

Old Testament Basics

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Exodus Chapters 1-20

The Beginning and Preparation

Chapters 1-3

- The book of Exodus was written by Moses from approximately 1450-1410 B.C.^{1a}
- Many Bible scholars date the exodus from 1446-1440 B.C. during the reign of Amenhotep II (1450-1425).^{1b}
- Exodus is an account of the *exodus* by the children of Israel from Egypt to the “Promised Land” (Canaan).^{1c}
- Genesis ended with the death of Joseph and the order for his bones to be carried from Egypt to Canaan.
- This promise was fulfilled when Moses led the Children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land.
- Exodus 1:7 states the sons of Israel were fruitful and had greatly **increased**.
- Because of Israel’s prosperity, the king of Egypt grew fearful they would overtake the empire.
- As a result, the Israelites were sentenced to hard labor.
- A period of 400 years had elapsed since the death of Joseph, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 15:13-14.
- Pharaoh commanded the midwives to kill all the male babies.
- The midwives feared God and refused to kill the babies. As a result, God prospered the midwives.
- Moses was born from the tribe of Levi (this tribe would eventually become the priestly tribe of Israel).
- Moses’ life was spared and he was raised in Pharaoh’s house for 40 years.
- After killing an Egyptian, Moses fled to the land of Midian.
- Moses married the daughter of the priest of Midian whose name was Jethro.
- Jethro apparently knew the God of Israel.
- Moses took Jethro’s flock to the west side of the wilderness to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- God met Moses in Horeb by way of a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-2).
- Little did Moses know this would be the place God would eventually give him the 10 Commandments.
- God was using this wilderness experience to familiarize Moses with the topography and layout of the land.
- This familiarization experience became crucial for Moses when he led the Children of Israel into the wilderness.

Chapters 4-11

Moses Returns to Egypt

- God told Moses in chapter 4 to return to the land of Egypt for those wanting to kill him were dead.
- Exodus 4:21 states God told Moses to perform wonders before Pharaoh to convince him to release the Israelites.
- God states in vs. 21 He would harden Pharaoh's heart so he would not let the people go.
- God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to show his power to the Egyptians and to the Israelites.
- A similar reference of God hardening hearts is found in John 12:40.
- God often allows His plan to be blocked in order to demonstrate His powerful works.
- In Exodus 6:2-4, God reaffirmed His covenant toward Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 13:15; 17:8).
- Genesis 6:3-Jehovah (redeemer) had not been revealed until now.²
- Moses was 80 years old when God spoke to Him in Horeb (40 years in Egypt and 40 years in the land of Midian).
- It would be yet another 40 years the Children of Israel would wander in the Wilderness.
- Exodus chapter's 7-10 states God sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians because of Pharaoh's hardness of heart and for not letting the Children of Israel leave Egypt.

Chapters 12-20

Preparation for the Exodus

- An interesting timetable is established in chapter 12.
- The Israelites left Egypt in the month of Nisan. Because of this, Nisan became the first month of the Jewish year.³
- God commanded the Israelites to take a lamb for sacrifice on the 10th day of Nissan.
- This would be the exact day Jesus would cleanse the Temple prior to His death.
- The lamb was to be killed at twilight on the 14th day which would represent "Passover."
- Passover symbolized when God passed over the house of those who had the lamb's blood on the doorposts.
- The 14th day of Nissan was the very day Christ died on the cross.
- The Israelites were to take the blood of the lamb and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses.
- This would form a cross within the doorway.
- If God saw the blood on the doorposts and the lintel, the firstborn would be spared.
- However, those who did not have the blood on the doorposts and lintel would lose their firstborn in death.
- This was symbolic of Christ.
- Christ shed his blood on the cross on the 14th day of Nissan.⁴
- Those who accept Christ's blood as atonement for sin will receive everlasting life.
- The *Feast of Unleavened Bread* would be held on the 15th day of Nissan.^{5a}
- This day would also represent when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt.^{5b}

- The 15th would have been Saturday, the day after Christ's crucifixion.^{5c}
- The Israelites were to go seven days eating unleavened bread.^{5d}
- Leavened bread symbolized corruption and evil.^{5e}
- The 16th represented "First Fruits." This was Sunday when Christ arose.
- Exodus 12:24 states this celebration was to always be observed.
- Exodus 12:31 fulfilled the prophecy of Genesis 15: 13-14.
- Exodus 12:46 gives an interesting parallel to that of Christ.^{6a}
- No bone of the sacrificial lamb was to be broken. This fulfilled John 19:34-36.
- Exodus 13:19 fulfilled Joseph's wish to be taken from the land of Egypt (Genesis 20:25).^{6b}
- God went before the people in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.
- Chapter 14 gives an insight to the fears the Israelites had when they saw the Egyptian soldiers pursuing them.
- Chapter 14:13-15 gives an interesting insight to God's character. God may tell us to keep silent and to let Him do the work in our lives?
- Exodus 14:19 gives us a graphic example of how Christ intercedes on our behalf. As God protected Israel from the Egyptians so will He protect us from the deceits of Satan.
- Exodus 15:26 demonstrates God's protection toward a faithful follower. Though the world may kill the body, Christ delivers the soul.

Summary

- The wanderings of the Children of Israel were not a continuous movement but a journey in stages.
- God would lead them to a place in the desert and then Israel would stop and camp.
- Blessings came and so did trials.
- God tested the Israelites over and over as He tested Abraham.
- Abraham finally demonstrated his trust in God by his willingness to offering Isaac as a sacrifice.
- Are there times when you seem to be camping and not going anywhere? Do you ever wonder if God has forgotten you? He hasn't.
- Sometimes God wants us to learn to obey and to trust Him right where we are. We may not always see His hand of miracles or deliverance, but He is with us.