

# **EXODUS**

**The Redemption of the People of God from Bondage  
and  
the Making of a Covenant with Them**

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**Spring Semester, 2008**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ten Commandments begin with the self-revelation of Yahweh<sup>1</sup> who was giving the Law:

“I am Yahweh your God,  
who brought you up from the land of Egypt,  
from the house of bondage” (Exod. 20:2).

This is how the formal revelation to the nation begins, and so the first order of business in studying Old Testament theology is to identify and describe who Yahweh is and what he did for His people. Accordingly, this introduction to the Book of Exodus will also serve as a general introduction to the self-revelation of God.

When we look at the structure of the book itself, we notice that the first nineteen chapters provide the background for this grand declaration made at the beginning of the commandments. And hereafter throughout the Bible whenever God speaks as the covenant Lord of the people, he will employ the clear declaration, “I am Yahweh your God.” The use of this statement would not only remind the people of their covenant obligations to the Lord, but also the reason for them—their redemption from Egypt.

### The Book of Exodus

The Hebrew title of the book is taken from the first clause recording “the names of the sons of Israel,” *shemot* meaning “names of.” The English texts use the title “Exodus” from the Greek Septuagint; it describes the major event in the book. This title is therefore a reminder of the main idea of the book, redemption.

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<sup>1</sup> You will recall that the personal name of God in the Old Testament is *Yahweh*, the archaic spelling of the 3msg imperfect form of the verb “to be,” and so would be rendered literally “he is.” When God spoke to Moses he used the 1msg form of the verb, *'ehyeh*, “I am.” The English Bibles follow the Jewish practice of substituting the word “LORD” (Hebrew *'adonay*—literally “my Lords”) for this holy name. They spell it this way to distinguish it from “Lord” (written with smaller capital letters), which is the word *'adon* in the singular. These notes will use “LORD” most frequently for the holy name as it is rendered in most English bible; but they will use the true name “Yahweh” when it is important to the meaning or emphasis of the passage.

Exodus forms a crucial historical link in moving from the age of promise to the beginning of the fulfillment of the promises with the account of the origin of the Hebrew nation. Just as Genesis gave the beginning of the history of the people in the family of Abram, so Exodus records the beginning of the promised nation in the tribes. But the book is not merely reporting how God made the seed of Abraham numerous, but how he formed them into a nation. For that they needed to be free from bondage and be given a constitution—the Law. The covenant at Sinai would be the basis of all God’s dealings with the nation down through history.

It is commonly recognized that Exodus is about the deliverance of the people of Israel from bondage and the granting of a constitution to them. The first nineteen chapters describe Israel's removal from Egypt to Sinai through a miraculous deliverance, and the last twenty-one chapters relate the institution of the covenant and its stipulations. The details of these sections will provide great refinement to the message of the book.

That Genesis is the literary and theological basis of the Exodus is clear from the beginning. According to Exodus 2:24-25 the impetus for the Exodus is the covenant God made with Israel. It is as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the LORD will deliver the people (Exod. 3:6ff.). The theme of the message of Moses is the God of the fathers and the covenant promises he made (Exod. 3:16ff.). The promise of the land of Canaan to the patriarchs surfaces accordingly in Exodus 6:2ff. Traces of this connection appear also in Exodus 13:11, 15:17, and 33:1. So it is inescapable that the Exodus is based on the summons to go forth from Egypt to a land promised to the ancestors.

### **The Biblical Background of the Book**

To understand this fully requires a good knowledge of the message of Genesis. The covenant made to Abraham included at first blessing, greatness, fame, and a great nation that would bring blessing to the world (Gen. 12:1-3). The restatement of it in Gen. 13:12-18 gave the particulars of the land that the seed of Abraham would possess. But the covenant itself was actually cut in Genesis 15, God thereby assuring by solemn oath that the promises would be fulfilled.

It was in Genesis 15 that the sojourn in Egypt was first announced. Abram gathered the animals for the covenant, but had to drive away the birds of prey who attacked the carcasses. Then, as the sun set, Abram fell into a trance and was filled with a darkening dread. At this point the LORD gave the prophecy--and the explanation of the birds of prey. The nation would be enslaved for 400 years until God would judge the nation they serve and bring out his people with great wealth. As for Abram, he would die in a ripe old age (Gen. 15:13-19).

The meaning of this chapter is rather complicated. At the risk of oversimplifying the case, one may say that the LORD was guaranteeing that his promises to the patriarch would be fulfilled in spite of death and persecution. The seed of Abram would constantly find themselves having to drive away "birds of prey" that would seek to end the covenant. Oppression and death are dreadful prospects, but they are tempered with the sure word of the LORD. The smoking oven and flaming torch that passed through the cut animals ratified God's promises to the patriarch, no matter what the outward appearances would be.

The reasons for this sojourn in Egypt are difficult to ascertain, as difficult as the purpose of suffering in the plan of God. One clear reason is that the sin of the Amorite was not yet full (Gen. 15:16). This seems to be saying that the righteous are expendable, but the wicked are not, and that if judgment is to fall on the wicked, they must clearly deserve it. The fulfillment of the promise involved the judgment of the wicked Canaanites. So, as it was with Israel, so it is with us.

Another reason drawn from Genesis 38 and 39 (as well as the Joseph stories) is that the seed of Abram had to flourish in safety. The promise called for a great nation that would preserve and promote the covenant blessing. In Canaan the people were moving towards extinction with amalgamation with Canaanite tribes. But in Egypt they would be safe, for Egyptians have nothing to do with Semites. Thus, the sojourn was partly judgment (or discipline) and partly preservation.

A third reason drawn from Exodus itself is that deliverance from bondage provided a greater display of the majesty of the Almighty, a display that would inspire devotion and allegiance. If a theocracy was to be formed, it was imperative that the subjects know first hand the power of God and that they be debtors to his gracious redemption. Or, to put it another way, any people who owe their existence to divine election and creation must exist by supernatural power. So the covenant would begin, "I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house

of bondage: You shall have no other gods beside me" (Ex. 20:2, 3).

In the telling of this great redemption, therefore, it was necessary for the writer to begin with the details of the suffering in bondage. But along with the details of the bondage there are clear literary connections with the divine plan recorded in the prologue to Exodus, Genesis.

### **The Historical Background of the Book**

The very subject of the book prompts a reconstruction of the background. While there are many problems in fitting the account into Egyptian history, and while newer views would change the dating arrangement of the nation of Egypt itself, conservatives have traditionally linked the events to the Eighteenth dynasty of Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

The Eighteenth Dynasty looks like this:<sup>3</sup>

Amenhotep I Ruled from 1546-1525

Thutmoses I Succeeded and ruled from 1525-1508 Moses would have been born in this time slot, probably 1526 B.C., since he was 82 or 80 at the exodus.

Thutmoses II Ruled from 1508-1503 and was followed by the queen Hatshepsut who ruled from 1504-1482, a period in which Moses found great favor. She served as co-regent with Thutmoses III, although she served as queen and he was with the armies.

Thutmoses III This powerful man Thutmoses III became a great rival of

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<sup>2</sup> This is not an arbitrary choice, but one that fits the biblical chronology exactly. The view takes the ages of the people and the time of the events and discovers that they place Moses in the late 1500s for his birth, and an exodus at 1446 B.C. Critical, liberal scholars do not take the facts of Scripture in the same way, and generally come to a later date for the exodus—that is, those who actually think there was one. The standard view today, the majority view by far, is that the exodus occurred (in some measure) about 1290 B.C.

<sup>3</sup> See for the details on this information, E. W. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986).

Hatshepsut; when he reigned in his own right he killed off her court (1462 B.C.) and tried to rid the country of any memory of her. He died in 1450 B.C. In this time we would find a natural backdrop for the flight of Moses out of Egypt. Moses would have returned from the desert when he heard that the king had died. His successor,

Amenhotep II    Reigned from 1450-1425 and would be the most likely candidate for the Pharaoh of the Exodus (in 1446 B.C.).

Thutmose IV    Ruled next from 1425-1412; he was not the first-born son of Amenhotep II, but received in a dream that he would be the next king. Perhaps this can be explained by the death of the first born of Pharaoh, as the Bible says.

Many historians demonstrate some interesting features of this dynasty (some of which are not widely accepted). The woman Hatshepsut was the daughter of Thutmose I as well as the wife of Thutmose II. Her claim to the throne would have been strong. Thutmose III was declared king by an oracle of his father but came to the throne under the tutelage of his father's wife who kept him in the background for 22 years.

He was succeeded by Amenhotep II. Sir Alan Gardiner dated the reign of Amenhotep from 1436, but mentioned that for the last twelve years of Thutmose III's reign there was no campaign into Syria. There is some clear evidence that there was a co-regency at the end of Thutmose III's reign and it was probable that Amenhotep II was acting in his father's stead. In the 17-20 years left in his reign, he had no military campaigns. Was this because he had no army left?

The next king, Thutmose IV, is the man of the disputed dream inscription by the Great Sphinx. The message he received told him to clear away the sand from the image and he would grant to him the rulership of the land. While this promise allegedly came from the Solar god, the crucial part of the story is that his becoming the ruler was unexpected. Could this offer a glimpse at a ruler who would suddenly inherit the throne due to the loss of the firstborn?

It makes good sense to see Amenhotep II as the Pharaoh of the Exodus who defied the God of the Hebrews and refused to let the people go. He increased his fury and was finally brought to utter disaster. Shortly after this, the so-called monotheism

rebellion swept into Egypt (Akenaton and Tut). Of course, most of modern critical scholarship would put an exodus of sorts (variously explained and variously accepted) in the 13th century B.C., after the people learned monotheism from the Egyptians.

Against that background we can see more specifically how the details of Genesis and Exodus fit in the setting of Egypt and the world. What was promised in the Book of Genesis now begins to unfold in a nation in Egypt. Abram was called out of Ur to become the father of a great nation. That nation was now in Egypt, and being called out of that country. And the first thing that the mass of people needed was a constitution. That is essentially the focus of the Book of Exodus.

For the complicated discussion of the date of the exodus, see the excursus after the notes on the exodus, Exodus 14.

## **The Theological Message of the Book**

### *Outline of the Book of Exodus*

- I. THE PREPARATION FOR DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE (1:1--4:31)
  - A. The bondage of Israel in the land of Egypt (1:1-22)
    1. The names of the people of Israel (1-7)
    2. The oppression under the taskmasters (8-14)
    3. The oppression from Pharaoh upon the children (15-22)
  - B. The preparation of the deliverer from bondage (2:1-4:31)
    1. The birth and care of Moses (2:1-10)
    2. The killing of the Egyptian and the flight to Midian (2:11-22)
      - a. The killing of the Egyptian (11,12)
      - b. The rejection by the brethren (13-15)
      - c. The meeting at Midian (16-20)
      - d. The marriage to Zipporah (21,22)
    3. The calling of Moses to deliver the people (2:23--4:17)
      - a. The cause: God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant (2:23-25).

- b. The confrontation: God meets Moses at the burning bush and commissions him to deliver the people (3:1-12).
  - c. The commission: the great “I AM” instructs Moses to lead the elders and the people in a great victory over Egypt (3:13-22).
  - d. The confidence: God gives Moses signs to authenticate his work (4:1-9).
  - e. The co-worker: God brings Aaron to be the spokesman for Moses (4:10-17).
- 4. The return of Moses to Egypt (4:18-31)
    - a. Moses returns to Egypt (4:18-23).
    - b. Yahweh is angered and seeks to slay him (4:24-26).
    - c. The elders accept Moses and worship God (4:17-31).

## II. THE DEFEAT OF EGYPT AND THE DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE (5:1--18:27)

- A. The confrontation with Pharaoh and reassurance from Yahweh (5:1-6:27)
  - 1. The presentation before Pharaoh (5:1-14)
    - a. Moses and Aaron are presented to Pharaoh (5:1-3).
    - b. Pharaoh hardens his heart and increases the work (5:4-14).
  - 2. The rebellion and reassurance (5:15-6:13)
    - a. The rebellion of the people against them (5:15-21)
    - b. The prayer of Moses to Yahweh (5:22,23)
    - c. The reassurance from Yahweh that he would redeem them from their oppression (6:1-9)
    - d. The return to Pharaoh (6:10-13)
  - 3. The lines of the tribes of Israel (6:14-27)
- B. The great plagues upon the land of Egypt (6:28-12:36)
  - 1. The second confrontation with Pharaoh (6:28-7:13)
    - a. The commission and the warning about Pharaoh’s unwillingness (6:28--7:7)
    - b. The working of the signs before Pharaoh and the response of the magicians (7:8-13)
  - 2. The working of the great plagues (7:14-11:10)

- a. The turning of the water into blood (7:14-25)
  - b. The swarming of the land with frogs (8:1-15)
  - c. The turning of the dust into lice (8:16-19)
  - d. The sending of swarms of flies on Egypt (8:20-32)
  - e. The bringing of a grievous pestilence on the Egyptian cattle (9:1-7)
  - f. The breaking forth of boils on man and beast (9:8-12)
  - g. The raining of hail that flashed continually and devoured the land ((9:13-35)
    - (1) the commission and provision of grace (13-21)
    - (2) the sending of the hail (22-26)
    - (3) the confession of Pharaoh (23-28)
    - (4) the cessation of the plague (29-34)
    - (5) the hardening of Pharaoh (35)
  - h. The covering of the land with locusts (10:1-20)
    - (1) the announcement (1-6)
    - (2) the decision to let the men go (7-11)
    - (3) the bringing of the locusts (12-15)
    - (4) the confession of Pharaoh (16,17)
    - (5) the cessation of the plague (18,19)
    - (6) the hardening of the heart (20)
  - i. The covering of the land with the thick darkness (10:21-29)
    - (1) the black darkness in the land of Egypt (21-23)
    - (2) the concession of Pharaoh (24)
    - (3) the resolution of Moses (25,26)
    - (4) the fury of Pharaoh and the separation (27-29)
  - k. The preparation for the greatest deliverance (11)
    - (1) the instruction about the plague (11:1-2)
    - (2) the appraisal of Moses (11:3,4)
    - (3) the warning about the firstborn (11:5-6)
    - (4) the summation about the hardening of Pharaoh (11:9,10)
3. The great Passover (12:1-36)
- a. The instruction and observance of the feast (12:1-28)
    - (1) The instruction for the feast (12:1-20)
      - (a) the lamb and the blood (1-7)
      - (b) the eating of the Passover in haste (8-11)

- (c) the smiting and the passing over (12-14)
      - (d) the feast of the unleavened bread for a memorial (15-20)
    - (2) The observance of the feast by the people in faith (21-28)
  - b. The last of the plagues: the smiting of the firstborn throughout the land (12:29-36)
    - (1) the death in the land (29,30)
    - (2) the summons and cry of Pharaoh (31,32)
    - (3) the spoiling of the people (33-36)
- C. The escape from the bondage of Egypt to the provisions of Yahweh (12:37-18:27)
1. The flight from Egypt towards the Sea (12:37-13:22)
    - a. The review of the number of the people and the duration of the bondage (12:37-42)
    - b. The regulations concerning the keeping of the Passover (12:43-51)
    - c. The remembrance through the sanctification of the firstborn (13:1-10)
    - d. The redemption of the firstborn males (13:11-16)
    - e. The route of the flight from bondage (13:17-22)
  2. The pursuit of the Egyptians and the deliverance at the Sea (14:1-31)
    - a. The pursuit of the army of Pharaoh (14:1-9)
    - b. The cry of the people and the faith of Moses (14:10-14)
    - c. The parting of the Sea for the deliverance of the people (14:15-22)
    - d. The destruction of the host of Egypt (14:23-31)
      - (1) the pillar of fire and cloud to discomfit (24-25)
      - (2) the return of the waters (26-31)
  3. The praise of Miriam and Moses for the Exodus (15:1-21)
    - a. The song of Moses (15:1-18)
      - (1) the praise for Yahweh, the man of war (1-3)
      - (2) the rehearsal of the deliverance (4-10)
      - (3) the acknowledgment of the incomparable God who delivered his people and sent fear on earth (11-16)

- (4) the assurance that God will establish His sanctuary and rule forever (17,18)
- b. The singing of Miriam over the triumph (15:19-21)
- 4. The provisions for the journey (15:22-17)
  - a. The provision of water at Marah (15:22-27)
  - b. The provision of bread from heaven (16:1-12)
  - c. The provision of the quails (16:13-20)
  - d. The provision of the Sabbath rest (16:21-30)
  - e. The provision for a memorial (16:31-36)
  - f. The provision of water from the rock (17:1-7)
  - g. The provision of victory with the rod of God (17:6-16)
- 5. The advice of Jethro (18:1-27)

### III. THE REVELATION AT SINAI (19:1--31:18)

- A. The circumstances surrounding the formation of the law (19:1-25)
  - 1. The historical notation of the revelation (19:1,2)
  - 2. The purpose for the giving of the law (19:3-6)
    - a. They shall be God's own possession.
    - b. They shall be a kingdom of priests.
    - c. They shall be a holy nation.
  - 3. The arrangements for the giving of the law (19:7-15)
  - 4. The fearful epiphany of the coming down of Yahweh and the warning of separation (19:16-25).
- B. The content of the revelation at Sinai (20:1--31:17)
  - 1. The *d'barim*, the ten words (20:1-17)
  - 2. The *mishp'etim*, the ordinances (20:22--24:11)
    - a. Various ordinances (20:22--23:33)
    - b. The acceptance of the ordinances and the building of the altar to sprinkle the blood of the covenant (24:1-11)
  - 3. The ceremonial laws and regulations (24:12--31:16)
    - a. The glory of God and Moses on the mount of revelation (24:12-16)
    - b. The instructions concerning the building of the sanctuary (25:1--27:21)
      - (1) The offering of materials (25:1-9)

- (2) The ark and the mercy “seat” (25:10-22)
- (3) The table of “show” bread (25:23-30)
- (4) The “candlestick” of pure gold (25:31-40)
- (5) The curtains for the tabernacle (26:1-14)
- (6) The boards for the tabernacle (26:14-25)
- (7) The bars (26:26-30)
- (8) The veil and the screen (26:31-37)
- (9) The altar for the burnt offering (27:1-8)
- (10) The making of the courtyard (27:9-19)
- (11) The bringing of oil for the lamps (27:20,21)
- c. The instructions concerning the servants (28:1--29:46)
  - (1) Aaron’s garments (28:1-5)
  - (2) The “ephod” (28:6-14)
  - (3) The breastplate (26:15-30)
  - (4) The robe of the ephod (28:31-35)
  - (5) The golden plate, coat and miter (28:36-39)
  - (6) The garments of the priests (28:40-43)
  - (7) The consecration sacrifices for the priests (29:1-46)
- d. The instruction concerning the service (30:1-38)
  - (1) The altar of incense for atonement (30:1-10)
  - (2) The atonement money (30:11-16)
  - (3) The laver for washing (30:17-21)
  - (4) The anointing oil (30:22-33)
  - (5) The fine incenses (30:34-36)
- e. The instruction concerning the skills (31:1-11)
- f. The sign of the covenant at Sinai, the Sabbath (31:12-17)

C. Closing: deliverance of the tablets to Moses (31:18)

IV. THE RESPONSE OF ISRAEL TO THE REVELATION (32:1--40:38)

- A. The failure of the nation (32:1-33:6)
  - 1. The idolatry of the people with their calves (32: 1- 6)
  - 2. The intercession of Moses before an angry God (32:7-14)
  - 3. The anger of Moses towards the idolatry (32:15-20)
  - 4. The rebuke of Aaron (32:21-24)
  - 5. The punishment of the people (32:25--33:6)

- a. The slaying of the rebels by Levi (32:25-29)
  - b. The intercession of Moses to be blotted from the book (32:30-35)
  - c. The Presence removed rather than consume (33:1-6)
- B. The favor for the leader of the nation (33:7--35:1)
- 1. The personal relationship of Yahweh with Moses at the Tent (33:7-11)
  - 2. The gracious reply of Yahweh in promise (33:12-16)
  - 3. The revelation of Yahweh's glory to Moses (33:17-23)
  - 4. The renewal of the tablets of law (34:1-4)
  - 5. The revelation of God's nature to Moses (34:5-9)
  - 6. The exclusive law of the covenant (34:10-26)
  - 7. The shining of the face of Moses (34:29-35)
- C. The faith of the nation (35:1--40:38)
- 1. The announcement of the law and the offering of the people (35:1-29)
  - 2. The preparation of the workmen (35:30--36:7)
  - 3. The construction of the Tabernacle (36:6--39:31)
  - 4. The completion of all the work (39:32-43)
  - 5. The erection of the Tabernacle (40:1-33)
  - 6. The cloud and the glory filling the Tabernacle and leading the nation (40:34-38)

### *The Theological Message of the Book of Exodus*

Exodus records the redemption of the covenant people from bondage through great miracles, the granting of a charter to them, and the establishing of the theocratic center of worship.

The theological message of the book is presented early when God announces that he has heard his people's cry and has come to deliver them so that they might worship and serve him. The different sections of the book, then, develop this:

As promised,  
 God delivers his covenant people from bondage,  
 demonstrates his power and faithfulness,  
 manifests himself in glory,  
 gives them his law,  
 provides access to his presence  
 and dwells among them.

In short, the book records the founding of the theocracy in which God rules over his redeemed people. The message of the book is developed through the self-revelation of God to his people in many marvelous ways. Yahweh, the covenant God, on his part, redeems, protects, provides, and rules; Israel, the covenant people, on their part, must trust him, obey him, and worship him alone.

As one can easily see, the basic principles of the faith are all found in this book. And this will make the exposition of the book both relevant and powerful.

### *The Theological Themes of the Book of Exodus*

The main message of the book unfolds in several stages. To trace the theological themes through the book I have here divided it into seven parts (which parts fit into the above outline of the book, only here taken as separate units). Each of these seven parts ends with a revelation of the LORD. These revelations are divine manifestations that authenticate the message of the LORD and inspire devotion and obedience. Using the chapters, the sections may be charted as follows:

Part I	1	Flourishing under affliction in bondage
	2	The birth of the deliverer and his presumption
	3	The call and commission of the deliverer—I AM (WITH YOU)
Part II	4	Convincing the deliverer of the mission
	5	Presentation of the message and rejection
	6	Confirmation of the promise—I AM (WITH YOU)
Part III	7-11	Victory over Egypt through might works
	12	The passover and the exodus

	13	The redemption of the firstborn
	13	Leading the people out of bondage–PILLAR AND CLOUD
Part IV	14	Crossing the sea and the destruction of Egypt
	15	The song of the victory at the sea
	15-17	Provision of water and food in the wilderness
	17	Defense of Israel in war
	18	Provision of elders for decisions
	19	Meeting with God at Sinai–EPIPHANY ON THE MOUNTAIN
Part V	20	The Law: the Words
	21-23	The Law: the Decisions
	24	The ratification of the covenant–VISION OF GOD OF GLORY
Part VI	25-31	Instructions for making the place of worship
	32	Disloyalty to God with the golden calf
	33-34	New tablets and new manifestation–VISION OF THE GLORY
Part VII	35-39	The building of the place of worship
	40	Completion of the work–VISION OF THE PRESENT GLORY

Another way to chart the development of the message of the book is to trace the situations leading up to the divine manifestations. The following chart offers a rough development of this.

<i>Topics/Chapters</i>	<i>Situation</i>	<i>Resolution</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
Preparation (1-6)	Living in Affliction Murderous Opposition	Cry to God Preparation of the Deliverer	I AM Promise of Presence
	Signs and Belief Rejection and more	Renewed Promise Hardening	I AM Promise of Presence

	Oppression		and Victory
Deliverance (7-15)	In Bondage Facing Death at the Sea	Miraculous Plagues Passover Parting of the Sea	Angel Passes Over Divine Leading with Pillar and Cloud
Provision (15-19)	Hunger, Thirst and Invasion	Miraculous Leading Providing, and Delivering	Terrifying Epiphany at Mount Sinai
Instruction (20-34)	In Need of Laws and Decisions	Revelation of Law in Covenant Form Ratification	Vision of Glory and and Peace with God
	In Need of Way to Worship	Revelation of the Tabernacle	
	Interruption by Idolatry	Intercession and Judgment	Vision of Glory and New Tablets of Law
Obedience	Need to Comply with Instructions	Tabernacle Completed	Vision of Glory Dwelling among them

Since the message of the book centers on the self-revelation of God, it might be helpful to trace this motif through the book as well.

I AM -

– Covenant Redeemer

- Causes fruitfulness to the seed of Abraham
- Hears their cry and remembers the covenant
- Comes to deliver but demands trust
- Leads his people to the promised land
- Cuts the covenant with his “son” Israel

- Destroys Egypt with plagues
  - Kills Pharaoh's army at the Sea
  - Defeats the Amalekites
  - Promises to destroy the Canaanites
- Divine Warrior
- Gives *talionic* justice for the oppression
  - Gives the Law so people can be righteous
  - Purges rebels from the camp
- Righteous Judge
- Provides redemption at the Passover
  - Provides water and food in the wilderness
  - Provides forgiveness through worship
  - Provides tabernacle to dwell among them
  - Promises his presence going with them
- Gracious LORD
- Demands application of blood for redemption
  - Demands faith in crises and in ritual
  - Calls people to come to sacrifice to him
  - Makes barriers to the mount and tabernacle
  - Manifests himself repeatedly in his glory
- Holy God

### ***The Details of the Theology of the Book of Exodus***

The following outline is patterned after the arrangement of material by Walther Eichrodt, in his *Theology of the Old Testament*. It will provide the details of the divine revelation in the Book of Exodus.

#### I. THE COVENANT GOD

##### A. The Names and Titles of God in Exodus

1. *Yahweh*, the personal name of the covenant God, often in the form

of self-disclosure, “I am *Yahweh*.”

2. “I AM,” the full meaning of the divine name; greater than the title *El Shadday* because it is linked to the fulfillment of the promises.
3. “The God of the Fathers,” an identification with the promises.
4. “The Angel of *Yahweh*,” the “death Angel,” “the Angel of the Presence,” “the Angel of God,” all describing divine presence and intervention.
5. “*Yahweh Nissi*,” an epithet of God in victory, along with epithets such as “Man of War,” and “*Yahweh* of Armies.”

## B. The Nature of God Displayed in His Works

1. Living
  - a. He reveals himself in divine manifestations, the bush (3), the pillar and the cloud (13), and at Sinai (19, 24, 34, 40).
  - b. He speaks, revealing his plan to Moses (3-6), in the giving of the Law (20-23), and in the instructions for the sanctuary (25-31).
  - c. He reveals himself in his miraculous deeds, the plagues (7-11), the victories (14, 17), and the provisions (15-17).
  - d. He sees his people (2), hears their cry (3), remembers his covenant (2), descends to redeem (3), sends a deliverer (3).
2. Holy
  - a. He prevents closeness at the burning bush (3).
  - b. He prevents closeness at the mountain (19).
  - c. He provides barriers through the building of the tabernacle (25-31).
  - d. He demands sanctifying blood (24, 29), and provides the sanctuary furnishings for it (25-31).
  - e. He manifests himself in the sublime (19, 24, 33, 34, 40).
3. Faithful
  - a. He remembers the covenant promises and comes to implement them (2).
  - b. He delivers out of Egypt as he had promised (12-14).
  - c. He provides for the physical and spiritual needs of his people (15-17).

- d. He protects his covenant people (1-17) and promises his presence (13).
4. Sovereign (All-Powerful)
- a. He confounds the Egyptians in their oppression (1, 2).
  - b. He chooses Moses and Aaron for his work (3, 4, 6), asserting his powerful presence with them.
  - c. He performs mighty miracles in Egypt, showing his power sovereignly over the gods of Egypt (5-12).
  - d. He demonstrates his power in battle against the Egyptians (14, 15), and the Amalekites (17), and promises victory over the Canaanites (23).
  - e. He hardens Pharaoh's heart to show his power, ultimately judging Pharaoh and causing Egypt to favor Israel (5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13).
  - f. He demonstrates his power over nature in the signs and plagues (5-12), at the sea (14), and in the wilderness (15-17).
  - g. He displays his sovereignty at Sinai in the epiphany, and in the giving of the Law (19-23).
  - h. He enables people to do the work of the tabernacle (35-39).

SO God is sovereign over nature, Pharaoh's will, armies, other gods, and his people. In song his people proclaim his exalted nature, singing (rhetorically), "Who is like you?" (15).

5. Righteous
- a. He brings talionic justice on Pharaoh's son for oppressing his son Israel (4, 7-14).
  - b. He gives the Law which legislates righteousness (20-23), and orders his sanctuary to perfection (25-31).
  - c. He accepts the covenant members into his presence after sanctification (24).
  - d. He judges the wicked (7-12, 23).
6. Gracious
- a. He is moved to compassionate action by the cries of his afflicted people (1).

- b. He redeems his people from bondage (1-15).
- c. He provides for redemption by instructing the application of blood (12).
- d. He forgives, heals, and provides for his people even when they are unfaithful (15, 16, 17, 32), even giving new tablets (34).
- e. He instructs the making of the sanctuary so that his people might approach him (25-31).
- f. He makes special provision for the stranger and the oppressed in the Law—in fact, the Law is filled with gracious provisions (12, 20-23).

#### 7. Wrathful

- a. He is angry at Pharaoh and pours out his wrath on him and his servants in judgment (7-14).
- b. He is a jealous God and does not tolerate idolatry (20-23, 32).
- c. He is angry at the unbelief of his people and warns them of discipline (15-17).
- d. He is angry with Moses' excessive hesitation (4) and failure to circumcise his sons (4).

## II. THE CREATION

### A. The Covenant People

- 1. Dependent, that is, in need of divine help
  - a. The people of God suffer in affliction and bondage, crying out to their God in desperation (1,2).
  - b. Moses senses total inadequacy for the task and is promised divine enablement (3, 4), and later receives advice for the administration of the nation (18).
  - c. The people are forced to trust God at the sea (14), and in the wilderness (15-17).
  - d. The people need God's law to instruct them in holiness and righteousness (20-23).

- e. The people need God's enabling Spirit to give them "skill" to do the work of the tabernacle (31, 35).
  - f. The people flourish by God's grace in spite of their circumstances (1, 2).
  - g. The people are called God's "son," a term of relationship but also political dependency (4).
2. Depending, that is, actively availing themselves of divine help
- a. Individuals live by faith according to God's higher standard and covenant promise (1, 2), producing children and refusing to kill their babies (fearing God).
  - b. The people believe that God has heard their prayers and sent a deliverer, and so they worship (4).
  - c. By faith the people keep the feasts in memory of God's deeds and pass the traditions on from generation to generation (10).
  - d. By faith the people apply the blood and comply with God's instructions (12-14).
  - e. By faith the people dedicate their firstborn to God (13).
  - f. The people conquer their enemies under the rod of God when they look to him for deliverance (14, 17).
  - g. The people praise God for his great deliverance (15).
  - h. In an act of faith the people commit themselves to obey God and his covenant (19, 24).
3. Disobedient
- a. Moses acts presumptuously by killing the Egyptian (2), and then hesitates too much over God's call (3, 4).
  - b. The people rebel against Moses when Pharaoh resists (5).
  - c. The people murmur in the wilderness and rebel against God (15-17).
  - d. The people make a golden calf and engage in idolatry (32).
- B. The Ungodly or Wicked (people who are not covenant believers)
- 1. The leaders of the world system hate and oppress God's people (1, 5).
  - 2. The leader of the world system is hardened in unbelief; he does not know Yahweh and will not submit to him (5-10).
  - 3. The spiritual leaders of the wicked can duplicate some signs (7).

4. The wicked are fragile under God's mighty power (plagues).
5. The wicked falsely confess sin to avoid distress (9).
6. The wicked are finally plundered and destroyed (12, 14, 15, 17); this is the first death.
7. The religions of the world have religious practices that are degrading and must be avoided (20-23).

### C. Nature

1. God uses a bush that burns to reveal his presence (3).
2. God can overrule the laws of nature with his signs and plagues (4-12), even creating life out of dust and ashes.
3. God displays his sovereignty over nature by dividing the sea (14).
4. God manifests his presence with a display of fire and thunder and earthquakes and thick clouds (19).
5. God changes bitter water to sweet water (15) and brings water out of the rock for the people (17).
6. God provides manna and quail for the people (16).
7. God uses a supernatural cloud that is both luminous and dark to guide the people and to protect them.

## III. THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

### A. Foundation of the Covenant

1. God maintained his covenant promises (1) until it was time to fulfill them in delivering his people (2-15).
2. The redemption/deliverance from Egypt and the establishment of the covenant was solely by God's grace and power (5, 6, 20).
3. The covenant was confirmed by the application of blood and by eating the communal meal with God (24).
4. Supernatural signs authenticated the covenant (3, 4, 19).
5. The sanctuary was constructed to be the center of Israel's existence because God was in their midst (25-31).

### B. Leadership of the Covenant

1. Moses and Aaron were called by God, and made a god and a prophet respectively (3, 4, 7).
2. Certain qualified elders were chosen to judge people (18) and to teach the Law (18, 24).
3. Aaron and his family were consecrated as priests (29).
4. Moses was the mediator of the covenant (33); his face glistened to authenticate his position in God's stead (24, 33, 34), and his intercession mediated on behalf of the people (32).

#### C. Responsibilities of the Members of the Covenant

1. The people had to believe (they were already believers, but they had to believe) that God had sent the deliverer (5); and they had to believe in God's word to comply with it (12).
2. The people had to dedicate their firstborn to the LORD (13).
3. The people had to obey God's statutes (15, 20-23)
4. The people had to be sanctified before God (19, 24).
5. The people had to worship God in sacrifices (5, 8), and worship him alone (4).
6. The people had to comply with the signs of the covenants, circumcision (4), and the *sabbath* (16, 20).
7. The people had to function as a kingdom of priests—what the priests were to the people, the people were to be to the world.

#### D. Communion within the Covenant

1. God provided the *passover* as the means of bringing people into the new relationship with him, moving them from living in the promises to actually living in the reality (12).
2. God specified that the *sabbath* be kept as the sign of membership in the old covenant (16, 23, 31, 35); he also required compliance with the other feasts.
3. God provided the place of communion (25-31):
  - a. The tabernacle became the dwelling place of God among his people,
  - b. The furniture and utensils signified the way of access to

- God through the sacrificial atonement.
- c. The construction of the tabernacle was funded by the willing offerings, and built by gifted people.
  - d. The ministry was maintained by the offerings of the people and arrangements of the priest.
4. God provided the true leadership for the communion.
    - a. The priests were to be sanctified through a series of holy, symbolic acts (29).
    - b. The priests were outfitted for the functions they were to perform (28).
  5. God revealed his glorious presence to his covenant people—"I AM," and "I will be with you."
  6. God gave them the Law so that they would live as a holy nation and thereby be able to serve as a kingdom of priests (19). The Law was given to a people already redeemed—no one is ever saved by keeping the Law.

***The Influence of Exodus on the Gospels,  
Especially the Gospel of John***

Exodus begins the revelation of the detailed faith of ancient Israel. The book accounts for many of the great religious acts and customs as well as the shrine for the performance of worship. It gives the reader the structure in Israel that would be a pattern and a type for the great sacrifice and offering that would come. It reveals to the reader the ultimate design of God in the spiritual renewal of the wicked heart. All of the transactions and customs look forward to the higher goal. These divinely prefigured illustrations bring the student of the New Testament to a greater understanding of the truths of the work of Christ. The Bible, in fact, makes many references to Exodus openly, as well as many veiled references to the events of the book. The Passover, the High Priest, Moses, the Tabernacle, the Feasts and all of the incidental points will speak of Christ and His work. Specifically, the Gospel of John seems to draw on Exodus more fully than other New Testament books, both in structure and contents. For example:

- John 1      Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory.
- Theme in Exodus is on the glory of the LORD; a tabernacle was made so that the glory would dwell in it among the people (Exod 35-40).
- John 1-3    Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- The Passover in Exodus focuses on the blood of the lamb that will redeem people from bondage to the world (Exod 12).
- Jesus calls the first disciples, who acknowledged that Jesus was the one of whom Moses wrote; and he promised that they would see heaven opened and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.
- In Exodus God called Moses to lead his people out of bondage and gave him proof of his presence and power (Exod.3, 4).
- John 2      At the wedding in Cana when the people ran out of wine Jesus turned the water into wine as a sign of his Messianic power.
- In Exodus the Lord turned bitter water into sweet water when the people had nothing to drink.
- Jesus cleansed the temple and prophesied his own resurrection using the language of “temple” for his own body.
- Moses had to purge the rebels from the camp before they could put the tabernacle together.
- John 3      Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, explaining how Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness as a type of Christ’s being lifted up. The message of redemption had to be believed.
- Moses told the Israelites that God had indeed visited his people to deliver but they had to believe the message that he brought (Exod. 5).
- John 4      Jesus met the woman at the well and explained that he could give her the water of life. He affirmed that he was the Messiah, by saying I am; and

he explained that the hour was coming when people would not have to worship at a mountain, but in spirit and truth. Many believed.

Moses told the people that I Am had met with him, and promised to redeem them; and the sign would be that they would worship the LORD at the mountain where Moses was called.

John 5 The healing at the pool of Bethesda took place on the Sabbath day, but Jesus explained that he was sent by the Father and did the works of the Father, and that all judgment was given to him. He added that if they had believed Moses they would have believed him, for Moses wrote of him.

All judgment given to the Son,

Moses wrote the Law from God that the Sabbath was to be a day set apart to God.

John 5, 6 Jesus fed the 5,000 and then walked on the water before he delivered his address as the Bread of Life, the Manna that came from heaven. Many who heard him murmured.

In Exodus God proved he could feed the people by giving them the Manna in the wilderness when they murmured. And when the LORD parted the Sea so that people could walk across, he proved that nature was no barrier for him.

Jesus chose twelve disciples  
In Exodus God chose twelve tribes.

John 7 Jesus delivers his address at the Feast of Tabernacles, having healed a man on the Sabbath, making him whole. The crowd wanted more signs. Jesus promised that living water would flow from the believers.

Moses gave the law for the feasts and for Sabbath observance, but they came from God, the Lord of the Sabbath. He established his message by doing miracles, signs. Those who believed entered into a new covenant with the LORD and became part of the life to come.

John 8 Jesus is the light of the world, the creator of the world, the I AM who was there before even Abraham.

God revealed himself to Israel as the I AM. He gave light to the Israelites and darkness to Egypt; he led his people by the luminous pillar.

These are but a few of the connections between the Gospel and the Book of Exodus. The following notes will add more to show how the Gospel fulfills the account of the redemption of Israel from bondage and the giving of the Law to them.

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