

Exodus

Summary

The story of Exodus is about deliverance from oppression. After Joseph moved his entire family to Egypt, they continued to grow as a people over the next four hundred years. At this point, the nation had become large enough to be a threat to the reigning Pharaoh, so he began to persecute them. Eventually, through the work of Moses and Aaron, God brought His people out of Egypt in a dramatic way. Initially, the people rejoiced over their release from bondage, but then they began to face struggles in their wanderings. During these desert wanderings, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and subsequent commandments that were to be followed by the people of Israel. God made a covenant with Moses and the Israelites and said that if they were to follow His commands and laws, they would be blessed as a nation. At the end of the book of Exodus, the people are still amidst their desert wanderings and have built the tabernacle where they will worship and offer sacrifices to God.

Author

The book of Exodus, as well as the rest of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, have been attributed to Moses.

Date

The most common date given for the writing of Exodus is in the middle of the second millennium B.C., between c. 1446 and c. 1406, depending on the dates that Moses lived.

Primary Characters

Pharaoh (Exodus 1-14)

Moses (Exodus 2-40)

Miriam (Exodus 2, 15)

Aaron (Exodus 4-40)

Historical Moments

Israel's Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1-15)

The Passover (Exodus 12)

The Crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14)

The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19-24)

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)

The Golden Calf (Exodus 32)

The Tabernacle Is First Constructed (Exodus 35-40)

Major Theological Themes

Only God Deserves Worship - Though God is loving, He is also a jealous God, who desires His people's worship and affection. The episode with the golden calf in Exodus 32 shows that God takes worship very seriously and idolatry is not tolerated. This is a consistent theme throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, and the people of Israel suffer greatly for their misdirected and false worship.

God Has a Plan for Redemption - When the people of Israel begin to be persecuted and threatened by Pharaoh, God calls Moses to step in and set the people free. God's plan was to give them the Promised Land, and we know that He always fulfills His promises. God gives Moses the Law and covenant to show them the path to a restored relationship with Him. This is another indicator of God's greater plan for the redemption that will eventually come through Jesus Christ.

God Is Sovereign - God created the world at the beginning of Genesis, but He does not step back and just observe from that point on. He controls the course of history and is able to use entire peoples and nations for His purposes. God intervened and brought judgment on Pharaoh, and He brought the Israelites out of Egypt so that His purposes could be fulfilled in a much greater way. There is nothing in this world that can thwart God's plan for His people and the world.

Lessons Learned from Exodus

God Asks Us to Be Obedient - Throughout the entire book of Exodus, God asks Moses and the people of Israel to be obedient to His leading. When the people follow God's decrees and directions, they receive His provision and get to be a part of His amazing work. This does not mean that they do not have hardships along the way, but it does mean that God provides for them amidst their situation. On the other hand, they are often disobedient to God, and they suffer consequences as a result. We must continually ask ourselves if we are truly trying to obey God's Word and His calling on our lives. Oftentimes, our biggest problems are caused by our own deviation from the truths in God's Word.

Sin Has Consequences - Throughout the book of Exodus, there are times when the people directly go against God's Law, and the results are sometimes shocking in degree. The reason that God gave His people the Law and commandments in the book of Exodus is to guide them regarding the best way to live. God knows that living outside of this will cause unnecessary pain and struggle, and this is not what He wants for us. However, because He is a just and holy God, there must be consequences when we directly disobey Him. Thankfully, Jesus paid the ultimate price for our sins and has covered the need for our punishment. Let us continuously be grateful for this truth!

God Works Through Flawed People - When Moses was called to liberate his people from Egypt, he had a host of excuses for why he was not the right person for this role. God continued to assure him that he was chosen for a purpose and that he could do it with God's power. Moses was clearly not perfect, but nevertheless, God worked through him despite his human frailties. Regardless of our innate talents or perceived giftings, God can work through us to accomplish His work.