

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF

Exodus

What is it? Second book of the Bible and of Moses (Pentateuch), it follows Genesis (Jacob's children left in Egypt) and flows into Leviticus (law through Moses continues; 20:22ff).

What's in it? Where? When? The first half is primarily historical; the second half is mostly legal. The Hebrews become slaves in Egypt (1600 B.C.?) and are delivered; they journey to Mt. Sinai and receive God's covenant (1400 B.C.?).

Who's in it?

- Moses - Exodus' prime personality (born in 2:2), Egypt's prince, Israel's deliverer and law-giver; a preview of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
- Pharaoh - Egypt's king, Israel's slave master (1:8ff), Moses' adversary (5:1ff) who drowns in the Red Sea; a picture of Satan, the god of this world.
- Amram, Jochabed - Moses' father and mother (6:20)
- Miriam, Aaron - Moses' sister and brother-spokesman (4:14, 27-30; 15:20)
- Jethro, Zipporah, Gershom, Eliezer - Moses' father-in-law, wife, and sons (2:21; 3:1; 4:18; 18:1ff, 2-4; 4:25, 26)
- Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar - Aaron's sons, the priests (28:1ff; 29:9)
- Bezaleel, Aholiab - gifted craftsmen who built the tabernacle and its furniture (31:2, 6; 36:1; 37:1)

Stories worth retelling:

- baby Moses (ch. 2)
- burning bush (ch. 3)
- Moses' excuses (3:11—4:17)
- "Let my people go" (5:1ff)
- plagues on Egypt (chs. 7—11)
- death of the firstborn (ch. 12)
- crossing the Red Sea (ch. 14)
- manna from heaven (ch. 16)
- mountain on fire (ch. 19)
- golden calf (ch. 32)

Its numbers:

- 2** - months of Israel's march from Egypt to Sinai (19:1)
- 6** - day of week double manna was gathered (ch. 16)

7 - day of week no work is to be done (16:23-30; 20:8-11; 23:12; 35:2)

10 - plagues on Egypt (chs. 7—12); commandments spoken at Sinai (20:3-17)

14 - day of first month Passover lamb was killed (12:6)

40 - years of Moses' three life phases: his youth in Egypt, his mid-life in the desert, his leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan

70 - Israelites who went into Egypt (1:1-5); palm trees at oasis Elim (15:27)

430 - years Israel sojourned in Canaan and Egypt (12:40)

603,550 - Israelites who came out of Egypt (12:37; 38:26)

Question: What are the central events of the Old Testament, and why?

Answer: Israel's deliverance from Egypt, crossing of the Red Sea, and instruction at Mt. Sinai (chs. 12—20). In these mighty and gracious acts, God took unto Himself a nation, rescued them from their greatest enemy, started them toward the Promised Land, and revealed to them the essence of His will. Note the order here: First God freed the people from slavery as an act of grace (20:2), then He proclaimed the law (20:3ff).

This is a preview of what God would do in the Christian gospel: call out a people for His very own, redeem them from their sins in Christ, promise them eternal life, and write His holy will upon their hearts. Only those forgiven in Christ and freed by the Spirit can offer authentic obedience to God (Rom. 8:1-7).

Question: Who "broke" all Ten Commandments at once?

Answer: Moses, when he threw down the tables of stone in anger (32:19).

Names of God:

- I AM (3:14, 15) - the self-existent One; emphasizes the ineffable, indescribable nature of God. Far from being fully defined, He is what He is and will be whatever it takes to complete His eternal will for His creatures.
- LORD, or YHWH (6:2, 3) - First seen in Genesis, this tetragrammaton (four Hebrew letters) became significant and sacred as God's personal name when He entered into covenant with Israel.
- God Almighty, or El Shaddai (6:3; see also Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11)
- LORD thy God (20:2) - Yahweh thy Elohim
- Jealous (34:14) - Using an attribute for a name, God might be named merciful, gracious, longsuffering, etc. (34:5-7).

Views of God: Mortal men were permitted glimpses of the glory that envelops the Almighty. Moses and 70 elders “saw God” on the mountain (24:9-11). Moses, to whom God appeared in the bush (3:2ff), looked at God’s glorious back (33:18-23). Even so, the directive that no man should see God’s face and live (33:20, 23) was not changed (see John 1:18).

Mosaic (Sinaitic) covenant: After the people vowed to do all the Lord’s commands, the book of the covenant was given and sealed by the sprinkling of blood (19:7; 20:22—23:33; 24:1-8). Soon broken by idol worship, the covenant was then renewed (32:1ff; 34). Anticipating man’s failure to keep the covenant stipulations, God instituted the sacrificial system to teach blood sacrifice for the remission of sins (20:24; 25—30). This gracious truth found its ultimate expression in the new covenant: the death of Jesus Christ (John 1:29).

Both Moses and Jesus:

- called of God for a great purpose
- rescued from infant death
- called out of Egypt
- fought a king who enslaved God’s people
- applied redemptive blood when people believed
- delivered people from slavery
- led-baptized people through-in water

Exodus in a sentence: When the children of Israel became slaves in Egypt, God called Moses to lead them out, sent plagues until Pharaoh released them, guided them through the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai, and there established His covenant with them — the Decalogue, a book of the law, and the Levitical tabernacle.

Temporary and Timeless

Biblical law, in its proper sense, begins in chapter 20. At Mt. Sinai, God enters into covenant with the Hebrew children. This covenant contains many statutes uniquely designed for that nation (Israel), for that region (Middle East), and for that time (from Moses to Christ). Some agricultural, some religious, some case law, these ordinances may not apply directly to other dispensations of God’s will.

In addition to these Mosaic rules, the Sinaitic Covenant also contains laws applying to all people in all places at all times — truly “moral” laws. Indeed, God highlights His timeless standards, the Ten Commandments, among the many temporary statutes given to Israel at the mountain. These ten words (or Decalogue) are upheld as standards of conduct throughout Scripture, and may be distinguished from other laws given at Sinai:

Moral Law

- spoken directly and audibly by God to the people (20:1-20)
- afterward, God added no more (Deut. 4:13; 5:4, 22)
- written by God’s finger on tables of stone (24:12; 31:18; 32:16; 34:28)
- placed **in** the ark of the covenant (25:16; 34:28, 29; 40:20)

Mosaic Law

- given to the people through a mediator, Moses (20:21, 22; 21:1ff)
- statutes and judgments added by Moses (Deut. 4:14; 5:31; 6:1ff)
- written by Moses in a book (24:4, 7; Deut. 31:9)
- placed **beside** the ark (Deut. 31:26)

- revealed God’s word from a mountain
- led people through a difficult wilderness
- were the meekest of men, but great leaders
- knew God face-to-face
- gave the people water and bread
- promised followers a wonderful home
- are worthy of honor (Jesus is worthy of more honor than Moses in the same way a builder receives more honor than his house, Heb. 3:1-6)

Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, which held the ark of the covenant with mercy seat and cherubim. This elaborate system of priests, sacrifices, and ritual sounds strange today, but it was God’s way of teaching the Israelites HOLINESS TO THE LORD (28:36; 39:30). With the coming of Jesus Christ to the world, each article and action in the tabernacle found its perfect fulfillment and ceased to be used and practiced by God’s new covenant people (Heb. 7—10).

Levitical tabernacle (chs. 25—30; 35—40): This ancient sanctuary, designed for the worship of Yahweh, was composed of a large courtyard with a tent in the middle. Outside the tent door was an altar for burnt offerings and a laver for washing. The tent had two rooms. The first, the Holy Place, housed a table for shewbread, a candlestick for light, and an altar of incense. A veil separated the

Birth, covenant: Exodus is the story of the birth of Israel as a nation and the making of her covenant with God. At its root, covenant is an agreement in which God takes a people for Himself and the people agree that Yahweh will be their God (6:7). A central text (19:3-8) reviews what God has done for Israel and previews the nation’s pledge to Him.