

Bible Study: Book of Exodus

Overview: The word “Exodus” means “going out”, “departure” or “way out”. This book is a continuation of the book of Genesis as seen in **1:15** and we are told Israel stayed in Egypt exactly 430 years (**12:40-42**). The dating of the book of Exodus has been dated back from the fourth year of Solomon’s reign to be 480 Years. If we assume the year is about 966 BC then the date held for the Exodus would be 1446 BC. There are different views when this event took place with such possible dates as early as 1450 BC and others later towards 1300 BC.

The children of Israel were allowed to stay in Egypt for an appointed time by God. God had revealed to Abram (later Abraham) that his seed would be in Egypt for 400 years until the sin of the Amorites had come to completion (**Genesis 15:16**). It will be the time that God will enable his people Israel to come and possess the promised land and remove the Amorites. At the time of the Exodus the children of Israel had grown to 2 to 2.5 million people.

Moses was called by God to lead the children of Israel out of slavery and bondage in Egypt. He and his brother Aaron faced opposition from Pharaoh king of Egypt at that time. Pharaoh had mightily sought to oppress the children of Israel before he was forced to ultimately release them after a series of ten plagues upon the land of Egypt.

It is worth stressing what David Pawson (P111 in his book “Unlocking the Bible Omnibus) has said: “It is easy, too, to miss the religious contest that takes place during the plagues. Every one of those plagues was an attack on a particular god worshipped by the Egyptians:

Khuum the guardian of the Nile; Hopi: the spirit of the Nile; Osiris: the Nile was believed to be the bloodstream of Osiris; Heqt: a frog-like god of resurrection; Hathor: a mother goddess who was a cow; Apis: a bull of the god Ptah, a symbol of fertility; Minevis: also a bull, the sacred bull of Heliopolis; Imhotep: the god of medicine; Nut: the sky goddess; Seth: the protector of crops; Re, Aten, Atum and Horus: all sun gods. Pharaoh was also said to be divine.

The plagues were specifically directed against these Egyptian gods. The message was very simple: the God of the Hebrew slaves is far more powerful than all your gods put together”.

On further study this writer found further information of the Egyptian gods as shown: Set (Satan), god of the east frontier by a crocodile. The Nile was regarded as sacred. Osiris: god of the dead, by a goat; Isis his wife, by a cow. Nechebt: goddess of the South, by a serpent. Minevis: god of Memphis. Amon: god of Thebes, was represented by a cow Mut, the wife of Amon, by a Vulture. Thoth, god of intelligence, by an ape, Heka, a goddess by a Frog. Horus: the sky god, by a falcon. Ra, son god, by a hawk. The Pharaohs were deified – there were many other gods hence it is impossible to give the entire list. Religion had formerly been monotheistic but it developed where each tribe had its own god represented by an animal.

Egypt had been a powerful world Empire. It is possible that Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus. Pharaoh’s daughter who adopted Moses to be her son until he was forty could have been the famous Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut.

The book has shown increasingly more of who God is. He has revealed himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob (**3:6**). We see so much more of how God shows Moses and his brother Aaron what to do through ten plagues (**chapters 7-12**) and then in the deliverance of his people out of Egypt (**chapters 12-15**). God continued to show himself as holy in setting apart the children of Israel to be his people and to give them his laws to show them how to live (**chapters 19-24**). Bear in mind the previous scriptures from **15:23 to 18:27** where Moses had to learn some important lessons especially in dealing with his people Israel. The Lord continued to show to Moses through detailed instructions the divine worship that he wished to see in place. A) The instructions in how to build the Tabernacle (**chapters 25-31**); B) The removal of false worship (**chapters 32-34**). God, although angry,

has shown his compassion and mercy to re-establish his covenant with his people Israel.

C) The Tabernacle built according to God's requirements (**chapters 35-40**).

We see how God has shown how his people were not allowed to come close to his presence in the wilderness of Sinai (**chapter 19:1-25**) and yet we see God's desire to dwell with his people Israel in establishing the Tabernacle to be in the midst of the camp of his people. His presence was known clearly and visibly through the cloud by day and the fire by night upon the Tabernacle (**40:34-38**).

The basis of the Hebrew Law was the ten commandments (the decalogue).

You shall have no other gods beside Me. You shall not worship any graven image.

You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.

Remember to keep the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.

Honour your Father and your Mother. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not covet.

Four of these commandments show what our attitude should be to God and six of them our attitude towards our fellowman.

Jesus showed only two laws. He said "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind and your neighbour as yourself" (**Matthew 22:34-40**). For us as Christians we only need these two laws because in following Jesus Christ we should have love for God and love for one another. Love is the fulfilling of the law (**Romans 13:8-10**) and God's law has been written on our hearts, **Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-11; 10:15-17**.

The book has much to teach us of spiritual truths as shown in the examples below.

1) There is redemption from the bondage of slavery in Egypt by the power of God. There was redemption from death by the shedding of blood of the Passover Lamb as a sacrifice. That looked forward to Jesus Christ being our Passover who shed his blood to redeem us from sin, death and hell, (**John 1:29; 1Corinthians 5:7; 1Peter 1:18-21**).

2) The love of God was shown to his suffering people Israel in his mighty deliverance of his people through the Red Sea. He has shown his patience for their lack of faith and murmurings when they started their journey in the wilderness.

3) God has shown his holiness which required consecration, purity and setting apart his people to himself. He began giving his laws as seen in the ten commandments which must be obeyed.

4) There was much ingratitude shown by men where God's people Israel become disobedient to the promises they initially made to obey his laws. In **chapters 32 & 33** they had turned away from God to worship the golden calf. Mercifully God did not destroy them.

5) There is one man called Moses who became a mighty leader who lived in the presence of God. He was steadfast in following the Lord and strong in faith being a man of prayer to intercede on behalf of his people Israel. His quality of leadership was an example for others to follow. He "was faithful in all his house," (**Hebrews 3:2**).

In closing this overview of the book there are three main themes:

1) LIBERATION: God's people have been set free from bondage by his mighty HAND.

2) SEPARATION: God's people set apart to be HOLY.

3) HABITATION: God desired to dwell amongst his people by building his HOUSE.

Questions on the Book of Exodus

Q.1) Read **1:1-22**. A) Show the growth of Israel as a nation. B) How did the king of Egypt respond to such growth? See also **Acts 7:18-19**.

Q.2) Read **2:1-25**. What was known about Moses' early life and how was he being prepared for his work of serving the Lord? See also **Acts 7:20-29; Hebrews 11:23**.

Q.3) Read **3:1-4:17**. A) Show how God reveals himself to Moses at the burning bush. B) Show the ways Moses was reluctant to take up God's call to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Questions on the Book of Exodus continued:

Consider the excuses we could make not to carry out the work God has called us to do.

Q.4) Read **4:18-6:30**. A) Show how the children of Israel respond to Moses and Aaron. Why was there such a change of attitude? See **4:29-31; 5:20-21; 6:9, 12**. B) How does Pharaoh react to Moses and Aaron requesting the release of the children of Israel in **5:1-19**. C) What did Moses do in the apparent set back with the children of Israel? See **5:22-23; 6:12, 30**. D) Show how God answered Moses' prayers. See **6:1-8, 10-11, 13, 28-29**. E) What is the significance of the genealogy of God's people in **6:14-27**?

Q.5) Read **chapters 7-11**. A) What was known about the nine plagues? You may find it helpful to make a list of the plagues. B) How was Pharaoh reacting to the plagues and how was his life affected in his refusal to pay attention to God's warnings. C) Show the way Moses seems to be maturing in stature spiritually in dealing with Pharaoh. D) What do we learn about God's patience in answering prayer and in how he deals with Pharaoh?

Q.6) What are we taught in **12:1-28, 43-51**? Why are these verses on the Passover so essential to us today? See also **1Corinthians 5:7-8**.

Q.7) Read carefully **12:29-42, 51; 13:1-22; 14:1-31**. Try to make a list of what was taking place. What had God done specifically for his people Israel?

Q.8) Read **15:1-21**. What can we learn from this song of deliverance?

Q.9) What lessons did Moses learn from **15:22-18:27**? Are these lessons relevant to us as we seek to walk with the Lord?

Q.10) Read **Chapters 19 & 20**. A) What has God revealed of himself to his people Israel. B) Show what God had required his people to do. C) Consider at this point the relationship Moses had with God. D) How have we as Christians encountered God when we came to believe what he had done for us? E) What had God required of his people in worship and behaviour? See again particularly **20:1-17**. How relevant are these requirements to us today in our relationship with the Lord?

Q.11) Read **Chapters 21,22 & 23**. Try to summarise what these laws particularly cover such as making restitution and any promises God had made towards his people Israel. Why is there no mention of anyone going to prison for crimes committed against others?

Q.12) Read **Chapter 24**. A) How is the covenant ratified in **vs 1-8**? B) What has God allowed Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders to see of Himself? See **vs 9-11**. C) Where was Moses called to be by God in **vs 12-18**?

Q.13) Read **Chapters 25,26 & 27**. A) What is known of the materials used to build the tabernacle? See **25:1-9**. B) Make a list of the things made to keep in the tabernacle. See **25:10-40; 27:1-21**. C) Describe the tabernacle itself in **26:1-37**. D) What is significant about **25:9 & 25:40**?

Q.14) Read **Chapters 28 & 29**. A) Describe what the priests are wearing. Try to consider any spiritual significance for the garments. See **28:1-43**. B) What is known of the consecration of the priests? Consider any spiritual significance for them being set apart for service in **29:1-30**.

Q.15) Read **Chapters 30 & 31**. A) Make a list of further instructions God had given in **30:1-38** regarding the tabernacle. There are four things given here. What do they symbolise?

B) What was known of the gifted men who were able to construct the tabernacle in **31:1-11**?

C) Why did God stress strongly keeping the sabbath at this point? See **31:12-18**.

D) What can be known of the tabernacle being a picture of Christ? Read again **Chapters 30 & 31** and see also **Hebrews 9:1-28; 10:1-18**.

Q.16) Look carefully at **Chapters 32 & 33**. A) Consider the attitude of the people towards God when Moses had been away forty days on the mount. See **32:1-10, 17-18, 19-25**. What did these verses reveal of the character of Aaron in giving the people what they requested?

Questions on the book of Exodus continued

B) What can we learn from the prayers of Moses in **32:11-14 & 33:12-23**? C) How did Moses respond to the sin of Israel in **32:15-16, 19-21, 26-35**? D) Show God's mercy to the children of Israel in **33:1-3**. E) Show the evidence of repentance amongst the children of Israel in **33:4-6**.

Q.17) Read Chapter 34. A) Show the mercy of God in renewing the covenant with his people Israel. B) Write down any instructions that are significant in this chapter. C) Show the result of Moses' communion with God and its effect on others in **vs 29-34**. See also **2Corinthians 3:18**.

Q.18) What can we learn of God's attitude to the Sabbath day? Read 35:1-3 and look again at 16:22-30; 20:9-11 & 31:12-17.

Q.19) Read carefully 35:4-35. A) Show what God required his people to bring as an offering in **35:4-9**. B) What had God commanded his people to build in **35:10-19**? C) Consider the response of the people to bring what was needed to build the tabernacle. See **35:20-29**.

D) Who were able to build up the tabernacle and show the skills they had to do this work? See **35:30-35 & 36:1-7**.

Q.20) Show how the tabernacle was constructed in reading 36:8-38:31 & 39:32-43.

A) Make a list of what was made to be important items in the tabernacle. B) Describe what is known of the following items: (I) The ark of the covenant, **37:1-5; 25:10-16**; (II) The mercy seat, **37:6-9; 25:17-22**; (III) Laver of brass, **38:8; 30:17-21**; (IV) Altar of burnt offering, **38:1-7; 27:1-8**; (V) Golden lampstand (candlestick) **37:17-24; 25:31-39**; (VI) Table of shewbread, **37:10-16; 25:23-30**. (VII) Altar of incense; **37:25-28; 30:1-10**. The previous references have been included being considered helpful to describing each item. What was spiritually significant about each item? C) What was the result of the work done? See **39:32-43**.

Q.21) What was known of the priest's garments in 39:1-31? What spiritual lessons can we learn from these garments? Look carefully at each part of the clothing.

Q.22) Read Chapter 40. A) Try to show a diagram of how the tabernacle was set up. See **vs 1-33**. B) What is significant about the presence of God over the tabernacle in **vs 34-38**?

Miscellaneous Questions

Q.1) Read through the book and consider who God is. It is helpful to read 1:20-21; 2:21-23; 3:5-6;

Q.2) What can be known about the Egyptian customs in reading this book? You may wish to refer back to Genesis chapters 39-50.

Q.3) What can be learnt from the character of Moses throughout the book of Exodus?

Q.4) What spiritual lessons can be learnt from the character of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who resisted letting the children of Israel go. Show how God dealt with Pharaoh. Read 5:1-15:21 and see also Acts 7:41-43; Romans 1:18-32; Revelation 6:12-17; 16:8-11, 17-21.

Q.5) What spiritual lessons can we learn to grow spiritually from reading the book of Exodus?

Q.6) Discuss using the references below who is the angel that has appeared at times. See 3:2; 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2. Read also Acts 7:30-34, 38-40.

Q.7) How did God show that Israel had been called to be his peculiar/special people. Show that God had kept his promises to Israel. The following references which may not be a complete list will be helpful in answering this question: 2:24-25; 3:6; 6:1-8; 8:22-24; 9:4-6, 26; 19:3-6; 20:1-17; 24:3-8; 29:38-46; 32:7-14, 30-35; 33:1-5, 12-17; 34: 8-17, 18-28; Acts 7:31-34.

Q.8) Show where there is prophecy in the book of Exodus. Most of the prophecies given have been fulfilled but try to consider the unfulfilled prophecies.

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