

# The Book of Exodus

## Scripture View

### OVERVIEW:

Exodus means departure. However, the actual story of Moses' exodus from Egypt is covered in only six of the forty chapters of this book. Instead, this famous book is more about the covenant that God made with his people - a holy nation.

The Book of Exodus can be divided into four main parts:

*The Period of the Israelites in Egypt (1-12:36)*

*The Departure from Egypt and Journey to Sinai (12:37-18)*

*The Sinai Covenant (19-24)*

*The Dwelling & Furnishings (25-40)*

### A Closer Look at The Israelites in Egypt (Chapters 1-12:36):

Chapter 1 picks up where the Book of Genesis left off with the 12 sons of Israel (Jacob) in Egypt. Long after Joseph and his brothers had died, the Israelites grew large in number. The book of Exodus begins with a new King of Egypt who is concerned that the Israelites will soon outnumber the Egyptians and rise up against Pharaoh. He has the Israelites enslaved and the first-born boys killed by drowning.

Chapter 2 introduces us to Moses who was hidden from the Egyptians and, after three months, was sent down the Nile in an "ark." He is retrieved by Pharaoh's daughter who adopts the Hebrew boy and raises him. She calls him Moses (or Mashah, meaning "draw out [of the water]"). After forty years (According to the Acts of the Apostles 7:23), Moses kills an Egyptian in defense of a Hebrew slave and kinsmen. Moses is forced to flee Egypt and stay in the land of Midian. It is there where Moses marries Zipporah and has a son, Gershom.

In Chapters 3 & 4, Moses comes upon (an angel/God) in a burning bush at Mount Horeb (South of the Sinai Peninsula). After the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob introduces himself, He calls on Moses to confront Pharaoh and lead his people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. After Moses' many objections - (Who am I to confront Pharaoh? Who among the Israelites will believe me?, etc.)

God assures Moses that he is the right man for the job and gives him a staff and certain powers to perform signs that the Lord is with him. In addition, God sends Aaron along with Moses as his spokesman and they set off for Egypt with Moses' family.

Chapters 5 & 6 give us the first meeting with Pharaoh (a successor of the previous king from whom Moses had fled [2:11-22]). Pharaoh has no time for Moses and Aaron and shows his anger by punishing the Hebrew slaves. The Israelite formen, in turn, share their anger with Moses for making Pharaoh mad. After Moses complains to God, the Lord assures him that the Lord will set his people free.

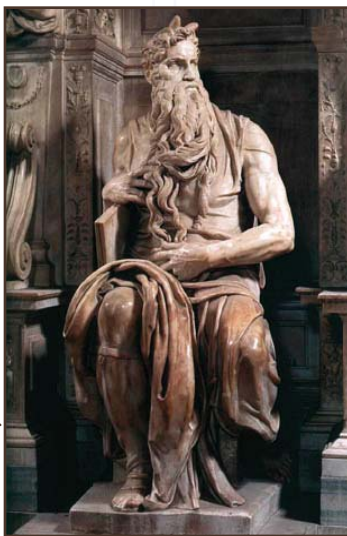
Chapters 7-11 show the mighty signs of God as Moses confronts Pharaoh again. Pharaoh's heart is hardened even after nine plagues are cast upon Egypt: bloody water and frogs (Chpt 7), gnats and flies (Chpt 8), pestilence and boils, and hail (Chpt 9), locusts and darkness (Chpt 10). In Chapter 11, Pharaoh is warned of the most severe plague, the death of the first-born.

In Chapter 12, despite these plagues and warnings, Pharaoh's heart is still stubborn. So, God prescribes the famous Passover Ritual for the Israelites and - being true to his word - the Lord slays every first-born in Egypt, causing Pharaoh to send Moses and the Israelites away along with spoils (of war).

### A Closer Look at the Departure from Egypt and Journey to Sinai (12:37-18):

Chapters 12-14 tell of the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army. The faith of Moses and the Israelites is tested again. Unlike their past fears that they would be severely punished as slaves, now they fear that they will die at the hands of Pharaoh's army who has them trapped at the shores of the sea. But, God calms their fears as he leads them miraculously through the waters.

Chapter 15 shows the fcleness of the Israelites who sing a song of praise to God for saving them from destruction and then, in versus 22-27, they grumble against God for leading them into a desert without water.



Though God gives them fresh water, they continue their complaints in Chapters 16 through 17:7. Their cry for food and more water clearly tests God's patience, but he provides for them quail, manna, and water from a rock.

In Chapter 17:8-16, we read about the Israelites first war as a people. Wandering in the desert, and with no place to call their own, they are an easy target for attack. Moses, with the help of Aaron and Hur, offers a prayer throughout the battle between the Israelites and the Amalekites. Joshua, who would later succeed Moses as leader, leads the battle and mows down Amalek.

Chapter 18 gives us the meeting between Moses and his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro is a wise man who offers sound advice to Moses regarding the distribution of duties. Moses heeds Jethro's advice and appoints minor judges to help organize the people of Israel. This acts as a bridge to the next section where God establishes a covenant with an organized Israelite society.

#### **A Closer Look at the Sinai Covenant (19-24):**

This section of Exodus gives us the arrival of the Israelites at Sinai. After three months from the time of their departure from Egypt, they pitch camp near the foot of Mount Sinai in the desert.

Chapter 19 tells of the Lord's desire to make the Israelites a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and a people set apart. Here, at Sinai, Moses commands the people not to approach the mountain but to view God's presence from a distance. God presents himself in the form of a fiery cloud which surrounds Mount Sinai.

In Chapter 20, God offers the famous Ten commandments and continues with further precepts in Chapters 21-23 (regarding slaves, personal injury, property damage trusts and loans, social and religious laws).

The covenant is ratified in Chapter 24 with Moses and Aaron and seventy of the elders of Israel. After offering holocausts and peace offerings to God, Moses reads the commandments to the people. He then sprinkles the blood from the sacrifice on the people to seal the covenant between God and Israel. Communion between God and Moses and the elders is shared. This is the final act of the covenant.

In Chapter 24:12-18, Moses passes into the cloud of the mountain to receive the stone tablets. He remains there for forty days and nights.

#### **A Closer Look at the Dwelling & Furnishings (25-40)**

**The Ark** (Chapter 25:10-22) and its propitiatory (cover) will hold the commandments.

**The Table** (25:9-30), on top of which is placed the showbread, cups, pitchers, and plates. This is to be the area for the priests to receive their portion of communion with God.

**The Lampstand** (25:31-40) with seven lamps to shed light upon the stand and the Holy Place (the tabernacle).

**The Tent Cloth** (26:1-14) to create the dwelling for the ark.

**The Wooden Walls** (26:15-29), made of acacia wood, to support the tent cloth and secure the Holy Dwelling.

**The Veils** (26:31-37) - which include a veil to separate the holy of holies (the ark) from the rest of the Holy Place. The table & lampstand will sit outside of the holy of holies and another veil, with five wooden columns, will act as an entrance to the Holy Place.

**The Altar** (27:1-8) will be for holocaust offerings and placed outside of the Holy Place.

**The Court of Dwelling** (27:9-19) will be a rectangular walled court of fabric and posts in which the holocaust offerings will be made.

**Oil for the Lamps** (27:20-21) from the Israelites as an offering to be kept burning from evening to morning is a sign of keeping vigil.

**The Priestly Vestments** (Chapter 28) are to be perfectly designed to offer a perfect sacrifice within the perfect Holy Dwelling of the Perfect God.

**The Ordination of Aaron and his sons** (Chapter 29) will be addressed in detail again in Leviticus (Chapter 8).

**The Altar of Incense** (30:1-16) is to be placed in front of the veil of the ark of the covenant.

**The Laver** (30:17-21) is to be placed between the entrance of the meeting tent and the altar of holocaust to hold the water for the priests to purify themselves before performing their holy duties.

In Chapter 31, God tells Moses that he must find the finest artisans for the creation of the Holy Dwelling and keep the Sabaath Laws. He then gives Moses the commandments on stone tablets.

Chapters 32-33 reveal the dramatic story of the golden calf created (against the first law of the commandments) by Aaron and the Israelites while Moses was on the mountain for forty days and nights. After acknowledging their terrible sin, Moses breaks the stone tablets at the base of the mountain and orders 3,000 priestly Levites to be killed as an offering to God. Moses appeals to God to have mercy upon the Israelites. God agrees, and orders that an angel will lead the people to the Promised Land. Moses urges God to lead the people himself and God accepts the invitation.

Chapters 34-40 give us the renewal of the tablets and the construction of the Holy Dwelling as God had perfectly designed.

In Chapter 40:34-38, after all is prepared, God's cloud covers the dwelling tent thus signifying his presence among his chosen people.