

What lessons can be learned from our study?

I. Background of Exodus

- Hebrew name of the book is “Sefer ve’ eleh Shemot” or “The Book of: These are The Names”. It is normally shortened to “Shemot”, simple meaning names. Exodus comes from the Greek title of the book, *Exodos Aigyptou*, used in the Septuagint.
- Regarded by some Jewish scholarship to be the most important book of the Hebrew Bible because of its contents:
 - Enslavement of the Israelites
 - Leadership of Moses
 - Beginning of prophecy
 - Revelation of God’s name to Moses (YHVH is used in Genesis 15:7)
 - Ten plagues
 - Passover instituted
 - Crossing of the sea
 - God providing manna
 - The Decalogue
 - The covenant between God and Israel
 - Beginning of legal portion of Torah, Sabbath rules established and sacrificial worship is detailed
 - Golden Calf incident
 - Construction of the tabernacle
- The narrative is not focused on historical details, but instead the significance of events within the story. Deuteronomy 4:32-39 describes the covenant with Israel as the greatest event since creation.
- The lack of historical detail and contemporary evidence from Egypt has caused the date of the Exodus events to be debated. Most of the evidence points to between 1200-1300 B.C. and under the reign of Rameses II and his son Merneptah. These were pharaohs of the 19th Dynasty in Egypt (First Dynasty was circa 3,000 B.C.). To give perspective, the Great Pyramid at Giza was built about 2,500-2,600 B.C.

II. Exodus 1: Did not know Joseph

- The Israelites had greatly multiplied and grown in number while in Egypt.
- The “new” king was concerned that they might ally with an enemy of Egypt from Canaan (knowing that the Hebrews were originally from there) if they continued to prosper unchecked.
- The Pharaoh’s initial measures are forced labor, making them build two storage cities. The industrious Israelites, blessed by God, multiplied in proportion with their sufferings. Forced labor becomes outright slavery.
- The king instructs two (only two?) Hebrew midwives to kill any newborn male Hebrews, but allow the daughters to live. The midwives feared God more than Pharaoh and did not carry out this command. They seem to lie when asked by the king why they are not carrying out their duty. God blesses the midwives and provides for them.
- Pharaoh strengthens his resolve and issues a blanket order to all people to throw male Hebrew children into the Nile. It is a military plan to eliminate potential enemy soldiers, not sound reproductive population control. The girls are the ones able to bear more children. One male could, in theory, father children with more than one woman.

III. Exodus 2: Birth to about 80

- Moses parents are not named here, but later are told to be Amram and Jochebed (Amram’s aunt). See Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59. The couple also produces Aaron and Miriam.
- The mother hides the son for three months, and then when she can hide him no more, places him in a basket in the Nile River, under the watch of Miriam. This seems a strange and unsafe action.
- Pharaoh’s daughter finds the baby in the Nile and deduces it is a Hebrew child. Miriam shrewdly sets up a deal for Moses’ true mother to nurse the child AND be paid out of the royal coffers to do so.

- Upon being weaned from his mother, the child goes to live in the royal household. He is named Moses, an Egyptian name meaning “born of” (i.e., Ra-meses means “born of Ra”). His Hebrew name is derived from Mosheh, meaning “drawn out”. Acts 7:22 reads that Moses was reared to be an educated man, powerful in word and deed.
- When Moses was approaching 40 (Acts 7:23), he witnessed an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave. Moved with compassion, Moses does a quick look around for witnesses, then slays the Egyptian and conceals the body in the sand. Justifiable homicide?
- The next day (word spreads fast) Moses intervenes with two Hebrews fighting. They reveal that the slaying of the Egyptian is widely known. Pharaoh is also made aware of Moses’ treachery and seeks to kill him. Moses flees to the land of Midian.
- The chivalrous Moses defends the daughters of Reuel (Jethro in 3:1 and 4:18) against some rude shepherds. He waters the flocks of the ladies. They inform their father of “the Egyptian’s” actions and Reuel rewards Moses with hospitality and the hand of his daughter Zipporah in marriage.
- Moses and Zipporah have a son and name him Gershom (foreigner) because Moses is a stranger in the land. This is also the name of Levi’s first born (Genesis 46:11 and Exodus 6:16).
- In the “process of time” (40 more years according to Acts 7:30), God takes notice of the plight of His people and begins the process of achieving their freedom.

IV. Exodus 3-4: God speaks while the bush burns

- Moses is working for his father-in-law as a shepherd. He is tending the flock at the mountain called Horeb (later Mt. Sinai, see 3:12).
- A messenger from God appears in the form of a bush that is burning, but not consumed. Moses marvels at the sight, but is quickly informed of where he is standing and who is speaking. Moses is afraid and hides his face, now afraid to look.
- God informs Moses of His intentions to free His people from Egypt and take them to the Promised Land in Canaan.
- The Lord tells Moses that he will be the leader of the liberation movement.
- Moses begins to question: Who am I to go before Pharaoh? The one God picked. Who shall I say has sent me? “*Ehyeh-asher-Ehyeh*”, that’s who. Tell them that the I AM sent you.
- God tells Moses to assemble the elders of Israel and tell them the plan as well as who sent him:
 - Plan to elders: Freedom from Egypt and delivery into Canaan
 - Plan to Pharaoh: Go worship and sacrifice three days. A lie?
- God prepares Moses with the knowledge that Pharaoh will resist this plan, but that He will overcome Pharaoh and Israel will in fact plunder the possessions of their former masters.
- The argument begins:
 - They won’t believe me....
 1. Miracle of staff to serpent
 2. Leprous hand restored
 3. Water from Nile into blood
 - I am not a good speaker....(contrasts Acts 7:22)
 1. Who gave man his speech?
 2. I will be with your mouth and teach you the words
 - Please Lord, not me!!!!
 1. Patience has run out. The Lord’s anger burns against Moses.
 2. Your brother Aaron is already on the way to meet you (already planned for Moses’ resistant excuses)
- Moses departs the mountain and asks permission from his father-in-law to return to Egypt with his family.
- God begins to reveal the ultimate plan of killing the firstborn of Egypt, defining Israel as His “firstborn”.
- A strange and unexplained story in vv. 24-26. Better get kid circumcised....
- The Lord sends out Aaron as promised (verse must be out of time with story) and he meets his lost brother. Together, they go to Egypt and assemble the elders, informing them of God’s plan and demonstrating the signs from God. The elders believe and bow low in homage to God.