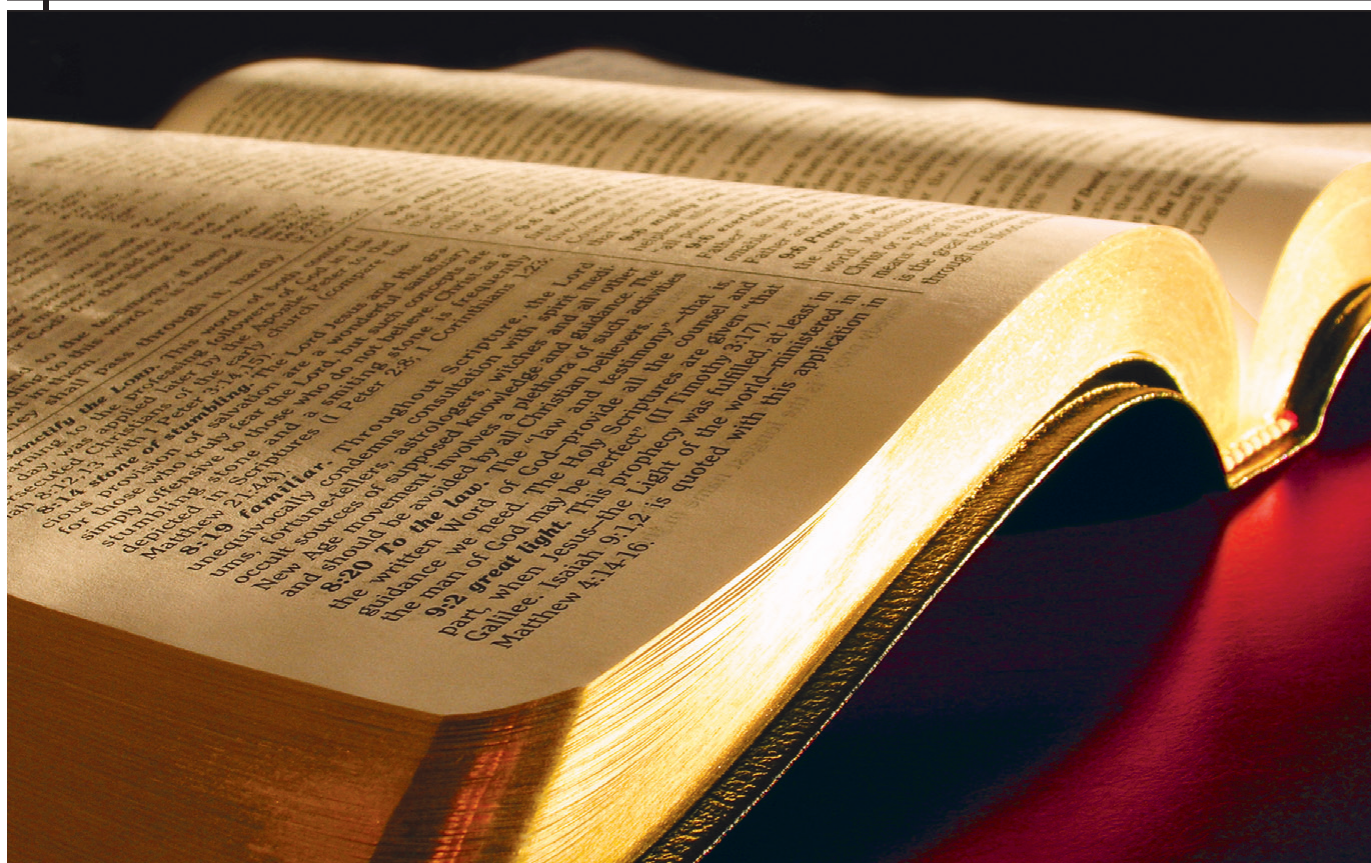




BIBLE OVERVIEW



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EXODUS

FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM



Israel in Egypt by Edward Poynter

Moses' Name

The Hebrew name Moses sounds like the Hebrew verb for “to draw out.” Pharaoh’s daughter named the child Moses because “I drew him out of the water” (Ex. 2:10). But the name Moses has an Egyptian meaning as well. It is found in many Egyptian names: Ra-messes, Thut-mose, Ah-mose. The first part of each name is related to an Egyptian deity (Ra, Thut, Ah). The second part of the names (messes/mose) means “boy” or “son.” Moses can be an Egyptian name meaning boy, son, or child.

Purpose

Israel is the story of God rescuing his people from slavery and forming them into a nation. While Genesis deals with the beginnings of all things, the book of Exodus focuses more on the origin of God’s people. He gives Moses the Law, but this Law is more than just a series of rules of behavior. God’s instructions to Israel shape the nation and give boundaries for the safety of the people. It shows Israel what it means to be God’s people in the midst of other nations.

In addition, the book connects creation with redemption. In the exodus itself—the redeeming or liberation of Israel from Egypt—God creates a new people, his people. The first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, which in the Hebrew Bible is considered the Torah, has the purpose of instructing Israel on what it means to be God’s people in the midst of other nations.

Outline

1. Israel in Egypt: God Frees His People (1:1–15:21).
 - a. Israel is enslaved in Egypt.
 - b. God calls Moses through a burning bush.
 - c. The ten plagues upon Egypt and the first Passover.
 - d. The exodus and the parting of the Red Sea.
2. Israel on the Way Toward Sinai: God Travels with His People (15:22–18:27).
 - a. God provides manna and quail, and water from a rock.
3. Israel at Sinai: God Instructs and Organizes His People (19:1–40:38).
 - a. Moses meets with God on Mount Sinai.
 - b. The Ten Commandments.
 - c. Instructions for the tabernacle.
 - d. The people worship the golden calf.
 - e. Moses and the people build the tabernacle.



The Code of Hammurapi

This black stele inscribed with about 300 laws claims to have been written by Babylonian King Hammurapi around 1750 BC. Many of the laws inscribed on the stone resemble the style and, to some extent, the content of Moses' laws in the Pentateuch. For example, the law of "an eye for an eye" is found in the Code of Hammurapi and in Exodus 21:24.

Background

Author: Although the book of Exodus does not name its author, Jewish and Christian tradition has accepted the author of Exodus (and the other four books of the Pentateuch) to be Moses.

Clash of the Gods

In Egypt, pharaohs were considered to be divine beings. When Moses came to Pharaoh to ask for the release of God's people, God and a false god, Pharaoh, clashed in a battle of wills and power. God showed his supremacy through the plagues. One way to understand the plagues is that they were direct attacks against the false gods of Egypt. God showed himself as victorious.

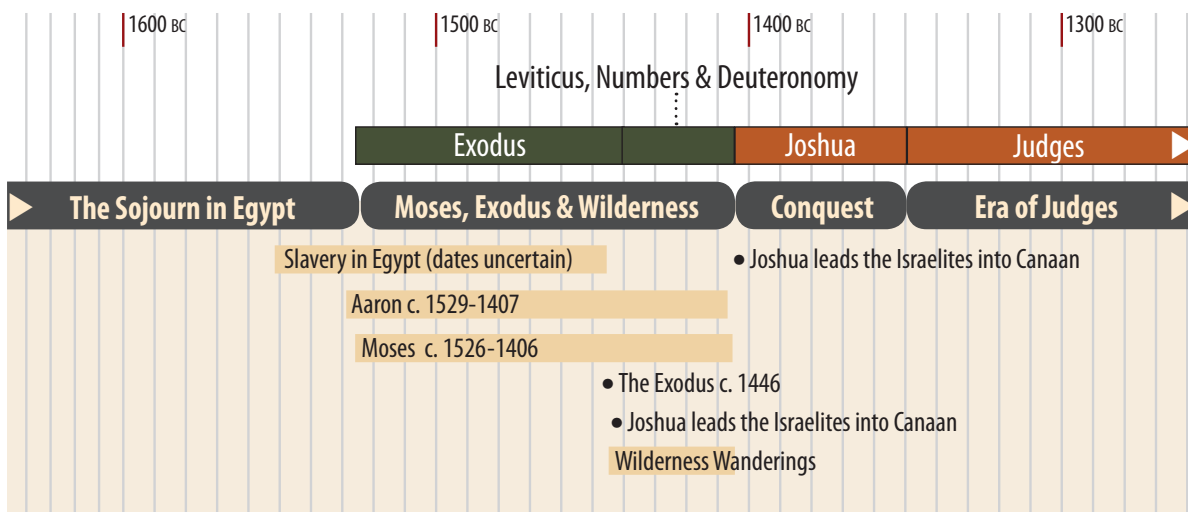
Date: Moses would have written Exodus (and the rest of the Pentateuch) between 1446 BC (a possible date of the exodus) and 1406 BC (the date of Moses' death).

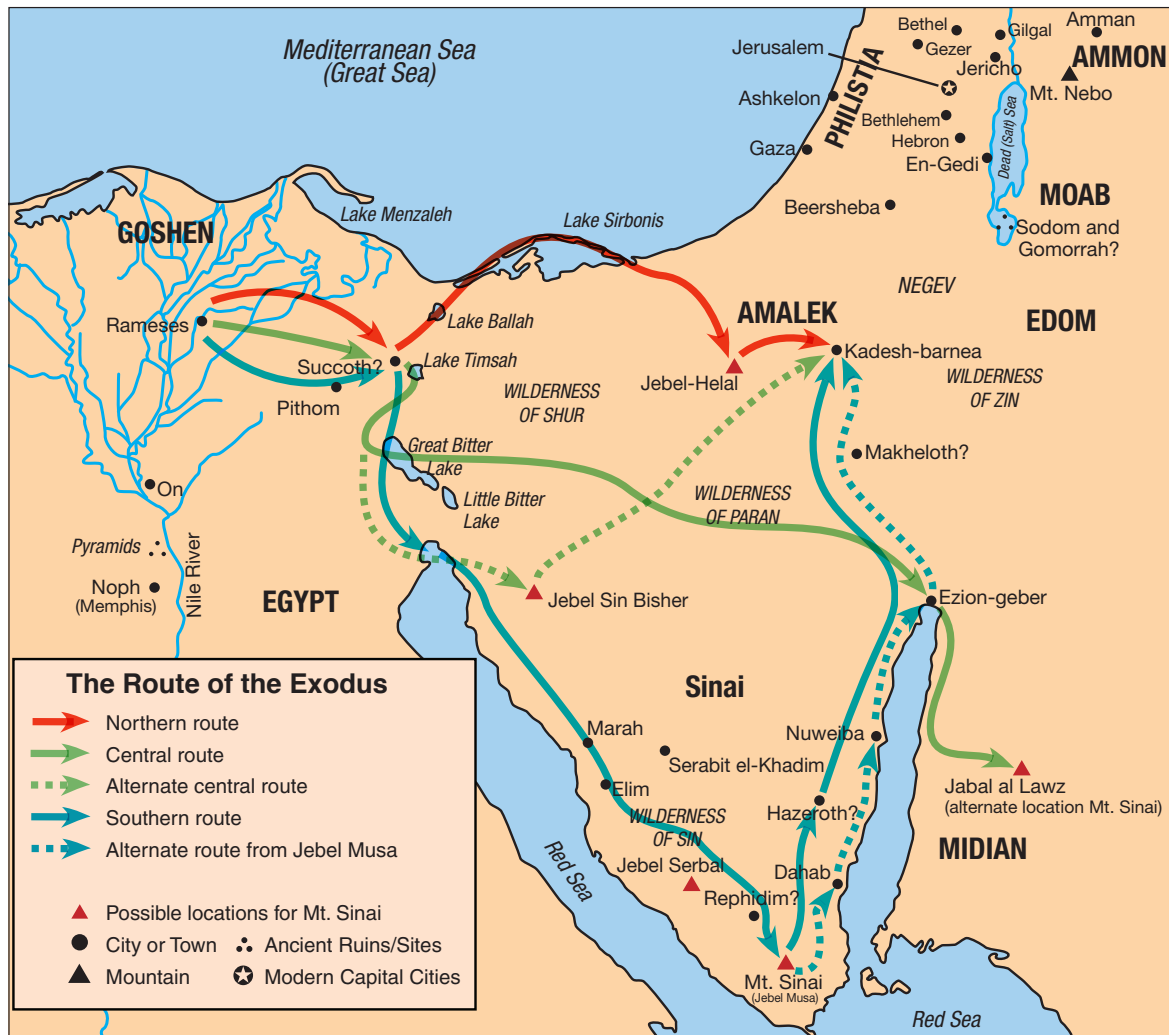
Setting: There are two main settings in the book of Exodus: Egypt and the wilderness.

To escape famine, Jacob's children had settled in northern Egypt, in Goshen (Gen. 47:5–6). The Israelites lived in Egypt in a time of Egyptian prosperity and political power. However, later generations became slaves to the Egyptian pharaohs (Ex. 1).

After the Israelites left Egypt in the event known as the exodus, they traveled in the wilderness on their way to Sinai. Traditionally, many people believe that Mount Sinai is found the southern part of the peninsula. However, some scholars believe that the mountain might be found in the northern part or, even, outside of the peninsula (one possible location for ancient Median).

Sections of Exodus	Themes	Events
Israel in Egypt: God Frees His People (1:1–15:21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ God is redeemer and rescuer. ■ God is the supreme King. ■ God has control over his creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Egypt oppressed Israel and became God’s enemy. ■ God heard Israel’s cries and remembered his commitment to Abraham. ■ Moses, a child of slaves, was threatened to be killed along with many other children. However, God rescued him. ■ God called and sent Moses to free his people from Egypt. ■ The exodus: God, through Moses, confronted Pharaoh in a struggle for the future of Israel. After ten terrible plagues, Pharaoh relented and freed Israel. ■ The day of redemption was celebrated and commemorated in the Feast of Passover. ■ God saved Israel from Pharaoh’s army through one more spectacular miracle—the parting of the Red Sea.
Israel on the Way toward Sinai: God Travels with His People (15:22–18:27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ God is provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ God led Israel through the wilderness of Zin toward his holy mountain at Sinai. ■ God provided for the people’s needs during the journey in the wilderness. ■ Israel grumbled against Moses and God. ■ God brought Israel to the meet with him at Sinai.
Israel at Sinai: God Instructs and Organizes His People (19:1–40:38)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ God is king. ■ God is just and merciful. ■ God is with his people. ■ God wants to relate personally to his people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On Mount Sinai, God instructed Moses on God’s law for Israel. These laws would teach Israel how to become God’s holy nation. ■ The people grew restless at Moses’ delay on the mountain. They built for themselves a golden calf to worship. God punished them. However, because Moses interceded for them, God did not destroy them. ■ God ordered Moses to build a special dwelling, the tabernacle. God’s presence would travel with the people to the place he promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ■ God equipped the Israelites to carry on the building of the tabernacle. ■ Once the tabernacle was completed, God’s presence descended to dwell in it.





Key People

Moses – He was born to a Hebrew slave family but rescued by Pharaoh’s daughter. Having grown up in the Egyptian royal court, Moses had inside knowledge of the royal court and the political subtleties of the time. As an educated Egyptian, Moses knew the religion, traditions, and political practices in Egypt. But when he fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian overseer, he became a shepherd in Midian. He was 80 years old when God called him to face an imposing Pharaoh.

Aaron – He was Moses’ and Miriam’s brother and the first high priest of Israel. God assigned Aaron to be Moses’ assistant. Despite his closeness to God and Moses, Aaron committed a terrible sin when he agreed to build an idol—the golden calf—for Israel.

Pharaoh – Following the traditional dating of the exodus as 1446 BC (the “high” date), the Egyptian Pharaoh reigning during the times of oppression was Thutmose III and later his son Amenhotep II during the exodus. Thutmose III expanded the Egyptian

empire as never before to the north, east, and south (possibly as far as Kenya today), then Amenhotep II consolidated the empire through massive building projects in Egypt. Some Bible scholars date the exodus much later, around 1290 BC (the “low” date), putting it during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses II, one of the most powerful pharaohs of Egypt’s New Kingdom period.

Miriam – She was Moses’ and Aaron’s sister and also a prophetess. She interceded on behalf of her infant brother Moses when Pharaoh’s daughter found him in the Nile River. She also led the Israelite women in a song of praise after crossing the Red Sea.

Key Verses

God said to Moses, *“I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*—Ex. 3:14

“‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”
—Ex. 19:4–6

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”—Ex. 20:2–3

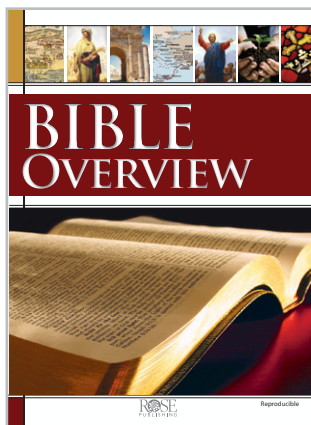
Being God’s People

Then: In Exodus, God called his people to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). But he did not leave them to do this on their own. Instead he was with them, equipping and instructing them how to achieve this. God’s presence dwelled in the tabernacle in the midst of the camp. The tabernacle was a visual reminder that God was among them. For Israel, being God’s people was more than just following rules. It was about learning to live as a holy nation with a holy God in their midst.

Now: Jesus promises his followers, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Being followers of Jesus today means learning how to live with the presence of God within us.

Jesus in Exodus

Moses’ ministry as judge, priest, and prophet anticipated Jesus’ own ministry (Heb. 3:1–6). The Passover celebration and sacrifice (Ex. 12) help us understand Christ’s own sacrifice on the cross on our behalf. In the exodus, God liberated Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh with great acts of power. Through it, God gave birth to a new people (Deut. 32:18). Now, God has freed us from the bondage of sin and death with the greatest act of grace and power: Jesus’ death and resurrection. In Christ, God has recreated us as a new people (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:10).

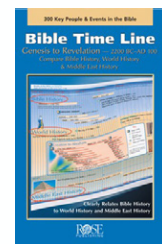


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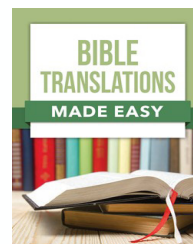


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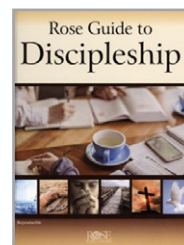
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