

Reading Exodus

Exodus 1–15 The Exodus from Slavery in Egypt

- 1-4 Moses is raised up as a deliverer
- 5-11 The plagues of Egypt
- 12-13 Passover legislation
- 14 Exodus story
- 15 Song of the Sea

Exodus 16–18 Wilderness journey to Sinai Exodus 19–40 Israel at Mt. Sinai

- 19–24 The Sinai Covenant is Established
- 25-31 Instructions for building the Tabernacle
- 32-34 Israel breaks the covenant
- 35-40 Tabernacle is constructed

Main Themes in Exodus

1. Yahweh is faithful to his covenant with Abraham. As an act of grace and love he sends a deliverer to his enslaved people (2:23-25; 3:5-10; 6:1-8)
2. The ten plagues Yahweh brings against Egypt are a demonstration of Yahweh's justice and power that will prevail over human evil and stubbornness (chs. 7-11) and the power of Egypt's gods (see Exodus 12:12).
3. The Passover festival remembers that Yahweh delivers his people through the blood of a lamb (chs. 12-14)
4. Yahweh rescues Israel to enter into a covenant relationship with them at Mt. Sinai
 - Yahweh redeems Israel so they can become a "kingdom of priests" to the nations: 19:1-6
 - The laws and commands in chs. 19-24 represent the terms of the covenant.
 - Israel breaks the covenant by worshipping idols (ch. 32) → Yahweh brings judgment, then forgives and reestablishes the covenant (chs. 33-34)
5. Yahweh rescues Israel to make them his people and dwell among them in the tabernacle
 - The tabernacle is the place where Yahweh will be present with his people and meet with them (25:8; 25:22, 29:42-46).
 - The design and imagery of the tabernacle is meant to recall the garden of Eden, where God dwelt with humanity in perfect relationship (compare the description of Eden in Genesis 2:8-14 with the description of the tabernacle)
 - The priesthood exists to mediate between God and the people: chs. 28-29
6. PROBLEM: At the end of the book, Yahweh's presence comes among Israel, but Moses cannot enter the tabernacle (see 40:34-35). How are Moses and the people going to be able to dwell in the presence of a holy God? (hint: keep reading into Leviticus...)

Things to look for in reading Exodus:

1. Yahweh is determined to rescue Israel and make them a light to the nations because of his promises to Abraham. Keep track of how often **Abraham** is mentioned in the book; don't forget that larger plotline.
2. As you read chapters 5-15, pay attention to the theme of **Pharaoh's heart**: Sometimes he hardens his own heart, other times God hardens it. Pharaoh is offered as an example of a broken human heart that is bent towards selfishness, and as a warning for how God deals with those who oppose his purposes.
3. Reading the laws and rules of the covenant in chapters 19-24 – Things to keep in mind:
 - These laws were given to ancient Israel as the terms of their covenant relationship with Yahweh. They are specific to Israel living in an ancient near eastern agrarian culture.
 - These laws embody principles of justice and generosity in their cultural setting; Israel was to be a holy nation to show other nations how God intended humans to live.
 - We need to discern the *wisdom* behind each law to discover the broader principle of how God wants his people to live. The laws were not meant to be directly applied to all people of all time.
4. The tabernacle represents God's desire to be in close relationship with his people: as you read chapters 25-40 allow the details to help you see how serious God is about dwelling with his people.
 - **Key Words:** keep track of the words "dwell, dwelling," "meet with," and "my people" occur in these chapters. They highlight that the tabernacle is all about relationship with God.