Started From the Bottom, Now We're Here!

A Study of the Book of Exodus

Overview

Name: The second book of the PENTATEUCH was known to the Jews by the designation *w^{e}›ēlleh š^{e}môṯ* ("and these are the names")[1]

Author: Moses

Purpose: To record the events of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and development as a nation.

Date written: 1450-1410 B.C.

Setting: Egypt. God's people, once highly favored in the land, are now slaves. God is about to set them free.

Key People: Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, Pharaoh's daughter, Jethro, Aaron, Joshua, Bezalel

Key Places: Egypt, Goshen, Nile River, Midian, Red Sea, Sinai peninsula, Mount Sinai

The following is extracted from the Life Application Study Bible NLT. Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

GET UP . . . leave . . . take off—these words sound good to those trapped or enslaved. Some resist their marching orders, however, preferring present surroundings to a new, unknown environment. It's not easy to trade the comfortable security of the known for an uncertain future. But what if God gives the order to move? Will we follow his lead? Exodus describes a series of God's calls and the responses of his people.

Four hundred years had passed since Joseph moved his family to Egypt. These descendants of Abraham had now grown to over two million strong. To Egypt's new pharaoh, the Hebrews were foreigners, and their numbers were frightening. Pharaoh decided to make them slaves so they wouldn't upset his balance of power. As it turned out, that was his biggest mistake, for God then came to the rescue of his people.

Through a series of strange events, a Hebrew boy named Moses became a prince in Pharaoh's palace and then an outcast in a wilderness land. God visited Moses in the

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[1] Bromiley, G. W. (1988; 2002). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*. Wm. B. Eerdmans.

mysterious flames of a burning bush, and, after some discussion, Moses agreed to return to Egypt to lead God's people out of slavery. Pharaoh was confronted, and through a cycle of plagues and promises made and broken, Israel was torn from his grasp.

Mobilizing this mass of humanity was no easy task, but they marched out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness behind Moses and the pillars of cloud and fire. Despite continual evidence of God's love and power, the people complained and began to yearn for their days in Egypt. God provided for their physical and spiritual needs with food and a place to worship, but he also judged their disobedience and unbelief. Then in the dramatic Sinai meeting with Moses, God gave his laws for right living.

God led Moses and the nation of Israel, and he wants to lead us as well. Is he preparing you, like Moses, for a specific task? He will be with you; obey and follow. Is he delivering you from an enemy or a temptation? Trust him, and do what he says. Have you heard his clear moral directions? Read, study, and obey his Word. Is he calling you to true worship? Discover God's presence in your life, in your home, and in the body of assembled believers. Exodus is the exciting story of God's guidance. Read with the determination to follow God wherever he leads. Tyndale House Publishers (2004-10-01). Life Application Study Bible NLT. Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Interesting to note…
The book is extremely valuable in preserving the link between the historical material of the Genesis narratives and the later history of the people of Israel. The sequence of events is of prime importance to the Hebrew concept of history, and Exodus is of fundamental significance for the manner in which it depicts the historical basis for the existence of Israel as the chosen people of God.[2]

MEGATHEMES

(Taken from Tyndale House Publishers (2004-10-01). Life Application Study Bible NLT. Kindle Edition.)

Slavery

EXPLANATION: During the Israelites' 400-year stay in the land of Egypt, they became enslaved to the Egyptians. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, oppressed them cruelly. They prayed to God for deliverance from this situation.
IMPORTANCE: Like the Israelites, we need both human and divine leadership to escape from the slavery of sin. After their escape, the memory of slavery helped the Israelites learn to treat others generously. We need to stand against those who oppress others.

Rescue/Redemption

EXPLANATION: God rescued Israel through the leader Moses and through mighty miracles. The Passover celebration was an annual reminder of their escape from slavery.
IMPORTANCE: God delivers us from the slavery of sin. Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover with his disciples at the Last Supper and then went on to rescue us from sin by dying in our

[2] Bromiley, G. W. (1988; 2002). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*. Wm. B. Eerdmans.

place.

Guidance

EXPLANATION: God guided Israel out of Egypt by using the plagues, Moses' heroic courage, the miracle of the Red Sea, and the Ten Commandments. God is a trustworthy guide.
IMPORTANCE: Although God is all-powerful and can do miracles, he normally leads us by wise leadership and team effort. His Word gives us the wisdom to make daily decisions and govern our lives.

Ten Commandments

EXPLANATION: God's law system had three parts. The Ten Commandments were the first part, containing the absolutes of spiritual and moral life. The civil law was the second part, giving the people rules to manage their lives. The ceremonial law was the third part, showing them patterns for building the Tabernacle and for regular worship.
IMPORTANCE: God was teaching Israel the importance of choice and responsibility. When they obeyed the conditions of the law, he blessed them; if they forgot or disobeyed, he punished them or allowed calamities to come. Many great countries of the world base their laws on the moral system set up in the book of Exodus. God's moral law is valid today.

The Nation

EXPLANATION: God founded the nation of Israel to be the source of truth and salvation to all the world. His relationship to his people was loving yet firm. The Israelites had no army, schools, governors, mayors, or police when they left Egypt. God had to instruct them in their constitutional laws and daily practices. He showed them how to worship and how to have national holidays.
IMPORTANCE: Israel's newly formed nation had all the behavioral characteristics of Christians today. We are often disorganized, sometimes rebellious, and sometimes victorious. God's Person and Word are still our only guides. If our churches reflect his leadership, they will be effective in serving him.

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What do I hope we get out of this study of Exodus? I pray the people of God will be empowered to joyfully journey to God's ordained destiny for their lives. May none of us settle for less than what God has ordained for us. This study should provoke the participants individually and collectively to ponder,

- Where has God ordained me/us to be?
- Where am I/are we going?
- How will I/we get there?

Homework for next week: Read chapter one of Exodus. Be ready to describe where you are in life. Is there anyone making life hard for you? Do you feel as though you're being held in any type of bondage? If so, what type? Let's talk about it and what it takes to break away from where you are and move forward toward destiny!