

EXODUS

Message:

“Exodus records how Yahweh established a covenant relationship with the nation Israel by redeeming them from Egypt and providing them with His law to govern them in their civil and religious obligations with Him and with one another.”

Title:

The English title *Exodus* is a transliteration of the Greek word Exodos (*Exodos*), the name given to the book in the Greek Septuagint (LXX) translation. The word “Exodus” means “exit, departure, or way out.” In Hebrew the book is named after its first two words, twmv hlav [*we'elleh shemoth*] (“These are the names of”). The same phrase occurs in Gen 46:8, where it likewise introduces a list of the names of those Israelites “who went to Egypt with Jacob” (Exod 1:1). This serves as an appropriate title to the book since it serves to describe the central historical event in Israelite history¹ (apart from God’s call and covenant with Abraham of course [Gen 12 and 15])—their salvation from slavery in Egypt. Both from context and from the conjunction “And” standing first in the Hebrew of 1:1, it is clear that Exodus was not intended to exist separately but was thought of as a continuation of the narrative that began in Genesis.

Author:

See Genesis: Author.²

In addition, Mosaic authorship is verified by the book’s own internal testimony (15:1; 17:14; 24:4; 34:27), as well as by statements in other portions of the Pentateuch (Deut 31:9, 24). Joshua 8:31 refers to the command of Exodus 20:25 as having been “written in the Book of the Law of Moses.” Mosaic authorship is further supported in other Old Testament books such as 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; Daniel 9:1-13; and Malachi 4:4. The New Testament also claims Mosaic authorship for various passages in Exodus (e.g., Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 2:22-23). *In fact, Christ and the apostles quote from Exodus some twenty-five times.* Taken together, these references strongly suggest that Moses was largely responsible for writing the Book of Exodus.

Recipients:

Assuming both Mosaic authorship and an early date of composition, the recipients of this book would have been the generation of the Exodus deliverance itself. Moses wrote

¹Eugene H. Merrill, suggest that “The exodus is the most significant historical and theological event of the Old Testament . . .” (*Kingdom of Priests*, 57).

²On the Mosaic authorship of Exodus, see my notes on the author of Genesis. For additional information on the Mosaic authorship of Exodus see Gleason L. Archer, “Old Testament History and Recent Archaeology from Moses to David,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 127:506 (April-June 1970):99-106; Leon J. Wood provides a detailed look at the arguments relating to the issue of Israel’s “Sojourn and Exodus Chronology,” in *A Survey of Israel’s History*, rev ed. (Zondervan 1986) 19-25, 65-86.

Exodus for the Sinai community that he led out of Egypt (Exod 17:14; 24:4; 34:27-28). Since the setting of the book appears to be limited to the generation that experienced the Exodus and Sinai Covenant, it seems best to assume that Exodus, like Genesis, was addressed to the assembly of Israel in the plains of Moab.³

Date of Writing:

Time span covered. The book covers a time span of approximately eighty-five years, from just prior to the birth of Moses in 1526 B.C. to the completion and dedication of the tabernacle at Sinai in 1445 B.C. Assuming one accepts the earlier date of 1446 B.C. for the Exodus, the compilation and writing of Exodus can be dated to some time shortly after this. Merrill may be correct in his assumption that Moses composed Exodus after the forty years of wilderness wandering, and just prior to his death—while Israel was encamped in the high desert plains of Moab, just east of Jericho directly across the Jordan River (cf. Deut 1:1 and 31:9).⁴

Determining the date of the Exodus. The date of the Exodus has been disputed by scholars for centuries. Virtually all liberal scholars and even a few conservatives hold to what has generally been termed a “late date” for the Exodus between 1290-1225 B.C., during the reign of the famous Egyptian Pharaoh, Rameses II (ca. 1304-1237). The vast majority of conservative scholars prefer a much earlier date very close to 1446 B.C., during the reign of Amenhotep II (ca. 1436-1410 B.C.). The earlier date of 1446 B.C. is preferable for several reasons: 1) According to 1 Kings 6:1 the time between the Exodus and the beginning of Solomon’s temple construction (declared to have commenced in the fourth year of his reign) was 480 years. Since the fourth year of Solomon’s reign was 967 B.C., the Exodus occurred in 1446 B.C.; 2) In Jephthah’s day (dated around 1105 B.C.) Israel is said to have been in the land for 300 years (Jud 11:26). This would place Israel’s entrance in the land during the Conquest of Joshua, around 1406 B.C. (1446 B.C. for the Exodus plus 40 years in the wilderness); 3) Archeological evidence from Egypt during this time period corresponds with the biblical account (e.g. though Thutmose IV succeeded his father, Amenhotep II, Thutmose was not the eldest son); 4) Events in Canaan about 1400 B.C. correspond to those of the Conquest (e.g. archeological evidence suggests that Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were destroyed at this time).

It should be noted that the Bible does not name the pharaoh of the exodus. Extant Egyptians records do not mention Joseph, Moses, or the exodus. Archaeological data can be variously interpreted. *The key issue is how the biblical text is interpreted and applied.*

Historical Context:

³Gene Merrill, “Exodus,” in *Old Testament Explorer* (Nashville: Word, 2001), 41.

The historical setting of Exodus. The historical setting of the Book of Exodus centers in the land of Egypt, from which the exodus of the Hebrews took place, and the Sinai Peninsula through which the Hebrews journeyed on their way to Mount Sinai where they remained for their first year (1446-1445 B.C.).

The history of Ancient Egypt. Scholars designate Ancient Egypt's history in three periods referred to as the predynastic period (3500-3100 B.C.), the protodynastic period (3100-2686 B.C.), and the dynastic period (2686-322 B.C.). The dynastic period is broken down into several intermediate periods. Towards the end of the first intermediate period (taking an early date for the exodus, see above: *Determining the Date of the Exodus*) during the 12th dynasty, Jacob and his sons came to live in Egypt (1876 B.C.; Gen 46:6). Joseph served as a "prime minister" of Egypt to the Pharaoh. This twelfth dynasty is understood as a prosperous time when arts and craftsmanship flourished. The events of Exodus occur in the 18th dynasty after Egypt had attained international status and when Egyptian nationalism supplanted the older Hyksos tolerance of foreigners.⁵

The historical period covered by the Book of Exodus covers roughly 430 years of history, from the arrival of Jacob and his family in Egypt (1876 B.C.) to the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai in 1445 B.C. The Israelites lived in Egypt 430 years (Exod 12:40). Genesis 15:13 has the round number 400 years as the time of Israel's oppression in Egypt. The text of Exodus 12:40-41 is very clear that Israel was in Egypt 430 years "to the very day" (v. 41). This probably refers to the time between when Jacob entered Egypt with his family (1876 B.C.) to the day of the Exodus (1446 B.C.). Galatians 3:17 also refers to 430 years. However this figure is apparently the time from God's last reconfirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob at Beer-sheba (1875 B.C.; Gen 46:2-4) to the giving of the Mosaic Law at Sinai in 1446 B.C. (Exod 19). Genesis 15:13, 16 and Acts 7:6 give the time of the Israelites' enslavement in Egypt as 400 years (1846-1446 B.C.). The "about 450 years" spoken of in Acts 13:19 includes the 400 year sojourn in Egypt, the 40 years of wilderness wanderings, and the seven year conquest of the land (1875-1395 B.C.).⁶ The following chart presents the dates considered in association with the above references.

Route of the Exodus:

⁴Ibid.

⁵For a full development see John D. Hannah, "Exodus" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 105-6.

⁶Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126:504 (October-December 1969):306-16, presents three other ways to reconcile these references. Also see Leon J. Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*, rev ed. (1986), 19-25, 65-72.

There are two basic views concerning the route that the children of Israel took as they fled out of Egypt. First, is the “northern view” which says that the exodus took place at a lagoon bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Second, is the “southern (central) view” which holds that the exodus took place south of Succoth near Lake Balah or Lake Timsah. Even though a definitive conclusion is not possible because of the uncertainty of many of the locations in the biblical text, it seems that the southern (central) view matches what is known more than the northern view.⁷ The evidence gleaned from the internal textual clues derived from Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-2 and Numbers 33:1-49 supports the southern view for several reasons. First, the LORD did not lead Israel by the way of the land of the Philistines (probably the Way of the Sea which was the most direct route along the Mediterranean coast to Palestine) (13:17). Second, the LORD led the people instead by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea (13:18).⁸ Third, the LORD led Israel from Rameses to Succoth (Exod 12:37; Num 33:5). Fourth, Israel set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness (13:20). Fifth, Israel turned back and camped before Pihahiroth, between Midgol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephron opposite it by the sea (14:2). Sixth, Israel went by the Way of the Wilderness (Exod 13:18) after crossing the Sea of Reeds and entered the Wilderness of Shur (Exod 15:22; Num 33:8) in the North-west Sinai Peninsula.

Theological Context:

Exodus contains a number of theologically significant incidents or features. It will provide an account of how the elect Hebrew people (Gen 12:1-3; 15:13-21; 18:18; 22:18; 26:3-4) are formed into an elect nation. The central themes of the Book of Exodus are the miraculous deliverance of Jacob’s posterity from Egyptian bondage in fulfillment of the promise God had made to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-14 and God’s establishing the theocratic nation under Moses by means of a new covenant relationship, the Mosaic Covenant (Exod 19:3-19). Exodus provides a bridge connecting the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant (of *land*, *seed*, and *blessing*) and fulfillment in a people constituted as the theocratic community through whom God’s redemptive purposes would be achieved.⁹ The people of Israel were called to become “a holy nation” (Exod 19:6) so that they could be an avenue of blessing to all of the Gentile nations of the earth (Gen 12:3; cf. “a light for the Gentiles” Isa 42:6).

⁷Also see Hill and Walton, *A Survey of the OT*, 108-10; John D. Hannah, “Exodus,” in *BKC*, 107.

⁸“More literally this refers to the Sea of (papyrus) Reeds (*yam sup*) describing the area between the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean Sea where there are many marshy lagoons and lakes” (*ibid.*)

⁹The Book of Exodus reveals that the only “way out” of bondage to servitude (sin), suffering, and death is through personal faith in and application of the shed blood of the “Passover Lamb” which teaches that man’s redemption is by blood and by power (John 1:29, 36; cf. Gen 15:6 and Exod 14:30-31).

Outline:¹⁰**I. The Redemption of Israel from Egypt 1:1–18:27**

- A. The Oppression of Israel in Egypt 1:1-22
 - 1. The population explosion: Jacob’s family grows 1:1-7
 - 2. The planned extinction: Jacob’s family groans 1:8-22
- B. The Preparation of Moses: Israel’s Deliverer 2:1–4:31
 - 1. Moses’ first forty years in Egypt 2:1-15
 - 2. Moses’ second forty years in Midian 2:16-25
 - 3. Moses’ return to Egypt 3:1–4:31
 - a. Moses is commissioned by God 3:1–4:17
 - b. Moses is commanded to return to Egypt 4:18-31
- C. The Confrontations of Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh in Egypt 5:1–12:36
 - 1. Moses and Aaron’s first encounter with Pharaoh 5:1-23
 - 2. Moses and Aaron’s reassurance by God 6:1–7:7
 - 3. Moses releases God’s judgments on Egypt: the Ten Plagues 7:8–12:36
 - a. Moses and Aaron’s second encounter with Pharaoh 7:8-13
 - b. Moses and Aaron’s releasing of the plagues of God on Egypt 7:14–12:36
 - 1) The first plague: *the Nile turned to blood* 7:14-25
 - 2) The second plague: *frogs* 7:26–8:15
 - 3) The third plague: *gnats* 8:16-19
 - 4) The fourth plague: *swarms of insects* 8:20-32
 - 5) The fifth plague: *disease (death) on the livestock* 9:1-7

¹⁰Exodus can be outlined in a couple of different ways. Charles C. Ryrie presents a Geographical outline which divides the book into three parts: 1) Israel in Egypt: *Subjection* (1:1–12:36); 2) Israel’s Journey to Sinai: *Emancipation* (12:37–18:27); and 3) Israel at Sinai: *Revelation* (19:1–40:38) (“Exodus,” in the *Ryrie Study Bible*, 91-92). The “General Contents” of Exodus suggests a two-fold outline 1) the **Narrative Section: Israel’s Deliverance (1:1–18:27)**; and 2) the **Legislative Section: Israel’s Worship (19:1–40:38)**. Excellent outlines may be found in Archer, *A Survey of the OT*, 209; John D. Hannah, “Exodus,” in *BKC*, 107-08; and Philip C. Johnson, “Exodus,” in *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 52.

- 6) The sixth plague: *boils* 9:8-12
- 7) The seventh plague: *hail* 9:13-35
- 8) The eight plague: *locust* 10:1-20
- 9) The ninth plague: *darkness* 10:21-29
- 10) The tenth plague: *death of every first-born of Egypt* 11:1–12:36
 - a) The Passover announced 11:1-10
 - b) The Passover instituted 12:1-28

D. The Redemption (*Exodus*) of Israel from Egypt to Mount Sinai 12:37–18:27

1. Israel's journey to the Red Sea 12:37–14:2
 - a. Journey from Rameses to Succoth 12:37–13:19
 - b. Journey from Succoth to Etham 13:20-22
 - c. Journey from Etham to Pi-hahiroth 14:1-2
2. Israel's miraculous passage through the Red Sea 14:3-31
 - a. The pursuit of Israel by Pharaoh's army 14:**3-14**
 - b. The passage of Israel's through the Red Sea 14:15-22
 - c. The pursuit and destruction of Pharaoh's army 14:23-31
3. Israel's (*first Psalm*) song of deliverance: "Song of the Sea" 15:1-21
4. Israel's journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai 15:22–18:27
 - a. Journey from the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur 15:22-27
 - 1) People complain about the bitter waters of Marah 15:22-26
 - 2) Provision of water (12 springs) and dates (70 date palms) at Elim 15:27
 - b. Journey from Elim to the wilderness of Sin 16:1-36
 - 1) People complain about hunger 16:1-3
 - 2) Provision of manna and quails 16:4-36
 - c. Journey from the wilderness of Sin to Rephidim 17:1-7
 - 1) People complain about no water 17:1-3

- 2) Provision of water from the rock 17:4-7
- d. Joshua defeats the Amalekites 17:8-16
- e. Jethro the priest of Midian meets Moses 18:1-27
 - 1) Jethro reunites Moses with his family 18:1-12
 - 2) Jethro recommends that Moses appoint judges 18:13-27

II. The Revelation of God to Israel at Mount Sinai 19:1–40:38

A. The Institution of the Mosaic Covenant 19:1–24:11

- 1. The covenant proposed and accepted 19:1-25
- 2. The Ten Commandments 20:1-26
 - a. The preamble 20:1-2
 - b. The Ten Commandments (Decalogue) 20:3-17
 - c. The reaction of the Israelites: fear and dismay 20:18-21
 - d. The prohibition against idolatry 20:22-26
- 3. The ordinances of the Book of the Covenant 21:1–23:33
 - a. Laws concerning slaves 21:1-11
 - b. Laws concerning homicide 21:12-17
 - c. Laws concerning bodily injury 21:18-32
 - d. Laws concerning property damages 21:33–22:15
 - e. Laws concerning proper actions in society 22:16-31
 - f. Laws concerning justice and neighborliness 23:1-9
 - g. Laws concerning sacred seasons and feasts 23:10-19
 - h. Laws concerning possession of the land 23:20-33
- 4. The ratification of the Mosaic Covenant 24:1-18
 - a. The public assent of the people 24:1-11
 - b. The private acceptance by God 24:12-18

B. The Institution of the Tabernacle: God's Dwelling Place Among His People 25:1–31:18

- 1. The tabernacle construction: built from contributed materials 25:1-9
- 2. The tabernacle furnishings 25:10-41
- 3. The tabernacle ministers: the priest's clothing and consecration 28:1–29:46
 - a. The family of the priests 28:1
 - b. The garments of the priests 28:2-43
 - c. The consecration of the priests 29:1-37

- d. The service of the priests 29:38-46
- 4. The tabernacle furnishings continued 30:1-38
- 5. The tabernacle craftsmen 31:1-11
- 6. The true importance behind Sabbath observance 31:12-18
- C. The Breaking and Renewing of the Covenant 32:1–34:35
 - 1. The breaking of the covenant 32:1-35
 - a. The sin of the Israelites: apostasy with the Golden Calf 32:1-10

 - b. The intercession and wrath of Moses 32:11-35
 - 2. The renewal of the covenant 33:1–34:35
 - a. The Lord’s charge of Moses to lead Israel on to Canaan 33:1-6
 - b. The Lord’s cloud of glory at the tent of meeting 33:7-11
 - c. The Lord’s commitment to reveal His glory to Moses 33:12-23
 - d. The Lord’s Commandments written on two new stone tablets 34:1-9
 - e. The Lord’s charges to Israel: their part in keeping the covenant 34:10-26
 - 1) Israel must worship God alone 34:10-17
 - 2) Israel must observe God’s festivals and Sabbaths 34:18-24
 - 3) Israel must practice strict festival observance 34:25-26
 - f. The Lord’s covenant renewed with Moses and the people of Israel 34:27-35
 - 1) Moses records the Ten Commandments 34:27-28
 - 2) Moses radiates the glory of God’s presence 34:29-35
- D. The Construction and Dedication of the Tabernacle and Cult Objects 35:1–40:38
 - 1. The tabernacle assembled 35:1–39:43
 - a. The summons to build 35:1–19
 - 1) The commands concerning Sabbath observance 35:1-3
 - 2) The call for voluntary contributions and craftsmen 35:4-19
 - b. The supply of the building materials 35:20-29
 - c. The supply of Bezalel and Oholiab and other craftsmen 35:30–36:7
 - d. The setting to the work 36:8–39:43

2. The tabernacle accepted 39:32–40:33
 - a. The inspection by Moses 39:32-43
 - b. The initial erection and consecration of the tabernacle 40:1-33
 - c. The indwelling by God 40:34-38

*** Significance of the "Glory Cloud"—it serves as a visible manifestation of the presence of Almighty God!**

In an interesting and original chart of Exodus, Ted Grove (a former DTS student, 1990-94, and classmate) proposes the following structural outline of Exodus (note the two extended chiasms):

I. Israel's Redemption from Egyptian Bondage 1:1–18:27

- A. Israel's Affliction 1:1–2:14
- B. Israel's Redemption 2:15–18:27

Note the chiasmic structure of this first section 2:15–18:27

- A Midian: Moses' Commission 2:15–4:28
- B Enemy: Egypt Defeated 4:29–15:21
- C Water: Bitter to Sweet and 12 Springs 15:22-27
- D Food: Manna and Quail 16:1-36**
- C' Water: Out of the Rock 17:1-7
- B' Enemy: Amalek Defeated 17:8-16
- A' Midian: Moses Accepts Wisdom 18:1-27

II. Israel's Adoption 19:1–40:38

- A. Covenant Delivered 19:1–24:11
- B. Sanctuary Planned 24:12–31:18
- C. Covenant Broken 32:1-35
- D. Covenant Renewed 33:1–34:35
- E. Sanctuary's Construction 35:1–40:33
- F. Covenant Sealed (Israel is God's Possession) 40:34-38

Note the chiasmic structure of this second section 19:1–40:38

- A Covenant Delivered 19:1–24:11
- B Tabernacle Planned 24:12–27:21
- C Priestly Instructions 28:1–30:38
- D Craftsmen's Direction 31:1-11

- E Sabbath Instructions 31:12-18
- F Covenant Broken 32:1-35**
- F' Covenant Renewed 33:1–34:35**
- E' Sabbath Reminded 35:1-3
- D' Craftsmen and Construction 35:4–38:31
- C' Priests Prepared 39:1-43
- B' Tabernacle Completed 40:1-33
- A' Covenant Sealed 40:34-38

Note: The center of the first chiasm is the *manna*. The center of the second chiasm is the *Tablets of the Law*. These were the two items God instructed Moses to preserve in the Ark of the Covenant. Ted proposes that the *key verse* of the book is **34:9**.