

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS

By Charles Dailey 2021 NLT CPS
Updated 5/20/2021 Printed 9/24/2021

EXODUS FOLLOWS NATURALLY

This study of Exodus is a natural followup to the drama of Genesis. That book covers an enormous amount of time when compared with any later books. While precise dates are not possible, one school of thought counts 2,130 years from Adam to the family of Jacob moving to Egypt. That's close to the same amount of time from the birth of Jesus to our own time.



The books that comprise the the first five books of the sacred Scripture have a special ring of truth. **Dennis Prager** uses the Hebrew word *Torah* to describe them:

The more I study the Torah, the more I am convinced that it is the revealed word of God. The more I study ancient cultures, the more I see the absolutely radical disparity between the values of pagan civilizations and the values which Torah brought into the world. Torah was God's weapon in the war against idolatrous culture; and war it was.

Prager, Dennis. *The Rational Bible: Exodus* (p. xxi). Regnery Faith. Kindle Edition.

In the last part of Genesis, the reader became acquainted with Jacob, his wives and sons. Then God moved Jacob's son Joseph to Egypt, arranging for him to be second in command of the key nation . The narration was about families and individuals. Here in Exodus, the focus changes away from individuals and families to the nation as a whole.

The family of Jacob was not yet a *nation*. They achieved nationhood in Exodus. God did not interact much with His people when they were first in Egypt and they were fairly prosperous.

The family of Jacob moved to Egypt where they flourished for a few years, until they were enslaved by a new and hostile Egyptian government. **Tom Bradford** sees 350 years from the last chapter of Genesis to the opening of Exodus.

In the Book of Exodus, the Lord redeems His people from Egypt and makes a covenant with them. Moses is given a new *type* of covenant; a *conditional covenant*, one that is *mutual* between God and Man. This is entirely different than the covenant God made with Abraham some 600 years earlier. For that covenant was *unconditional*. It was one way, not mutual. Nothing man could do would cause God to pull back from that covenant.

BETWEEN GENESIS AND EXODUS

Tom Bradford describes these years between Genesis and Exodus in picturesque language:

What I think you will come to see, however, is that what God did with Israel was to metaphorically make a cake. God carefully selected the ingredients to make Israel; then He mixed them until properly blended, and next set the mixture in an oven to be baked. He set His heavenly timer for exactly the amount of time He knew was needed for this Hebrew cake to congeal and to rise and to become usable—400 years—and He waited. Although He undoubtedly monitored the baking process, in general, there was no need for substantial intervention on His part. The cake would remain in the oven until the timer went off, and it was finished baking. When God opened the oven, out popped Israel. And, apparently there was little point in His telling us the details of what went on during the time Israel was baking in the oven of Egypt. So, the Bible contains almost nothing of those years.

THE WRITER OF EXODUS

Jesus said that Moses wrote Exodus:

"But now, as to whether the dead will be raised--haven't you ever read about this in the writings of Moses, in the

story of the burning bush? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said to Moses, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Mark 12:26 NLT

The *burning bush* incident is in Exodus 3:3. No further research is needed about the identity of the writer. Other comments of Jesus also bear on the subject: Mark 7:10; John 5:46,47; 7:19-23.

Wilbur Fields discusses Moses' qualifications:

"There were very few men living in ancient times who had the knowledge, the training, the literary skill, the time, and the motivation to write such a marvelous book as Exodus. As a participant and eye-witness of the events, Moses had the necessary knowledge.

Having been educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, he had adequate training and literary skill. Because he was with Israel for forty years during the wilderness wanderings, he had abundant time to write.

Being a man fully dedicated to God and to the people of God, he had the motivation necessary for the big task of writing this book and also the other books of the Pentateuch.

Most important of all, the Spirit of God motivated him and assisted him. How many other men of ancient times (or modern either!) possessed this combination of qualities needed by any author of a book like Exodus?"

THE TIME OF WRITING

Exodus was written while *Israel wandered in the wilderness* following the actual exodus from Egypt. Moses indicates some of the times of writings in such places as Exodus 17:14 NLT:

After the victory, the LORD instructed Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a permanent reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

THE NAMING AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

While no title is given within the book itself, the Hebrews called it “Now These are the Names” (verse 1) and when it was translated into Greek the name of *Exodus* or *going out* was used. That name only describes the early part of the book.

Albert Barnes comments on the structure of Exodus:

“The book is divided into many smaller sections; each of which has the marks which throughout the Pentateuch indicate a subdivision. They are of different lengths, and were probably written on separate parchments or papyri, the longest not exceeding the dimensions of contemporary documents in Egypt. They were apparently thus arranged for the convenience of public reading.”

THE PLACE OF EXODUS IN WORLD HISTORY

Wilbur Fields captures the place of Exodus in the development of mankind:

The greatness of Exodus radiates benefits and life-changing truth to ALL HUMANKIND. From no other book have men learned so much of the character and work of the LORD God, a “God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; . . . and that will by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34:6,7). From no other book has mankind learned laws more beneficial, comprehensive, and succinct than the ten commandments in Exodus.

IS THE BOOK ENDORSED BY OTHER INSPIRED WRITERS?

Throughout the canon of Scriptures, the later writers show their endorsement of earlier writers by quoting them or referring to them. Exodus is endorsed overwhelmingly. The chart shows instances of endorsement. There are many more.

Endorsements of Exodus

Compiled by Charles Dailey

Exodus 3:6	Jesus called Exodus the “Book of Moses” and quotes from it. Jesus relied on the tense of the verb for proof, showing reliability.	Mark 12:26
4:12	God promised Moses that he would speak the words of God	
6:13	Moses claims God spoke to him. Cases are frequent.	
15:27	Moses wrote as an eyewitness. Note the details recorded.	
19:5	Jeremiah quotes God as alluding to Exodus.	Jer. 17:23
24:4	Moses claims to be writing for God.	
24:7	The writer of 2 Kings knew of Exodus, called the “Book of the Covenant.”	2 Kings 23:21
25:14	The writer of 1 Chronicles said that Exodus was from God.	1 Chron. 15:15
32:13	Moses quoted Genesis, showing that he had a copy.	
Joshua frequently cited the events of Exodus		2:10; 4:23; 24:6
The Psalmist had Exodus and knew its events.		Psalms 106:9
The Lord refers to Exodus events in Jeremiah.		Jer 2:6
Paul cited the events of Exodus and the wilderness as truth.		1 Cor. 10:1-4
The writer of Hebrews cited passing through the Red Sea from Exodus.		Heb. 11:29

LOCATIONS IN EGYPT

It is important to see what part of Egypt was cultivated and inhabited.



The greenish area in the upper left shows where water was available from the Nile River and where people lived and raised their animals and crops. Note also the green area in Canaan where Jacob and his family had lived before moving to Egypt. At the time the Book of Exodus opens, all of Jacob's family was living isolated from Egyptian culture in Goshen, seen just above the "P" in the word Egypt.

THE BOOK SHOWS GOD'S POWER

In order for God to redeem His people, it was necessary for Pharaoh to release Israel from the land. When God had His leaders prepared, events turned into a battle between God's power and the power of the many pagan gods of Egypt. In every struggle, God's power was superior and in the case of the 10th plague, it was convincing.

Beginning with Exodus chapter 4, we will watch the battle between the God of Heaven and the gods of Egypt play out.

God Proved Superior to the Pagan gods of Egypt

The Plague	The <i>possible</i> Egyptian god	
1. Blood in the water	<i>Heket</i>	goddess of water
2. Frogs	<i>Heket</i>	her symbol was a frog
3. Lice	<i>Khepri</i>	god of creation
4. Flies	<i>Hathor</i>	goddess of protection
5. Livestock diseased	<i>Sekhmet</i>	associated with disease
6. Boils	<i>Isis</i>	goddess of medicine
7. Hail	<i>Seth</i>	god of thunderstorms
8. Locusts	<i>Osiris</i>	god of agriculture
9. Darkness	<i>Ra</i>	the sun god.
10. Death of the firstborn	<i>Selket</i>	protector of the dead.

EXODUS ALSO POINTS TO THE DISTANT FUTURE

Exodus not only records a story, but the story itself points to events that will come in later centuries.

Moses appears first in Exodus. Numerous later Old Testament writers refer to Moses. After the church began in Acts 2, Peter cites Moses as an authority his listeners must listen to, Acts 3:22-23 NLT:

Moses said, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people. Listen carefully to everything He tells you.' Then Moses said, 'Anyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from God's people.'

Aaron is introduced in Exodus, but his story pointed to the call of Christ to be the everlasting High Priest. The writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 5:4 NLT:

And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants such an honor. He must be called by God for this work, just as Aaron was.

The Crossing of the Red Sea served as an illustration of baptism 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 NLT:

I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses.

It is clear that the crossing of the Red Sea prefigured the baptism into Christ that began on Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. It was not possible to be saved from the Egyptian army that was in hot pursuit without this baptism and likewise, it is impossible to be saved from sin without the baptism first commanded by Peter in Acts 2:38 NLT:

Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Near the end of his years, Peter still believed that baptism was necessary to be saved.

And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but

as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(1 Peter 3:21 NLT)

The Passover given in Exodus was the seedbed for the Lord's Supper of the church age.

On the final evening before Jesus was crucified, He took the Passover with His twelve disciples. After the meal and while they were still seated, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as a permanent memorial of His death that would happen in less than 24 hours.

When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before My suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." Then He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come." He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this to remember Me." After supper He took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and His people--an agreement confirmed with My blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you. (Luke 22:14-20 NLT)

As the Hebrews observed the Passover just as they were leaving Egypt to become a new nation, so the Twelve who were to become the rulers in the Kingdom—a new nation—participated in a memorial meal with the Master.

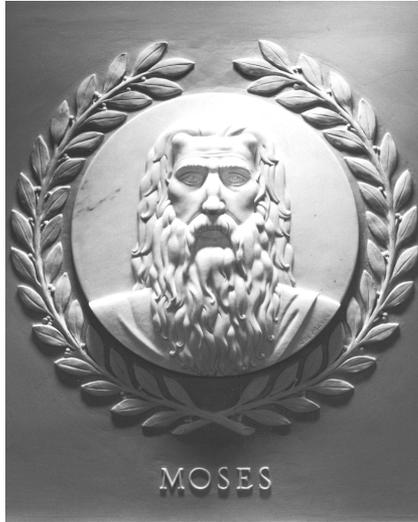
The Passover lamb pictured Christ as seen in 1 Corinthians 5:7 NLT:

... Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.

Other cases are the tabernacle and its furniture which pictured many aspects of the church in the New Testament.

THE IMPACT IN OUR TIME

The founders of the United States were profoundly aware of the impact of Moses and the Book of Exodus on a nation wanting to form a workable society. Today, there is a relief portrait of Moses in the House Chamber in Washington, D.C. <https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/moses-relief-portrait>



SUMMARY

Alastair J. Roberts summarizes the importance of Exodus very pointedly when he says:

“When we read the story of the exodus, we are not just reading about some events that occurred in the distant past, but acquainting ourselves with patterns of divine redemption that are still being worked out in the world today. Paul wrote of the exodus story in 1 Corinthians 10:11,

‘Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.’

In the exodus story and the many other stories that share its patterns, the Scripture looks us directly in our eyes in the present day. The themes of redemption disclosed in such narratives resonate with those of the New Exodus that we have been caught up into by the work of Christ. When we hear exodus stories we are listening to variations within the one great Story, a Story that finds its climax in the Great Exodus, as through the Passover sacrifice of his Son, the Father delivers us from the kingdom of Satan, leading us by the Spirit into the new creation.”

In the next lesson, we begin at Exodus 1:1.