

# Exodus

## Title and Purpose

The title of the second book of the Old Testament comes from the Greek name which was given to it by the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The word *Exodus* means *going out*. The original name given to the book in the Hebrew is translated: *And these are the names*. The reader may recognize these words as the first words of the book of Exodus, which was a common practice in titling books at that time. These names are the fathers of those who would later be known as the twelve tribes of Israel. The Hebrew name fits this book in the sense that it continues the history of Israel which the holy writer began in Genesis which ended with the death of Joseph in Egypt. Exodus continues the story some four-hundred years later, when, *“there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” (1:8)*.

The Greek word, *Exodus*, is perhaps a more fitting title since it relates to the purpose of the book, which is to show how God delivered His people from Egypt. That deliverance also marks the beginning of Israel as a separate nation since they had never really been ruled or led by someone from among their own people. It is at this time in their history, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, that they are formed as a nation and ruled by a theocracy – rule by God – through the giving of the Sinaitic Covenant which contained Civil, Moral and Ceremonial Laws which the people were commanded to obey.

## Christ In Exodus

The book of Exodus is full of *types* of Christ. In its strict sense a *type* is a picture given in the Old Testament that is interpreted as such in the New Testament.

- Perhaps the easiest to recognize as a type is the celebration of the **Passover** (Jn 1:29,36; 1 Cor 5:7);
- **Manna** from heaven is another type of Christ, who is the Bread of Life (Jn 6:48-51);
- The **Smitten Rock** (1 Cor 10:4 Jn 4:13f);

- **Moses** (Ex 32:31-35; Deut 18:15,18; Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1f);
- The **Tabernacle** (Heb 8:5);
- And the **High Priest** (Heb 5).

Without confusing the Law and the Gospel, the LORD revealed to Israel His will that they be holy. Through the Moral Law He showed that they could not be holy of themselves, while at the same time, through the sacrifices and worship ordinances of the Ceremonial Law He showed them how they would be holy, namely, through the blood offering of their Savior.

## The Holy Writer

As with Genesis, there is little question as to the identity of the holy writer. Internally portions of Exodus are directly attributed to Moses (17:8-14; 20:1-17; 24:4,7,12; 31:18; 34:1-27). Externally, the prophet Malachi (Malachi 4:4), the disciples (John 1:45), and the Apostle Paul (Romans 10:5) attribute this writing to Moses. Christ Himself also testifies to this (Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 20:37; John 5:46f). Mosaic authorship of Exodus would place the recording of the book in the 1400's BC. It seems that Moses kept a running journal of these things by God's direction and inspiration (cf. 17:14).

## The Old Covenant

Obedience to God's Law was demanded by God as part of the Old Covenant. This was a two sided Covenant which God made with His people Israel at Mt. Sinai. As part of this covenant God demanded complete obedience from His people, and in return promised to take Israel as His special possession. One purpose of the Old Covenant was to build a wall around the people of Israel since their laws and religion were peculiar and not like those of the people around them. This was to preserve the people until the time of the Savior. It does not reveal the Savior, which could only be known through knowledge of the Abrahamic Covenant. In contrast to the Old Covenant spoken of in Exodus 19:5-8, there is the New Covenant which is spoken of in Hebrews 8:7-13. The New Covenant was similar to the Abrahamic Covenant in that it was a one sided covenant of which we are the passive recipients of God's actions in His Son Jesus.

The Old Covenant also presents a warning to those who despise the Gospel. Each step in Israel's history plays a role in the coming of the Savior – from God's promise to Abram that all the nations would be blessed through his seed (that being Jesus), to the 400 years of slavery in Egypt, to the very possession of the promised land of Canaan. All of this was part of God's plan, and when the people rebelled against God, wanting to go back to Egypt and not obtain that promised land, they were rejecting the destiny God prepared for them, and all people. They were condemned because of their unbelief, and because they were in fact saying that they didn't want to be part of God's plan of salvation. Whether they liked it or not, the Savior would be from their descendants. They were to keep themselves pure and stay away from the heathen so they would not be tempted to follow the heathen's false gods and turn to unbelief.

## The Mosaic Law

The giving of the Law is the focus of the book, with the preceding chapters preparing the reader for this event. As we study the Law recorded in Exodus we must bear in mind that this Law was given specifically to the nation of Israel and is not binding upon us. All of these laws were done away with by Christ, as Paul writes, "***the Law was our tutor until Christ***" (Galatians 3:24). He has delivered us from the Law of Moses and it no longer applies to us. We need to focus on the intent of the commandment instead of the specific words which are used. Though God demands that His Law be kept absolutely, we note that the giving of the Law is prefaced by a Gospel statement in 20:2, "***I AM the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.***" The Law was not given to instruct man how to get to heaven, as Israel misinterpreted it (Mark 10:17). Salvation has *always* been by the Gospel (Galatians 3:16-18). So the LORD used the Gospel to motivate Israel to keep His Law.

The Mosaic Law is one unit, but can be broken down into three different parts:

**1. The Moral Law** (20:1-17) is made up of what we know as the *Ten Commandments*. God Himself gives them this name in

34:28 (cf. Deuteronomy 4:13, 27). While the Moral Law was directed only at Israel, we find in the Ten Commandments a perfect summary of God's will, as Jesus says, "***You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.***" *This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*" (Matthew 22:37-40). Paul tells us that all men, without exception, are bound by this law: "***For when Gentiles, who do not have the [written] law, by nature do the things contained in the law, these, although not having the [written] law, are a law to themselves, who so the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them***" (Romans 2:14-15).

**2. The Ceremonial Law** governed Israel's worship activities, including the Sabbath, the sacrifices, the garments of the priests, and much more. The Ceremonial Law no longer has any bearing upon the worship of God's people since the coming of Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:16f; Hebrews 9; 10:1-22).

**3. The Civil Law** dealt with the day-to-day governing activities of Israel as a nation, prescribing court procedures and punishments for various civil offenses. These laws also have no governing authority over us, as they were given specifically to the physical nation of Israel to govern its political affairs. The authority of the Civil Law ceased with the destruction of Israel by the Romans in AD 70.

## Outline:

### I. The LORD gives Israel a Leader! (Chapters 1-18)

- A. The LORD's preparation of Moses. (Chapters 1-4)
- B. The LORD's plagues upon Egypt. (Chapters 5-12)
- C. The LORD's preservation of Israel.. (Chapters 13-18)

### II. The LORD gives Israel the Law! (Chapters 19-40)

- A. The LORD's revelation to Israel. (Chapters 19-31)
- B. Israel's response to the LORD. (Chapters 32-40)