

The Exodus Era (Exodus-Deuteronomy)

The Exodus was the mass movement of the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt back to the Promised Land in Canaan. It was not an easy movement. The Pharaoh of Egypt did not want them to go, and he threatened them with military retaliation. The miracles God performed during this time are among the most spectacular miracles recorded in the Bible—the Nile River turned to blood, shepherds’ rods turned into snakes, the firstborn of every Egyptian household died, and the Red Sea parted to allow the Israelites to cross over on dry land, escaping the Egyptian army.

Movies have sometimes portrayed this event as a little band of nomads roaming about the desert, camping under palm trees and singing Hebrew folk songs around a small campfire. This picture could hardly be further from the truth. The Book of Numbers tells us that when the Israelites left Egypt, there were six hundred thousand fighting men. It is reasonable to assume that if there were six hundred thousand fighting men, there were also six hundred thousand women. That’s 1,200,000. Each of those families may have had at least two children. That’s another 1,200,000. In addition there were the men who were too old to fight, and their wives. There was the priestly tribe, the Levites, who didn’t fight, and their wives and their children. There were, conservatively speaking, between two and a half to three million people who left Egypt during this “Exodus.”

This was not a little tribe of nomads roaming about the desert. This was a nation on the move. Look at the state of Texas on a map and imagine the city of Dallas beginning to move across the map, and you get an idea of the magnitude of the Exodus. When you add all the animals they took with them for food and milk, as well as for sacrifices, this qualified as a horde! Instead of looking for a flat spot under a palm tree to camp, they had to look for a valley ten miles square. When they lined up across the Red Sea, more than a little aisle was required. If they crossed the Red Sea one hundred abreast, counting the animals, the column would have stretched perhaps as far as fifty miles back into the desert.

Personal beliefs aside, this ranks as one of the greatest historical events of the ancient world, and this was an event over which Moses presided.

Story Line Summary: Through Moses, God delivers the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt and then gives them the law.

There are four major events in the Exodus Era:

- Deliverance from Egypt
- Receiving The Law and the Instructions for the Tabernacle
- Rebellion at Kadesh Barnea
- Forty Years of Wandering



Ex. 3:14 **I am who I am.** In response to Moses’ question (“What is [your] name?” v. 13), God reveals his name to be “Yahweh” (corresponding to the four Hebrew consonants YHWH). The three occurrences of “I am” in v. 14 all represent forms of the Hebrew verb that means “to be” (Hb. *hayah*), and in each case they are related to the divine name Yahweh (i.e., “the Lord”; see note on v. 15). The divine name “Yahweh” has suggested to scholars a range of likely nuances of meaning: (1) that God is self-existent and therefore not dependent on anything else for his own existence; (2) that God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists; (3) that God is immutable in his being and character and thus is not in the process of becoming something different from what he is (e.g., “the same yesterday and today and forever,” Heb. 13:8); and (4) that God is eternal in his existence. While each of these points is true of God, the main focus in this passage is on the Lord’s promise to be with Moses and his people. The word translated “I am” (Hb. *’ehyeh*) can also be understood and translated as “I will be” (cf. ESV footnote). Given the context of Ex. 3:12 (“I will be with you”), the name of Yahweh (“the Lord”) is also a clear reminder of God’s promises to his people and of his help for them to fulfill their calling. In each of these cases, the personal name of God as revealed to Moses expresses something essential about the attributes and character of God.

Deliverance: Freedom from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1-18)

The Hebrews have languished under slavery in Egypt for four hundred years when they cry out to God for deliverance. God raises up Moses as His spokesman to Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, asking for spiritual freedom for the Hebrew people. Pharaoh refuses that request, and a series of ten plagues is levied on Egypt to prompt Pharaoh to let the people go. The plagues start out badly and they get worse- from frogs, to gnats, to water turned into blood, to the death of the firstborn in every household of Egypt. Finally, Pharaoh consents to let the Hebrews leave Egypt. After they have gone, he changes his mind and attempts to recapture them. They are as far as the Red Sea [from Egypt] when God parts the Red Sea and the Hebrew people cross over to the other side. The waters come together again, protecting them from the Egyptian army and freeing them from slavery in Egypt. God, of course, has only one destination for them: the Promised Land of Canaan...the land “flowing with milk and honey.” The land that their father Abraham had first settled is again to be their home.

The Law: God’s commandments at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-40)

The Hebrew people now begin to take on a national identity as Israel. From the Red Sea, the Israelites travel south to the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula and camp at Mount Sinai. They receive God’s commandments at Mount Sinai. Moses meets with God alone at the top of Mount Sinai, where he receives the Ten Commandments written on tablets of stone by the finger of God. Moses also receives a full revelation of the law that is to govern Israel’s national life as well as her relationship to God. God promises to bless her abundantly for obedience and curse her soundly for disobedience.

Kadesh Barnea: Place of Rebellion Against God (Numbers 10-14)

Israel leaves Mount Sinai and migrates north to an oasis, Kadesh Barnea, which is in the southern gateway into the Promised Land. From this vantage point, twelve spies are sent into the Promised Land, one spy from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The land is inhabited by the Canaanites, who would not take kindly to an Israelite horde coming back into the land. When the spies return, they have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that the land is bountiful, “flowing with milk and honey.” The bad news is that there are giants and hostile armies throughout the land. Ten spies report that the land is indomitable (in spite of the fact that God has promised to give them victory over any opposing forces). Two spies, Joshua and Caleb, exhort the people to believe God and go into the land. The people believe the majority report and refuse to follow Moses into the land. Thus, this becomes known as *a place of rebellion against God*.

Forty Years of Wandering: Consequences of Rebelling Against God (Numbers 20-36)

As a consequence of rebelling against God at Kadash-Barnea, the “Exodus” generation is condemned to wander in the wilderness until everyone who was twenty-one years old or older at the time dies. In the ensuing forty years, a new generation comes to leadership; it is willing to follow the leaders into the land. Moses leads them north to the Dead Sea near Jericho, the eastern gateway to the Promised Land. Moses encourages the people, gives them additional instruction found in the Book of Deuteronomy, and then dies.

Three Stages of Moses’ Life

Location	Age	Reference
Egypt	0–40	Ex. 2:11 ; Acts 7:23
Midian	41–80	Ex. 2:15 ; 7:7 ; Acts 7:29–30
The wilderness and edge of Promised Land	81–120	Deut. 31:2 ; 34:7 ; cf. Num. 14:33–34 ; Deut. 29:5

Name _____ Date _____ (2 points each) Score _____

Exodus Era Homework

Who is the leader of the Israelites during the Exodus Era? _____

Where did he grow up? _____ (Ex 2)

What is the meaning of his name? _____ (Ex 2: _____)

God spoke to him from a _____ and called him to be the new leader (Ex 3).

Who was his father-in-law? _____ (Exodus 3)

Who was his right hand man and Israel's first high priest? _____

What caused Jacob and his sons and daughters to relocate to Egypt? _____ (Gen. 43)

What are the four main events of the Exodus Era?

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What is the unique name of Egypt's King? _____

List the ten plagues:

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.

What sea did God part for Israel to cross on dry ground? _____ Name 2 large countries the Red Sea divides:

E _____ and S _____

God led Israel by day with a _____ and by _____ with a pillar of fire (Ex 13:20-22).

What are the Ten Commandments? (Exodus 20)

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

V. _____

VI. _____

VII.

VIII.

IX.

X.

Where did Moses receive the law from God? _____

In what year did Moses receive the law? a. 1776 b. 1446BC c. 70AD or d. 586BC _____

Why did Moses break the first tablets (tables, KJV) God gave him on Mt. Sinai? (Exodus 32)

What is the name of the container the tablets (tables) of stone were kept in? _____

(3pts.) Find a picture of the Tabernacle in a study Bible or on the Internet and describe what it looked like:

What happened at the Tabernacle?

What happened at Kadesh-Barnea? (Numbers 14; 32:8)

Who were the only two spies that believe God's promise to the Israelites? _____ and _____

How were the inhabitants of the Promised Land described in Numbers 13:33? _____

What was God's judgment against the Israelites for their sin at Kadesh-Barnea? (include length and location)

What were the two things God fed Israel in the wilderness? _____ (Num 11:7) and _____ (11:31)

Why wasn't Moses allowed to enter the Promised Land? (Numbers 20:7ff)

How old was Moses when he died and where did he die? _____ and the land _____ (De 34)

How is the 'Promised Land' described in Ex 3:8? _____

(3 pts.) How is the Passover lamb a picture of Christ?
