

Introduction to Exodus

October 18, 2023

Title

“Exodus” is the title given to this book in the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the OT), and means “exit” or “departure.”

Refers to Israel’s departure from Egypt, the major event of the book.

Dates of Events

1 Kings 6:1 states that Solomon began to build the temple in “the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign.” We can conclude from this that the exodus occurred around 1445 B.C.¹

Moses was 80 years old at the time of the exodus (Exo 7:7), putting his birth around 1525 B.C.

This dating places the exodus during the height of Egyptian power, prestige, and glory.²

Authorship

The books from Genesis through Deuteronomy were written by Moses as a five-volume work that the Jews call the Torah (meaning “instruction” or “law”), and that others call the Pentateuch (comes from a Greek word meaning “five-volumed book”).

Indications that Moses wrote Exodus include the following:

- **Ex. 17:14** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”
- **24:4** And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD...
- **24:7** Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people...
- **34:27** And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”\
- **Josh. 8:32** And there, in the presence of the people of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.
- **Mark 7:10** For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ [citing Exo 20:12; 21:17]
- **Mark 12:26** And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?

¹ *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 80.

² John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus*, 2nd edition, 44.

- **John 5:46–47** For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

While God dictated sections of Exodus to Moses, God also providentially prepared Moses to write Exodus

- **Acts 7:21–22** and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

Occasion

Israel was preparing to enter the Promised Land. They needed a written record of everything we find in this book.

Main Idea, Themes, Purpose

Question: If you read at least part of Exodus since last Wednesday, what stood out to you?

Question: What is the main idea in Exodus?

Exodus continues where Genesis left off

1. **Genesis 50:24-26**
2. **Exodus 1:1**
 - In Hebrew, begins with the word "and," translated "now" by the NASB
 - Repeats Genesis 46:8 almost word-for-word
3. **Exodus 1:2-7**

Exodus records the fulfillment of the following prophecy and promise God spoke to Abraham

- **Gen. 15:13–14** Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.
- **Gen. 12:2** And I will make of you a great nation...

The main idea of the book is seen in **6:6-8**

1. **7** "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God"
 - Covenant establishment

2. 7 "...you shall know that I am the LORD your God"

- This clause and similar variations occur 49 times in the OT, and 7 of them are in Exodus
- *Question:* What OT book contains more occurrences of this clause?

- **Ex. 7:5** The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them."
- **7:17** [To Pharaoh] Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood.
- **14:4** And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD..."
- **16:12** "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"
- **29:45–46** I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.
 - The main idea of the book is seen here as well

John J. Davis: "The second book of the Pentateuch establishes a foundational theology by which God reveals his attributes, name, redemption, law and the ways of worship. The covenant faithfulness of the Lord is put on display in a marvelous exhibition of supernatural deliverance."³

One of God's attributes that is highlighted is His holiness, an attribute that is to be reflected in His redeemed people

- **Ex. 3:5** Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."
- **15:11** "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"
- **19:6** and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
- **26:33–34** And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place.
- **28:36** "You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.'

The main idea of the book is that the LORD redeemed the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, and established His covenant with them as a nation, promising to dwell among them as their God.

³ Davis, 47.

Outline

Peter Enns gives the following outline:⁴

1. Departure from Egypt (ch 1-15)
 - a. Prelude (ch 1-6)
 - b. Plagues (ch 7-12)
 - c. Departure (ch 13-15)
2. Mount Sinai: Law (ch 16-24)
 - a. Journey to Sinai (ch 16-18)
 - b. Ten Commandments (ch 19-20)
 - c. The Book of the Covenant (ch 21-24)
3. Mount Sinai: Tabernacle (ch 25-40) [40% of the chapters in the book]
 - a. Instructions for the Tabernacle (ch 25-31)
 - b. Rebellion and Forgiveness (ch 32-34)
 - c. Building the Tabernacle (ch 35-40)

Significance

Exodus first and foremost reveals who God is

- *Arthur W. Pink*: “An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshipped.”⁵

The book of Exodus is the heart of the Torah.⁶

The exodus event is alluded to by OT writers more frequently than any other event.⁷

Eugene H. Merrill: “The exodus is the most significant historical and theological event of the Old Testament because it marks God’s mightiest act in behalf of his people, an act which brought them from slavery to freedom, from fragmentation to solidarity, from a people of promise—the Hebrews—to a nation of fulfilment—Israel. To it the Book of Genesis provides an introduction and justification, and from it flows all subsequent Old Testament revelation.... In the final analysis, the exodus served to typify that exodus achieved by Jesus Christ.”⁸

Throughout the book we see Moses as the Lord’s chosen mediator through whom the Lord gives blessings to Israel, and thus as a type of Christ.

⁴ Enns, *Exodus* (The NIV Application Commentary), 33-34.

⁵ Pink, *The Attributes of God*, 7.

⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, “Exodus,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 2:287.

⁷ Davis, 47.

⁸ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 57-58.