

the book of

EXODUS

After nearly four hundred years of growth in Egypt, the infant nation Israel is now ready to leave behind the chains of slavery and seek a new homeland. Exodus narrates the liberation of Israel from Egyptian captivity and the migration of God's new nation to the wilderness of Sinai. Moses, the great deliverer, announces ten devastating plagues of judgment upon Egypt, then leads the Israelites on the first leg of their journey to the Promised Land.

EXODUS

Chapters 1–18 relate Israel's exodus from bondage in Egypt, while chapters 19–40 record the instructions given by God on Mount Sinai to direct the life and worship of the nation.

EXODUS

Exodus is the record of Israel's birth as a nation.

Within the protective "womb" of Egypt, the Jewish family of seventy rapidly multiplies. At the right time, accompanied by severe "birth pains," an infant nation, numbering between two and three million people, is brought into the world where it is divinely protected, fed, and nurtured.

EXODUS – INTRO & TITLE

The Hebrew title, *We© elleh Shemoth*, “And These Are the Names,” comes from the first phrase in 1:1. Exodus begins in the Hebrew with “And” to show it as a continuation of Genesis. The Greek title is *Exodus*, a word meaning “exit, departure, or going out.” The Septuagint uses this word to describe the book by its key event (see 19:1, “gone out”). In Luke 9:31 and in Second Peter 1:15, the word *exodus* speaks of physical death (Jesus and Peter). This embodies *Exodus*’ theme of redemption, because redemption is accomplished only through death. The Latin title is *Liber Exodus*, “Book of Departure,” taken from the Greek title.

EXODUS – INTRO & TITLE

There are two basic themes in Exodus, and both tie in together. The first theme is redemption, portrayed in the Passover, and the second theme is deliverance, portrayed in the Exodus from Egypt (see 6:6; 15:13,16; Deut. 7:8). This redemption and deliverance was accomplished through the shedding of blood and by the power of God.

EXODUS – THEME & PURPOSE

Exodus was written to portray the birth of Israel as the nation that would bring God's rule on earth. It records the story of Israel's redemption under the leadership of Moses. It also serves as an exposé of the falsehood of idolatry. Yahweh is revealed as infinitely superior to any so-called "gods." Exodus also teaches that obedience to God is necessary for a redeemed and set apart people.

EXODUS – THEME & PURPOSE

Exodus contains no direct messianic prophecies, but it is full of types and portraits of Christ. Here are seven: (1) Moses: In dozens of ways Moses is a type of Christ (Deut. 18:15). Both Moses and Christ are prophets, priests, and kings (although Moses was never made king, he functioned as the ruler of Israel); both are kinsman-redeemers; both are endangered in infancy; both voluntarily renounce power and wealth; both are deliverers, lawgivers, and mediators. (2) The Passover: John 1:29, 36 and First Corinthians 5:7 make it clear that Christ is our slain God and the Passover Lamb.

EXODUS – CHRIST IN EXODUS

(3) The seven feasts: Each of these feasts portrays some aspect of the ministry of Christ. (4) The Exodus: Paul relates baptism to the Exodus event because baptism symbolizes death to the old and identification with the new (see Rom. 6:2–3; 1 Cor. 10:1–2). (5) The manna and water: The New Testament applies both to Christ (see John 6:31–35, 48–63; 1 Cor. 10:3–4).

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(6) The tabernacle: In its materials, colors, furniture, and arrangement, the tabernacle clearly speaks of the person of Christ and the way of redemption. The development is progressive from suffering, blood, and death, to beauty, holiness, and the glory of God. The tabernacle is theology in a physical form. (7) The high priest: In several ways the high priest foreshadows the ministry of Christ, our Great High Priest (see Heb. 4:14–16; 9:11–12, 24–28).

EXODUS – CHRIST IN EXODUS

Exodus accounts for many of the religious ceremonies and customs of Israel, the creation of the tabernacle, the formation of the priesthood, the Mosaic Law, and the sacrificial system. As such, Exodus is foundational for the following history of Israel. It describes how the Israelites escaped from Egypt, became the covenant people of God, and came to know His presence and His ways. Exodus stands at the heart of the Old Testament as the greatest example of the saving acts of God before Christ. It provides the framework for the rest of the Old Testament message. The Passover, the Exodus, Moses, the Law, and the tabernacle dominated the thought of Israel for centuries to come.

EXODUS – CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Exodus abounds with God's powerful redemptive acts on behalf of His oppressed people. It begins in pain and ends in liberation; it moves from the groaning of the people to the glory of God. It is the continuation of the story that begins in Genesis with the seventy descendants of Jacob who move from Canaan to Egypt. They have multiplied under adverse conditions to a multitude of over two million people. When the Israelites finally turn to God for deliverance from their bondage, God quickly responds by redeeming them "with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" (6:6). God faithfully fulfills His promise made to Abraham centuries before (Gen. 15:13-14).

SURVEY OF EXODUS

**The book falls into two parts: (1) redemption from Egypt (1–18);
and (2) revelation from God (19–40).**

Redemption from Egypt (1–18): After four centuries of slavery, the people of Israel cry to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for deliverance. God has already prepared Moses for this purpose, and has commissioned him at the burning bush to stand before Pharaoh as the advocate for Israel. However, Pharaoh hardens his heart: “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?” (5:2).

God soon reveals Himself to Pharaoh through a series of object lessons, the ten plagues. These plagues grow in severity until the tenth brings death to the firstborn of every household of Egypt. Israel is redeemed through this plague by means of the Passover lamb. The Israelites' faith in God at this point becomes the basis for their national redemption. As they leave Egypt, God guides them by a pillar of fire and smoke, and saves them from Egypt's pursuing army through the miraculous crossing of the sea. In the wilderness He protects and sustains them throughout their journeys.

SURVEY OF EXODUS

Revelation from God (19–40): Now that the people have experienced God's deliverance, guidance, and protection, they are ready to be taught what God expects of them. The redeemed people must now be set apart to walk with God. This is why the emphasis moves from narration in chapters 1–18 to legislation in chapters 19–40. On Mount Sinai, Moses receives God's moral, civil, and ceremonial laws, as well as the pattern for the tabernacle to be built in the wilderness. After God judges the people for their worship of the golden calf, the tabernacle is constructed and consecrated. It is a building of beauty in a barren land and reveals much about the person of God and the way of redemption.