

p 7 WEEK 1: OVERVIEW

Getting Acquainted

The book of Exodus received its name because it records Israel's departure (Greek *exodos*) from Egypt. The book recounts how God graciously delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt, traces their journey through the wilderness, and describes in detail the covenant God made with them at Mount Sinai. In telling this story, Exodus highlights the supreme faithfulness and mercy of God, and contrasts this with Israel's repetitive grumbling, rebellion, and sin. In so doing, this book presents a condensed picture of the gospel. Simply put, Exodus shows us that God saves sinners.

After showcasing his power and glory in freeing Israel from slavery, God gathers Israel to the foot of Mount Sinai where he communicates his will to them through the law. The instructions of the law include both requirements for how Israel is to live (chs. 20–24) and directives for how God is to be worshiped (chs. 25–31). Although Israel continues to demonstrate idolatrous tendencies, God shows himself to be supremely merciful and faithful (chs. 32–34). The book ends with Israel constructing the tabernacle according to God's specifications, and God descending to dwell with them (chs. 35–40). (For further background, see the *ESV Study Bible*, pages 139–144; also online at www.esvbible.org.)

p 8 Placing It in the Larger Story

Whereas Genesis records God's promise that Abraham would become a great nation (Gen. 12:2), Exodus describes the fulfillment of that promise (Ex. 1:6–7). Moreover, God's covenant with the patriarchs, in which he promised to give their descendants the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:18; 26:3; 35:12), is the reason God delivers Israel from Egypt (Ex. 2:24).

Although God gives Israel the law and comes to dwell in their midst, ultimately Israel will not be faithful to their covenant with him. Only in Jesus do we find a faithful Israelite who keeps God's law while simultaneously embodying God's presence with his people (John 1:14).

Key Verse

"You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples" (Ex. 19:4–5a).

Date and Historical Background

In the Gospels, Jesus quotes Exodus 3:6 and ascribes authorship to Moses (Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37). In Exodus, one verse in particular narrows down when Moses finalized the book. Exodus 16:35 says, “The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.” This verse suggests that Moses did not finalize the book of Exodus until *after* the forty years in the desert, when Israel had reached the border of Canaan. This reveals that the original audience of Exodus was the second generation of Israel, camped on the plains of Moab, waiting to enter the Promised Land.

Outline

I. Exodus from Egypt (1:1–18:27)

A. Israel in Egypt (1:1–11:10)

1. Israel’s oppression and Moses’ early life (1:1–2:25)
2. Moses’ call and preparation (3:1–7:7)
3. The plagues against Egypt (7:8–11:10)

p 9 B. From Egypt to Sinai (12:1–18:27)

1. Passover and exodus (12:1–13:16)
2. Deliverance at the Red Sea (13:17–15:21)
3. Journey to Sinai (15:22–18:27)

II. Covenant at Sinai (19:1–40:38)

A. Covenant law at Sinai (19:1–24:18)

1. Covenant preparation (19:1–25)
2. Covenant law (20:1–23:33)
3. Covenant confirmation (24:1–18)

B. Divine Presence with Israel (25:1–40:38)

1. Instructions for building the tabernacle (25:1–31:18)
2. Covenant violation, intercession, and renewal (32:1–34:35)
3. Construction of the tabernacle (35:1–40:38)

As You Get Started

What is your present understanding of the events in Exodus as they relate to God’s plan of salvation? How would you summarize the teaching of the book as a whole?

How do you understand Exodus’s contribution to Christian theology? From your current knowledge of Exodus, what does it teach us about God, humanity, sin, salvation, and other doctrines?

p 10 What has perplexed you about Exodus? What questions do you hope to see answered through this study of Exodus?

As You Finish This Unit ...

Ask God to open your heart and mind as you begin this study of Exodus. Also, take a few minutes and look back through this first unit of study to see what the Lord may be teaching you—and perhaps to highlight or underline anything that jumps out so you can review it later.