



Wednesday Bible Education
Biblical Theology
Lesson 3: Exodus

REVIEW

Questions from last week's lesson:

1. What is Genesis about?
2. How does Genesis help us today?

Answers:

1. The book of Genesis is about God from the very first verse, "In the beginning God ... " Before the creation of the universe, God is there and active. This book recounts the creation of the universe and the earth in particular as the place for mankind and God's fellowship with man. Man was created in God's image but foolishly fell into sin, so the book teaches us the need for redemption. Genesis gives us the ages old promise of the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head and liberate men from his dominion. Genesis also records God's covenant promise to bless a nation and all families of the earth through them and the promised seed. The lineage of the promised seed, the Messiah, is traced in Genesis from Eve to Seth to Noah to Shem to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah. This is a highlighted list and not an exhaustive genealogy. Genesis tells about the eternal God creating all things, the origin and purpose of man, and the origin of sin and its consequences. Genesis also begins the revelation of God's plan for the redemption of man and his creation, and testifies to his power and purpose in ordering history to fulfill his promises.
2. Understanding Genesis helps us understand who God is and what he is like. We learn how we got here and what is wrong with the world around us. The book gives us a big-picture view of God's great purpose for the world and his faithfulness and power to bring his purpose to fruition. We are humbled by seeing the human failings of the patriarchs, realizing we are no better than they were and are in just as much need of a Savior. It helps us rest in God's promise that is thousands of years old that a Man would be born who would crush Satan and destroy his work, thereby setting us free from bondage to sin and Satan. We can trace the fulfilling of the promise through the Bible and history to today, where we look for the return of the Man, Christ Jesus, in the future. Genesis gives us an important introduction to the physical and tangible nature of God's kingdom. Genesis truly helps give purpose to life as we understand history is not random, spontaneous events without connection or purpose.

INTRODUCTION

What is the book of Exodus about? Exodus recounts the famous deliverance of Israel from Egypt with the ten plagues on Egypt and the Red Sea crossing. Moses leads the children of Israel out of Egypt and to Mount Sinai where he receives the ten commandments on the tables of stone. Israel receives the law from God through Moses and the instructions for the tabernacle. Exodus recounts the building of the tabernacle in preparation for God's presence to dwell with his people. Exodus is about the sovereign supremacy and glory of God. Exodus shows God (Yahweh) exalted above all powers in Heaven and earth, sovereignly working to save his chosen people for his own glory.

In this lesson we will look at the whole book of Exodus. We will consider the contents of the book, the theological meaning of some of the major events, and the message of Exodus for modern readers. In biblical theology we are looking for what the book reveals about Christ and his kingdom, and what it contributes to major themes of the whole Bible to see how it fits into the big picture of the Bible's main story.

OBSERVATION

Exodus is the second book of the Bible and the second book of Moses, or the Pentateuch. Exodus continues the account from Genesis, focusing on the nation of Israel. The events in Exodus cover something less than 400 years, with chapter 1 covering over 300, chapter 2 covering about 80, and chapters 3-40 covering a little over a year. That year is obviously the focus of the book.

Exodus recounts several historical events. The book tells of Moses' birth, early life, departure from Egypt for the wilderness, God calling Moses at the burning bush, and most of the book focuses on Moses leading Israel out of Egypt. The account of the exodus from Egypt is recorded in great detail, including Moses' return to Egypt, his sessions with Pharaoh, the ten plagues on Egypt and their gods, the Passover, and the Red Sea crossing. The journey from Egypt to Sinai takes about three months and includes testings, failings, judgments, miracles, and God's faithfulness. God gives Moses the law for Israel at Mount Sinai, including the ten commandments, additional statutes, and instructions for building the tabernacle. The book of Exodus closes with Israel encamped at Sinai and completing the tabernacle.

A brief outline of Exodus:

1. Chapters 1-12 focus on Israel in Egypt
2. Chapters 12-18 focus on the exodus from Egypt and the journey to Sinai
3. Chapters 19-40 focus on Israel encamped at Sinai with Moses going up and down the mountain to speak with God and to relay God's words to Israel

INTERPRETATION

Exodus is rich with theological meaning and event important to the rest of the Bible. Exodus recounts the major events of the Old Testament, i.e., the redemption of Israel, Passover, mighty acts of God, the old covenant, the priesthood, the tabernacle, etc. The events of Exodus are frequently referred back to throughout the rest of Scripture. Exodus is the third most referred to book in the New Testament, after Isaiah and Psalms. Incidentally, Genesis is the fourth most referred to book in the New Testament. In terms of most directly quoted books in the New Testament, Exodus is fifth behind Psalms, Isaiah, Deuteronomy, and Genesis.

God's sovereignty is the overwhelming message of Exodus. God (Yahweh) is revealed as the sovereign author and actor of history. Genesis ended with a clear testimony of God's sovereignty in ordaining events that led his chosen people into Egypt and Exodus continues that witness and expands it. Exodus gives us a behind-the-scenes look at God's involvement in affairs on earth. The book of Job would probably be the closest with its recounting of scenes in Heaven with God speaking to Satan.

Exodus not only reveals God acting in history but also reveals why he acts in history. God works first and foremost for his own glory (Exodus 6:7; 7:3-5; 8:10; 9:14-16, 29; 10:1-2; 11:9; 14:4, 13, 17, 31; 15:11, 14-16; 18:8-11). God's sovereignty is clearly revealed in two primary happenings in Exodus.

1. His sovereignty is seen in the difficult revelation of Pharaoh's hardened heart (Exodus 4:21; 9:34-10:1). The text says equally that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart, and that his heart was hardened. We often have difficulty interpreting these verses, but Paul referred to them as clear evidence of God's sovereignty and doing as he pleases with whom he will (Romans 9:14-18).
2. His sovereignty is also revealed in the renewal of the covenant with Israel. While Moses was on the mount receiving the ten commandments on the stone tablets, the children of Israel were at the foot of the mountain making a golden calf to worship. When Moses saw it, he angrily threw down the tablets, breaking them (Exodus 32:19). His act symbolized Israel's breaking of God's covenant. However, Moses interceded for the people that God not destroy them (Exodus 32:12-13, 30-32). In the midst of the fire, smoke, lightning, and the voice of thunder, God is revealed as merciful and forgiving (Exodus 34:5-7). This is quite a mysterious text, but it shows God acting sovereignly is patient bearing with Israel.

Exodus reveals the terror of God's holiness, particularly through his presence on the mount and his laws (Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-19). God's wrath and judgment are seen in the plagues on Egypt and particularly the Passover. In the Passover, it is made clear that God is not ultimately saving Israel from the Egyptians but from his own wrath. At the cost of a yearling lamb, the wrath and judgment of God passed over the house where the blood was applied, else the Angel of the Lord would bring death to that house. Though their slavery in Egypt was a hard and bitter bondage, Israel ultimately needed delivered from God's wrath.

Exodus is rich with pictures pointing to the Messiah, the Christ. In Exodus, there are miraculous circumstances surrounding the birth of the deliverer. The spotless Passover lamb pictures the perfect sacrifice for sin. The manna was bread from Heaven picturing the true bread from Heaven. The living water, the smitten rock, the tabernacle, and the priesthood with the great high priest point us to the coming One. Jesus Christ is the descendant of Jacob who became a slave, fulfilled the law of God perfectly, and died without blemish as a sacrifice for sins. His shed blood applied delivers all who repent and trust in him from the bondage of sin and the wrath of God to live in the kingdom of his peace and blessing eternally.

Exodus continues the progress of revelation concerning God's kingdom. At Sinai, Israel received the charter that constituted them as a nation, a body politic (Exodus 19:5-6). The designation as a "kingdom of priests" points to the mediatorial nature of the kingdom. God's blessings will be mediated to the nations through his peculiar people and holy nation.

The old covenant in Exodus is a provisional tutelage for receiving the promises of the Abrahamic covenant what would ultimately be fulfilled in the new covenant (Galatians 3:21-29). Israel's failure to keep this old covenant is no surprise and the law simply had no provision or ability to make the people obedient in order to receive the blessings.

APPLICATION

What does Exodus relate to modern readers? How does a book written thousands of years ago to a small nation of people in the Middle East help us today? This lesson has been an overview of Exodus with hopes of leading to a theological understanding of this second book of law. A contemporary Christian reading of Exodus yields at least three important applications.

1. Exodus helps us understand who God is. The God of Israel in Exodus is the same God in Isaiah, Matthew, and Revelation. God does not change and the book of Exodus reveals much about him that is just as true today. Exodus shows us God is sovereign over history and is working all things out according to his purpose and the counsel of his own will. This is always the case, though not always as obvious.
2. Exodus helps us understand why and how to fear God. We don't turn to Exodus in order to go back under the law. No, Christ is the end, or fulfillment, of the law for all who believe. Observing the law is not how we fear God from faith. Reading Exodus will help us understand the holiness of God and what it means to be his holy people. Consider Moses interceding for Israel in Exodus 33:15-16. The holiness of God's people means having the presence of God among us. His people reflect his holiness, not by wearing a special uniform or eating a strange diet, but rather by love and concern for righteousness. In other words, God's law reflects his concern for justice, love, and care for our neighbors, even our enemies (Exodus 23:1-9). His people should reflect his holiness in these same

concerns and acts. His people must reverence him by committing wholeheartedly to him and going after idols in the world.

3. Exodus helps us see Jesus Christ as our Passover who was killed for us. The Passover instructions forbid the breaking of any of the lamb's bones (Exodus 12:46) and John makes note of the fulfillment of such a small detail in Christ's death (John 19:31-36). John the Baptist announced him as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Paul also wrote of Christ as the Passover lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

CONCLUSION

Exodus is a rich book that teaches us about the mighty power of God and his faithfulness to fulfill his promises. God's presence particularly marked Israel as his people. God's law is holy and reflects his character.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This series is a study in biblical theology going book by book through the entire Bible. Each lesson typically covers one book of the Bible, though occasionally covers more than one book when the books are short. This PDF is provided for personal study, small group study, or use in a church class. Unless otherwise noted, all lessons have been prepared by Jeff Short, the pastor of Harmony Baptist Church.

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