

KNOWING GOD THROUGH EXODUS

Exodus is history for today! It is the story of God's ability to save us from circumstances that seem to be impossible and hopeless. It opens with a people of promise feeling as if they had been forgotten and left for dead. By the time the book ends, they are breathing fresh air, camped at the foot of "miracle mountain," and ready for their next test of faith.

Tracking that kind of storyline, author David Egner will attempt to lead you beyond the "frogs, flies, and furious storms" of the plagues, to the God who, in His own timeless way, wants to be your rescue as well.

Martin R. De Haan II

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THE CHAINS THAT BIND MANKIND

Julianna is a political and spiritual refugee. She had suffered oppression in her homeland because of her faith in Jesus Christ. When she began speaking about Christ to her students, government officials first cut her pay. When she persisted, she was publicly ridiculed. Finally, her job was taken away from her. She applied for permission to emigrate, but it was 5 years before she was permitted to leave her country.

Today she has a new life. No more oppression. No more ridicule. No more starvation conditions. No more being denied the opportunity to support herself. The morning after she arrived in the United States, Julianna was asked what her feelings were. Because she could speak very little English, communication was difficult. But when she understood the question, she threw her hands in the air and said, "Feel wonderful!"

This woman experienced the meaning of one kind of bondage. She had been a prisoner in her own country. The chains that had bound her were not literal, but political and religious. People in many parts of the world know this kind of suffering by hard personal experience. For some, it has meant imprisonment and torture.

Yet human misery is not limited to the fenced yards of political tyranny. People who live in free countries experience their own kind of bondage. Consider, for example, the millions of alcoholics who live in the United States. They are bound by chains of their own forging. Think of battered wives who feel trapped. Or of children who come home from school every day to beatings, drunkenness, or neglect.

Then there are the shaking bodies and vacant eyes of those who are addicted to cocaine or heroin. So harsh are their bonds that they will rob or kill for one more fix.

Others in society are enslaved by less detectable but equally binding forces: their quest for power, their love of money, sex, compulsive spending, work, their own huge egos, the need to dominate their mates or children. They are hopelessly enslaved by their inability to control their own thoughts or appetites.

**“The same God
who set Israel free from the tyranny
of Egypt is able to set us free.”**

Yes, we need deliverance. We need someone to set us free—not just from the physical, external things that enslave us, not just from our own inability to say no, not just from our insatiable greed or terrible temper or our need to control others. We need deliverance from the consequences of our own choices. That’s what enslaves us. We need to break the bonds of our own guilt. Like the children of Israel we cry, “Who can deliver us?”

Exodus gives the answer. The same God who set Israel free from the slavedrivers of Egypt can deliver us from our sin. In that sense the rescue from Egypt can be our story. We can find ourselves in Israel’s journey from bondage to freedom, from oppression to release. When personalized in this way, it’s a pilgrimage that starts in the depths of our own minds and hearts, and ends in the vast and glorious spiritual freedom of Christ made possible because of the love of God, our Deliverer.

EXODUS: JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament, is the written account of Israel's journey from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the Sinai Peninsula. Let's consider a brief overview of its events, when they took place, and what they tell us about God.

An Overview Of Events. As Exodus opens, we find God doing something He often does. For His own wise reasons, He is letting His people experience painful circumstances that are going from bad to worse. Enslaved in Egypt, they experience increasing oppression, and their cries for rescue are growing louder. Yet, unknown to His struggling people, God has been slowly, quietly, and faithfully preparing a reluctant messenger named Moses to lead them to freedom.

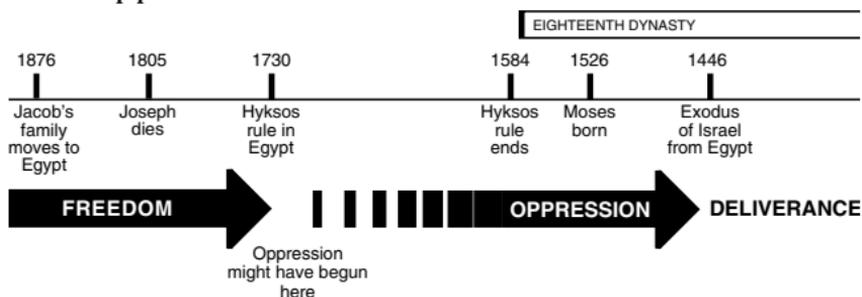
When God was ready to answer His people's cries for help, Moses began dragging his feet. Forty years earlier he had tried to help a fellow Israelite, but he got burned in the process. His efforts had turned sour, as our efforts often do. For his mistake he paid dearly, spending four decades hiding on the far side of the desert. What he had learned through it all was not to trust himself.

Now, however, it was time to trust God. The test was a big one. God presented Moses first to a skeptical Israel, then to an obstinate Egyptian head of state. The king defied Moses and refused to respond to the appeal, "Let My people go." Egypt paid for that resistance. Through a series of 10 plagues, God gradually broke the Pharaoh's will and loosened his iron grip. Israel was free. Free at last!

However, God once again did what He often does with us. To expose the nature of His people's hearts, and to show them their need for trusting Him, the Lord orchestrated a series of impossible circumstances. Time after time, they failed the test. Repeatedly, the Lord showed His faithfulness and power by miraculously providing for their every need. Slowly, very slowly, Israel learned. The God who saved them could take care of them in ways they could never provide for themselves.

The Background Of The Exodus. Most all conservative Bible scholars date the exodus at about 1446 BC. Four hundred thirty years earlier, Israel's ancestors had migrated from Palestine to Egypt to escape a terrible drought. There they found a home as a result of an ironic and merciful provision of the Lord. They settled in Goshen, and over a period of more than four centuries they multiplied to a nation of several million people.

During this time, however, the size of their nation became a problem. A new ruler, who was either the first king of the invading Hyksos people (1730 BC) or the first Pharaoh of the 18th dynasty (1584 BC), began a planned program of tyranny designed both to exploit the Hebrews and to keep them from threatening his rule. A timeline for the background and dating of Exodus appears below.



BOOK CHART OF EXODUS

BONDAGE 1:1 7:7			RESCUE 7:8 12:36		PROVISION 12:37 18 19			INSTRUCTION 40			
Bondage in Egypt 1	Birth of Moses 2	Call of Moses 3 7:7	Plagues 7:8 11	Passover 12:1-36	Exodus from Egypt 12:37 13	Red Sea Crossing 14	Journey to Sinai 15 18	Giving the Law 19 24	Tabernacle Plans 25 31	Golden Calf Idolatry 32 34	Tabernacle Built 35 40
15% of Exodus			15% of Exodus		15% of Exodus			55% of Exodus			
430 Years					3 Months			11 Months			
Israel in Egypt					Israel to Sinai			Israel at Sinai			
Egypt					Wilderness			Sinai			
God's People					God's Grace			God's Holiness			
Deliverance								Worship			

"I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments." Exodus 6:6

KNOWING GOD THROUGH EXODUS

The relationship between the first five books of the Old Testament could be outlined this way:

Genesis: Beginning of all things

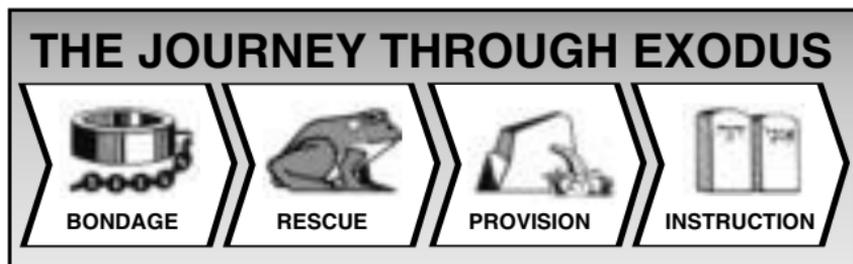
Exodus: Israel's deliverance

Leviticus: Regulations for worship and life

Numbers: Record of the 40-year sojourn

Deuteronomy: Covenant renewal before Canaan

Exodus was written as a continuation of Genesis. In Genesis, God is seen as the Creator; in Exodus, we see Him as the Deliverer. As we trace the events of Exodus, we will be following a true account of the dramatic rescue of an entire nation. It might be pictured as follows:



The rescue God brought to His people led them out of slavery and into a new relationship with Him. He gave them laws to tell them what He expected of them and a system of worship and sacrifice to bring them forgiveness when they failed. In many ways, Exodus portrays the deliverance we receive today, over 3,000 years later, when we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior and Deliverer.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH EXODUS



BONDAGE

1. BONDAGE (1:1-7:7)

In the darkest night of bondage, we cry for a deliverer. Captive, we cannot escape the isolation, the pain, the overwhelming feeling that we are struggling against the whole world alone. But God hears the cry of the captive, and He responds with the gift of His grace.

As is often the case for the people of God, Israel's stay in Egypt began as a wonderful and undeserved provision of the Lord. About 400 years before the events described in Exodus, God had turned a terrible evil around to the good of Jacob's family. An envied little brother named Joseph had been sold into slavery. Many years later, he ended up being the surprise Egyptian protector and provider for his family. God had in His own unpredictable way sent Joseph on ahead. When a terrible drought swept over all of the Middle East (Gen. 41:56), the family of Jacob was reunited in Egypt and invited to settle there. In this rich land they prospered. Helped by the Lord, they multiplied rapidly and became a great people (Ex. 1:7).

As time passed, a new regime rose to power in Egypt. A man became Pharaoh who didn't know that Joseph had saved Egypt from the drought and that the Israelites were Joseph's people (1:8). All he knew was that these people, by their very numbers, posed a threat to his rule (1:9-10). Afraid they would join with

an enemy in an attempt to overthrow him, Pharaoh ordered the taskmasters to oppress them. He forced the Hebrews to work extremely hard, transporting water for irrigation and making and carrying bricks for his ambitious building program. Any Israelites who stumbled from weakness or who rebelled were beaten mercilessly. In spite of the harsh treatment, however, God caused the Hebrew population to continue to grow.

Frustrated, Pharaoh gave orders to the Hebrew midwives that all male babies were to be killed as soon as they were born (1:16). But the midwives, fearing God, disobeyed Pharaoh's command, and the Israelites multiplied in number (1:17,20).

A Leader Provided. While Israel suffered under cruel bondage, God was silently and faithfully preparing to deliver them. His plan made a mockery of the Pharaoh. Even as the king had demanded the death of all Hebrew male babies, the Lord arranged to have the eventual deliverer of Israel, and number one enemy of Pharaoh, raised in Pharaoh's own house! What an example of how the Lord of heaven must laugh at the empty threats of human rulers! (Ps. 2:1-4).

Born in the midst of Pharaoh's terrible oppression was a baby boy named Moses. He was safely hidden by his mother until he was 3 months old (Ex. 2:1-2). When she could no longer conceal him, his mother made a little basket and placed him in the reeds at the edge of the river. He was found by Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him into the royal family and protected him. The boy was allowed to live in childhood with his own family (2:3-10) before being taken into Pharaoh's household and reared as a child of royalty. He became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22).

When Moses was 40 years old, having chosen to identify with the people of God and their sufferings rather than to accept the prestige, power, and pleasures that were his as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Acts 7:23; Heb. 11:24-25), he went to visit his people. There he saw an Israelite receiving a terrible beating by an Egyptian taskmaster, so he decided to defend and avenge him. In a moment of anger, the eventual deliverer of Israel became a murderer! Moses believed that God was going to use him to deliver the Israelites from their bondage (Acts 7:25), but he soon found out that taking things into his own hands was not what God wanted.

The next day, Moses tried to stop a fight between two Israelites. He probably thought they would respect his position and be thankful that he was interested in them. He wanted them to see him as their deliverer. But instead, the Israelite who was at fault in the dispute said to Moses, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" (Acts 7:27-28; cp. Ex. 2:14). When Moses realized that his secret of the murdered Egyptian was known, he fled to Midian (see map, p.19).

A Marked Man. After an act of courage and kindness, Moses was welcomed into the household of Jethro, the priest of Midian. He married Zipporah, Jethro's daughter, and settled down to life as a shepherd (2:16-3:1).

Meanwhile, conditions were worsening in Egypt. The king of Egypt died, and the new ruler increased the oppression (2:23). The cries of the suffering Hebrews were lifted up to God, and we are told that "God acknowledged them" (2:24-25). The time had come for Jehovah to deliver His people.

While Moses was tending his flocks in the desert, he

noticed a bush that was burning without being consumed. Mystified, he stopped to investigate and he heard the voice of God. “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt,” the Lord said, “and have heard their cry So I have come down to deliver them” (3:7-8).

Then the Lord issued this call to Moses: “Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt” (3:10).

Moses was not a ready servant. In fact, before the conversation was over, he had given the Lord five excuses for not going. But God rejected them all.

MOSES' EXCUSES	GOD'S PROMISES
No Ability (3:11)	His Presence (3:12)
No Authority (3:13)	His Name (3:14)
No Believability (4:1)	His Power (4:2-9)
No Eloquence (4:10)	His Enablement (4:11-12)
No Inclination (4:13)	His Instruction (4:14-16)

Moses' question of the Lord “When . . . they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” led to one of the most important revelations of God in the Old Testament. The Lord told Moses to tell the children of Israel that “I AM WHO I AM” was the name of his sender (3:14). By using this name, God was revealing Himself to be the eternal, self-existent God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Significantly, the Lord Jesus applied this name to Himself and was nearly stoned as a blasphemer (Jn. 8:58-59).

When Moses still protested, the Lord gave him three signs he could use to convince the people and Pharaoh that the one true God had sent him (4:1,21). First, the Lord turned Moses' rod into a living serpent (4:1-5),

then He made his hand leprous and healed it (4:6-7). Finally, God told Moses that if the first two signs didn't convince them, He would give him the power to turn water from the Nile River into blood (4:9).

Moses' Return. At 80 years of age (he had been in exile 40 years [Acts 7:30]), Moses went back to Egypt (4:18), taking his family with him. He presented himself to the elders of Israel, who gave him their support when they saw the miraculous signs God had given him. Then Moses went before Pharaoh (5:1). The king of Egypt was furious at Moses' request for Israel to leave. So he greatly increased the workload of the Israelites, who were already at the breaking point (5:6-14). When the elders of Israel blamed Moses for the suffering, he became discouraged and cried out to the Lord. God gave him a wonderful promise, considered by many to be the key verse of Exodus:

Therefore say to the children of Israel: "I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" (6:6).

Accompanied by his brother Aaron, Moses approached the throne of Pharaoh to do the task God had called him to do.

SEEING GOD

- Exodus shows us a God who can turn blessing into difficulty, and difficulty into great blessing.
- Exodus shows us a God who can silently prepare to rescue His people even while allowing it to appear that He no longer sees or cares.
- Exodus shows us a God who often takes many years to carry out His perfectly timed rescue.

SEEING OURSELVES

- In Israel's Egyptian nightmare, we can see our own fears and intolerable circumstances.
- In Moses, we can see our own reluctance to trust the God who is so able to be our strength.
- In Moses, we can see our own ability to do whatever God wants us to do.
- In Moses' killing of the Egyptian, we see the terrible results of our own efforts to take things into our own hands.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH EXODUS



BONDAGE



RESCUE

2. RESCUE (7:8–12:36)

The car had spun out of control near midnight in a remote area and plunged down a steep bank. It came to rest in a watery ravine. The driver was trapped in the wreckage, unable to move. Fully conscious, she waited for someone to help her. But no one appeared. Dawn came, then daylight. Now she realized that her car was hidden from view. She pushed the horn button, but no sound came. She screamed as loudly as her injuries would allow, but there was no one to hear. As the afternoon passed, she began to panic. She knew she would not last another cold night. Why doesn't someone come? Aren't they looking for me? Finally, as darkness fell, she saw a pinpoint of light. Someone was searching! But the light passed right over the bridge without discovering her. She finally

broke down, weeping in despair. Deliverance was so close, but so far away. Then the light reappeared, right beside the car! Something had told the young searcher to check the ravine, and he had spotted her car. She was rescued!

Exodus 7–12 tells an even more dramatic story of rescue. Moses had come to declare himself Israel’s deliverer. He had approached Pharaoh, but he had been rejected. The situation seemed hopeless to the suffering Israelites. Would they be rescued?

**“And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart,
and multiply My signs and My wonders
in the land of Egypt.”**

—Jehovah (Ex. 7:3)

Yes, they would—but not without an intense struggle between Moses and Pharaoh on the human level; between Jehovah and the pagan deities of Egypt on the supernatural level. In an initial encounter (7:8-13), Aaron threw his rod to the floor and it became a serpent. The magicians of Egypt duplicated the feat. Then Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods to show the reality and superiority of the God of Israel. Pharaoh would have saved himself and his people a lot of grief if he had let the Hebrews leave at this point, but he hardened his heart (7:13).

God directed Moses to go to Pharaoh again and ask permission to leave (7:14-18), warning him that if he refused, the Nile would be turned to blood. When the king would not grant Moses’ request, the sacred Nile was turned to blood as God had said (vv.20-21). This was the first of 10 plagues that would fall on Egypt. Each exposed the weakness of one of the Egyptian gods.

PLAGUE	EGYPTIAN GOD DEFEATED
1. Water to blood (7:14-25)	Nilus or Orisis
2. Frogs (8:1-15)	Hekt, reproduction goddess
3. Lice (8:16-19)	Seb, god of earth
4. Flies (8:20-32)	Khephera, sacred scarab
5. Cattle disease (9:1-7)	Apis and Hathor, sacred bull and cow
6. Boils (9:8-12)	Typhon, evil-eye god
7. Hail (9:13-35)	Shu, god of atmosphere
8. Locusts (10:1-20)	Serapis, protector
9. Darkness (10:21-29)	Ra, sun god
10. Firstborn die (12:29-30)	Ptah, god of life

Plague after plague fell on Egypt over a period of several months. The Egyptians cried out in anguish, but the hardened Pharaoh refused to budge. At the end of the ninth plague, a 3-day darkness, he cried out to Moses, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!" (10:28). Moses, knowing what would happen, assured Pharaoh that he would never see him again. Egypt had been defeated in the battle between their gods and Jehovah. But Pharaoh's heart did not change. The terrible tenth plague, the death of all the firstborn of Egypt, would cause him to weaken, but only briefly.

The Passover. Then came a final, chilling announcement from God: "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the firstborn of the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the maid-servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the beasts. Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again" (11:4-6).

A "destroyer" (12:23) would pass through Egypt at

midnight of the 14th of Nissan. All the firstborn in the land of Egypt would die. But God made provision for Israel to escape the tenth plague. He gave detailed instructions for each family (smaller families could go together) to slay a lamb and apply the blood to the doorposts and lintels of their houses. Then they were to roast and eat the lamb, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They were to consume all of the meat “in haste” (12:11), already dressed for travel.

Midnight came. The Israelites were ready. “The Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt” (12:29). A great cry of anguish went up in the land. Pharaoh sent word for Moses and Aaron to leave with all their people, and with all their flocks and herds.

After 430 years, the Israelites left Egypt. They scurried out of their homes, assembled under Moses’ leadership, and began their journey. A sad chapter of Israel’s history had drawn to a close, and a bright new one was opening before them. God had delivered His people from the destroyer and from the cruel oppression of Pharaoh.

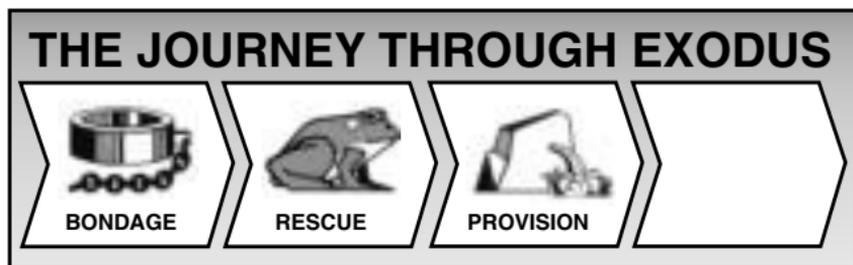
SEEING GOD

- God’s manner of breaking Pharaoh’s will shows that He sometimes chooses a path of deliverance that can make things worse before they get better.
- The defeat of the Egyptian gods through the plagues shows the power of the living God over the limited strength of Satan.
- In the Passover rescue, the Lord showed His plan to rescue through the blood of a substitute—a carefully designed object lesson that foreshadowed the eventual substitutionary death of God’s own Son.

SEEING OURSELVES

- Pharaoh’s resistance to God reminds us of the potential stubbornness of our own hearts.

- In Moses and Aaron we can see that it's possible to confront the forces of darkness by God's strength.
- The blood of the Passover lamb was the only way for Israel to escape the destroyer; likewise, our only way of salvation is through the blood of Jesus Christ.



3. PROVISION (12:37–18:27)

Remember Julianna, the refugee we mentioned at the beginning of the book? She waited 5 long years for her freedom before the day finally came. Once she received her passport and visa, she was ordered to leave her country immediately. So she left the bondage of oppressive atheism and headed for freedom.

Julianna's departure was not only an ending, but it was also a beginning. First were the rigors of travel. Then came the meeting of new people in a totally different land. Language barriers had to be crossed. Forms needed to be filled out. She had to have a job and a permanent place of her own to live. And transportation problems had to be resolved. No, it was not all over for her just because she had left the land of bondage. She needed help on the journey to freedom.

The same was true of Israel. God had displayed His power, and Pharaoh was ready for the Hebrews to leave his land. They had escaped the destroyer and were prepared to go. But as soon as they left their homes, they were in desperate need of the care and provision

of God. And He provided for them. So, as we journey with the Israelites in Exodus, let's watch for ways in which God made provision for His people.

God Guides His People. It had finally happened! The exodus had begun! Moses stood before his assembled nation and they began to walk. But which way? Ahead of them was the unknown. There were trade routes that led to Palestine (see map on next page), but which one should they choose? Was the most direct route the best? God does not leave His people to wonder where they are to go. We are told:

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night (13:21).

At any time of the day or night, the Lord could direct His people to move. When the pillar moved, they followed. They were miraculously guided by God.

The Lord directed His people along the southern route out of Egypt. They could have gone along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This route, called the Way of the Philistines, was the closest and most direct, but it was also a heavily traveled military road. God knew that if the Israelites saw hoards of armies, they would become fearful and go back to Egypt (13:17). They also could have followed a caravan route across the wilderness of Shur called the Way of Shur. But instead God sent them south.

The Israelites started their exodus from Egypt at the city of Rameses (Num. 33:3). From there they moved south to Succoth and then to Etham at the edge of the wilderness (Ex. 13:20). God then led them north to Baal Zephon to make Pharaoh think they were lost and confused (14:2-3).



God Protects His People. God doesn't get His people started on the journey of faith and then abandon them. The Hebrews hadn't been on the journey very long before Pharaoh began to count his losses (14:5), so he ordered his charioteers to bring them back. In a short time the speedy chariots caught up with the slow-moving Israelites. When the people saw Pharaoh's armies, they were terrified. With the Red Sea before them, they were trapped.

Without knowing how God was going to intervene and deliver the people, Moses said, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. . . . The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (14:13-14).

Then God told Moses to raise his staff over the waters of the Red Sea. When he did, an incredible thing happened—a strong east wind arose and divided the waters. Imagine the thoughts that went through the minds of all who witnessed this event!

All that night, the Israelites crossed over between the walls of water while God held the Egyptian forces at bay by engulfing them in darkness. When the Hebrews reached the other side, God allowed Pharaoh's forces to pursue them, and his chariots drove out between the walls of water. But as suddenly as the wind had arisen, it died down. The seas came crashing together, and the Egyptian army was drowned. When the Israelites saw this mighty display of God's power, they declared their trust in Him and in His chosen leader Moses (14:31).

God Provides For His People's Needs. After a pause to celebrate their deliverance, the people of Israel marched out into the desert and headed south. After a few days they became thirsty, and the water they found at Marah was so bitter that it was undrinkable (15:23). The people began to grumble, so the Lord showed Moses a tree and told him to throw it into the water. When he did this, the water became sweet and the people's need was met. A little later, at Rephidim, the people were again without water (17:1). Again they grumbled. This time the Lord told Moses to strike a rock with his staff. When he did, water gushed from the rock and the people drank their fill.

But how do you feed more than 2 million people in a desert? They had brought a large supply of food, but it was fully depleted within a month (16:1-3). The people began to get hungry, and they wished they were back in Egypt. Once again the Lord provided—this time with a supernatural supply of quail and bread

(16:11-15). The bread was an unusual white substance the people called “manna”—which in Hebrew meant “What is it?” (16:15,31).

Six days a week the manna would appear in the morning—“a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground” (16:14). It would then be gathered up by the people and consumed. Wherever they went during their long sojourn, it was there (16:35). God provided for the people’s need of food and water.

God Gives His People Victory. The Lord had shown Himself to be strong in His defeat of Pharaoh’s army. But now, in the desert, the Israelites faced a new enemy. While they were camped at Rephidim, they were attacked by the armies of the Amalekites.

What did this slave nation know about fighting? Where would they get battle-trained troops? Even so, Moses sent out Joshua with an army to confront the enemy while he climbed a high hill to watch. Whenever Moses held his hands up, Israel would win. But when he grew tired and lowered his hands, Amalek would prevail. So Aaron and Hur held Moses’ hands up for him, and by the time the sun went down, the Amalekites were defeated. The Lord had given His people victory (17:8-16).

Moses built an altar at Rephidim and named it “Jehovah Nissi,” which means, “God is my Banner.” God is also our Banner, the flag under which we fight our spiritual battles. And, just as He helped Israel on their journey, so He supplies our needs as we continue in the journey of faith.

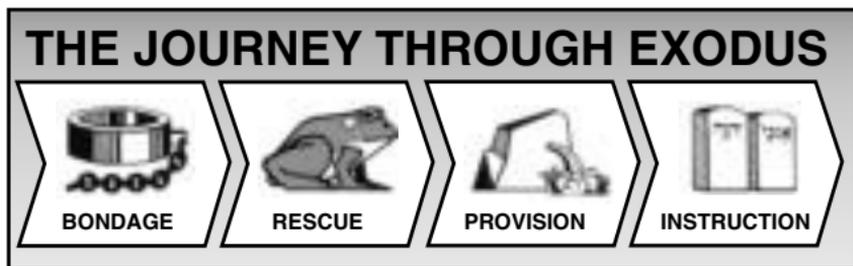
SEEING GOD

- In God’s parting of the Red Sea, we see His power to make a way of escape where no natural path of escape exists.

- Through the pillar of cloud and fire, we see God's willingness to lead those whom He has rescued.
- In His provision of manna and water, we see a God who can use His supernatural power to meet our daily needs.
- God often answers our prayers in ways we least expect it—like providing bread from heaven and water from a rock.

SEEING OURSELVES

- Israel's need for guidance in the wilderness reflects our own need for direction from the Lord.
- Israel's need for water and manna reflects mankind's need for Christ, the living water and bread of life.
- Israel's grumbling about not having food and water sounds like our own complaints against the goodness of God.
- When we raise the banner of God, He fights for us as He did for His people in the desert.



4. INSTRUCTION (19–40)

When the people of Israel camped at Mount Sinai, they had traveled about 200 miles from their homes in Egypt. This was a major accomplishment for a nation of more than 2 million people! But they were free. Pharaoh, after his armies had been destroyed in the Red Sea, had given up on them. This nation of slaves, who had known only oppression, was on its own in the

wilderness. They were dependent on the God who had delivered them and on Moses, His designated leader.

But freedom brought with it new responsibilities. How would they live? Who would govern them? What laws would they establish? How were they to worship the God who had set them free?

These questions were answered during a period of a little over 11 months that Israel was camped at Mount Sinai (cp. Ex. 19:1 with Num. 10:11). Through the prophet Moses, God gave the Law. He also gave detailed instructions for building a “tent of meeting” and its furnishings where the people were to worship Him. And sadly, while Israel was at Sinai, they experienced a terrible lapse into pagan idolatry.

The Law (19:1–24:8). Moses climbed to the top of Mount Sinai seven times to receive revelation from God (19:3,8,20; 20:21; 24:18; 32:31; 34:4). The laws Moses gave Israel, as well as the prescription for worship, did not originate in his imagination but in the mind of God Himself.

Israel had not been there very long before God called Moses to the top of the mountain. The Lord’s promise to the people, delivered by Moses, was this: “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me” (19:5). When Moses carried this preparatory message back to the Israelites, they responded with this pledge: “All that the Lord has spoken we will do” (v.8).

Then Moses ascended the mountain a second time. This time he returned to instruct the people to wash their clothes and prepare their hearts for God’s revelation (vv.10,11,14). The people complied, and after 3 days God spoke through thunder and lightning and dark clouds to give Israel the Ten Commandments

(20:1-17). These commandments are at the heart of God's moral law for all mankind.

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make any carved image.
3. You shall not take the name of God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. Do not commit murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bear false witness.
10. Do not covet.

The first four commandments tell man's duty to God; the last six his responsibilities to his fellowman. The Lord Jesus summarized these two divisions of the Law 1,500 years later when He said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:37,39).

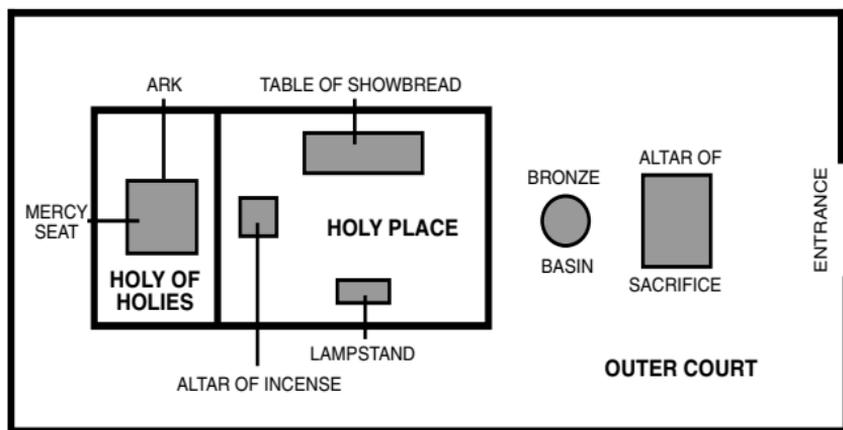
The Ten Commandments were supplemented with a series of specific regulations sometimes called "The Book of the Covenant" (24:7). Included were regulations concerning the altar (20:22-26), servants (21:1-11), violence (21:12-27), animal control (21:28-36), property (22:1-15), morality (22:16-31), justice (23:1-9), and the sabbaths (22:10-13). Three annual feasts were also commanded: the Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:15), the Feast of Harvest (23:16), and the Feast of Ingathering (23:16).

The revelation of God's Law to Israel was concluded with the promise: "Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way" (23:20). God would accompany and direct His people as they left Sinai and continued on their journey to the Land of Promise.

Having received the Law of God, Moses returned to the people of Israel. He told them all that God had revealed to him. And the people solemnly affirmed the covenant by saying, "All the words which the Lord has said we will do" (24:3,7).

The Tabernacle (24:9–40:38). Then came grace! After revealing a moral law that Israel would never fully keep, God then revealed a way in which a sinful people could approach Him in worship.

To receive this plan of grace, Moses once again ascended the mountain. This time he stayed 40 days and the Lord gave him detailed instructions for a carefully designed "house of symbols" called the tabernacle. One thing came through very clear. God was to be worshiped on His terms, not man's. Yet God's terms allowed for man's terrible moral and spiritual failure. The following diagram shows the floorplan and furniture of the tabernacle.



The tabernacle symbolized the rescue of grace that would be provided in Christ. The seven pieces of furniture represented timeless principles that are still as applicable today as they were in Moses' day.

PIECE OF FURNITURE	SYMBOLIC MEANING
Altar Of Sacrifice	Salvation through sacrifice
Basin	Spiritual cleansing
Table Of Showbread	Spiritual provision
Lampstand	Spiritual illumination
Altar Of Incense	Acceptable worship
Ark Of The Testimony	Access through relationship
Mercy Seat	God's merciful presence

God also gave very specific regulations for the priests and dictated exactly what they would wear (Ex. 28). God was to be approached only on His terms! The garments of the high priest were as follows:

- Linen trousers—worn to cover the priest's nakedness (28:42).
- A tunic—a long linen garment worn next to the body (28:39-40).
- A robe—a long, blue, seamless garment worn over the tunic. Its hem was embroidered with bells and pomegranates (28:31-35).
- An ephod—an apronlike garment woven of blue, purple, and scarlet. It was fastened together at the shoulders with two golden clasps, each containing an onyx stone engraved with the names of six of the tribes of Israel (28:5-14).
- A sash—a girdle that secured the ephod to the body (28:39-40).
- A breastplate—a square piece of cloth, doubled up to form a pocket, made of the same material as the ephod. It contained four rows of three precious stones, each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel (28:15-30).
- A turban—a priest's cap with a dark blue covering (28:37-40).

- A crown—a thin, gold plate fastened to the front of the turban and engraved with the words HOLINESS TO THE LORD (28:36-37; 29:6).

Apostasy (32–34). While Moses was on the mountain receiving the instructions for the tabernacle and the priests, things were not going well back at the camp. The people of Israel became impatient waiting for Moses to return. Afraid that something had happened to him and that he might not come back to lead them, the people rebelled. They went to Aaron and demanded, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us” (32:1).

Tragically, Aaron complied. He took the people’s gold earrings, melted them down, and made a golden calf for the people to worship. They began to dance before the idol in a lewd, drunken orgy (32:2-6).

While Moses was in the presence of Jehovah receiving the Law, the people were at the foot of the mountain breaking the first commandment! When God told Moses what the Israelites were doing, he went down the mountain. Approaching the camp, he saw the idol and the people dancing before it. Furious, he smashed the tables of stone he had received from God. Then he ground the idol into powder, mixed it into the drinking water, and forced the people to drink it. Moses called for allegiance, and all the men of the tribe of Levi stepped forward. He then had them kill the guilty Israelites, which numbered about 3,000.

The next day, Moses approached God on behalf of the people to intercede for them (32:30-31). The Lord told Moses that because of their obstinacy, His presence would not be with them on their journey to the Promised Land (33:2-3). When the Israelites heard this, they went into mourning and repented of their evil.

Responding to the people's repentance and to Moses' pleading, God relented and promised that His presence would go with them (33:14).

The final chapters of Exodus complete the regulations for the tabernacle and the priests. Over a period of about 6 months (cp. Ex. 19:1 with 40:17), the tabernacle was built as God directed. When it was completed, a great celebration was held. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, signifying the presence of Jehovah with His chosen people. He would be with them to lead, protect, help, and bless them as they walked according to the commandments He had given them. The Law had been given and the tabernacle had been constructed. Israel was now ready to resume its journey to the Promised Land.

SEEING GOD

- In God's giving of the Law to Israel, we see that He is concerned with the rightness of worship.
- In God's instructions for the Tabernacle, we see His willingness to provide a merciful plan of grace and salvation for those who could never live up to the perfect standards of the Law.
- In God's punishment of Israel for bowing before the golden calf, we see that there are serious consequences for worshiping anyone else but Him.

SEEING OURSELVES

- Just as the Israelites needed the Law to know how to please the Lord, we need God's Word to know and obey His will.
- In the sacrifices of the tabernacle, we see a picture of the forgiveness and cleansing we have in Christ.
- In the golden calf incident, we see our own tendency to want to dictate the terms of our acceptance by the Lord.

JESUS CHRIST IN EXODUS

The life and work of Jesus Christ are foreshadowed throughout the book of Exodus. For example:

1. Moses. In many ways, Moses prefigured Jesus Christ. Both Moses and Christ were endangered in infancy (Ex. 2:2-10; Mt. 2:14-15); both gave up power and wealth (2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 11:24-27); and both were prophets (Dt. 18:15; Lk. 24:19), priests (Ps. 99:6; Heb. 2:17), mediators (Ex. 32:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:5), lawgivers (Jn. 1:17; Mt. 5,6), judges (Ex. 18:13; Acts 17:31), and deliverers (Acts 7:35; Gal. 1:4).

2. The Passover. The New Testament teaches that Christ is our Passover Lamb (Jn. 1:29,36; 1 Cor. 5:7). As the lamb in Egypt died so that its blood could ward off the destroyer, so Christ died to rescue us from the guilt and penalty of our sin.

3. The Feasts. The feasts God instituted in Exodus 23 picture different aspects of Christ's ministry. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover) looked ahead to the death of Christ, the perfect, unblemished Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7-8). The Feast of Harvest (Pentecost) looked forward to the birth of the church, the body of Christ, with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). The Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) portrayed the millennial reign of Christ on the earth when the King will dwell among men in universal peace (Zech. 14:16; Rev. 20:1-6).

4. The Manna. Jesus compared Himself to the manna by saying that He was the true, living bread from heaven. He declared His superiority over manna by saying that anyone who eats of Him would never hunger and would live forever (Jn. 6:31-58).

5. The Tabernacle. The tent of meeting in the wilderness—in its materials, its furnishings, and its compartments—speaks of Christ and His ministry on our behalf (see also chart on p.26).

PART OF TABERNACLE	CHRIST'S FULFILLMENT
Door	"I am the door" (Jn. 10:9).
Altar Of Sacrifice	". . . and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45).
Basin	"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7).
Lampstand	"I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12).
Showbread	"I am the bread of life" (Jn. 6:48).
Altar Of Incense	"I pray for them" (Jn. 17:9).
Veil	". . . having boldness to enter the Holiest . . . through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20; cf. 1 Cor. 11:24).
Mercy Seat	"He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 2:2).

6. The High Priest. The high priest of Israel was a foreshadowing of Christ, our Great High Priest.

HIGH PRIEST	CHRIST OUR PRIEST
Entered earthly tabernacle.	Entered the heavenly temple (Heb. 9:24).
Entered once a year.	Entered once for all (Heb. 9:12).
Went behind the veil.	Removed the veil (Heb. 10:20; cf. Mt: 27:51).
Offered many sacrifices.	Offered only one sacrifice (Heb. 10:11-12).
Offered sacrifice for his own sins.	Offered only for our sins (Heb. 7:27).
Offered blood of bulls and goats.	Offered His own blood (Heb. 9:12).

THE GOD OF EXODUS

What have we learned about God in Exodus? How have we come to know Him better by reading and studying this book? We have seen that:

- **God controls history.** He caused the oppressed Israelites to multiply, and He prepared Moses to lead His people.
- **God remembers.** He remembered His covenant with Abraham. He would also remember the covenant He made with Moses.
- **God knows our bonds.** As He heard Israel's cries in Egypt, so He knows about the inescapable circumstances of our lives.
- **God is holy.** The very place He revealed Himself to Moses was holy ground. The veil in the tabernacle also shows His holiness.
- **God delivers.** In Exodus we see the big picture—the God who set His people free. But we also see Him delivering Israel from thirst, hunger, enemies, and death.
- **God is gracious.** The angel of death passed over the houses protected by the blood of a lamb—sparing the lives of Israel's firstborn.
- **God acts in judgment.** He hardened the heart of the rebellious Pharaoh, bringing plagues on his people for his stubbornness. He punished Israel for her lapse into idolatry at Sinai.

Yes, it is a complex and fascinating picture of God that we see in Exodus. He is a God to love, a God to believe, a God to follow, and a God to fear. But most of all, Exodus is a portrait of a God we can trust for our deliverance—a God who sets us free.

BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

Exodus is the accurate historical account of events that took place 3,500 years ago. Yet the basics of the book are relevant to today's world. Why? Because people haven't changed—and neither has God.

The bondage of Israel is a picture of the enslavement many people find themselves in today. Israel was oppressed by captors; mankind is chained by sin and its consequences. Israel needed a deliverer; so do we!

Jesus Christ is our Deliverer. Just as the passover lamb died so that when its blood was applied to the doorposts the Israelites could escape the destroyer, so Christ died so that all who believe in Him would experience forgiveness of sins and escape the wrath of God. The same God who must punish sin because He is holy has also provided a way of salvation—Jesus Christ.

God has done His part; now it's up to us to do ours. We must receive by faith what He offers us in Christ—rescue from the bondage of sin. We must take the visa and the passport and leave behind the old way of life. We must embark on the journey to freedom that begins with salvation and culminates in heaven.

If you are seeking deliverance from sin, you must trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Receive Him as your Passover Lamb—the One who died for you.

If you are a Christian in bondage to some sin or attitude or habit, come to God for rescue. Call on Him for the deliverance you need (1 Jn. 1:9). He is the God who sets people free (Rom. 6:17-18).

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