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Lesson 1

The Book of Exodus

The study of any individual book of the sixty-six of the Bible involves the following three areas:

1. Study of the book's background
2. Survey study of the whole book
3. Analytical study of each part of the book (each part may be more or less than one chapter)

The three areas designated above should be studied in the order in which they are listed. This lesson is a guide for the first two studies; all the succeeding lessons deal mostly with the analytical studies.

I. THE BACKGROUND OF EXODUS

Concerning any book of the Bible, we should be interested in who wrote it, when it was written, what its chief theme is, and what relation it bears to the Bible as a whole. Some answers to these questions are given here your own personal survey study will provide further light.

A. Name

The second book of the Bible has been given the title *Exodus* to represent one of the main historical events of its narrative: the Israelites' exit or *departure* from Egypt (read Ex. 19:1). The English title is derived from that of the Latin Vulgate, *Exodos*, which is based on the title *Exodus* of the Greek Septuagint version.

B. Writer

Jewish tradition ascribes to Moses the first five books of the Bible. Christ explicitly ascribed the Pentateuch to Moses (Luke 24:44). As

mentioned in this verse, the biblical authors divided the Old Testament into three parts—the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (the Psalms being representative of the large section called “Writings”). Christ frequently referred to different books as being written by Moses. For example, compare Mark 12:26 with Exodus 3:2-5; Matthew 8:3-4 with Leviticus 14:3-4; Matthew 19:7-8 with Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Also the text of Exodus itself clearly refers to Mosaic authorship (17:14; 24:4).

C. Date

Moses wrote Exodus sometime during the last half of the fifteenth century B.C. This is based on the 1445 B.C. date of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt.

D. Theme

Exodus is the book of redemption in its broad meaning. As of the beginning of the book, the descendants of Abraham are residents of Egypt, under rigorous bondage and oppression by Egypt's pharaoh. Exodus describes how God delivered Israel from that bondage by bringing them out of Egypt. But this is only the negative aspect of the large word *redemption*. Positively, God brought the Israelites into a covenant relationship with Himself, making them a “peculiar treasure” unto Himself (19:5) and giving them a law, which was to be the foundation of their national existence. This positive aspect of Israel's redemption is the theme of the last half of the book of Exodus. The redemption narrative of Exodus is thus one of the remarkable Old Testament illustrations of the great redemption wrought by Christ through Calvary.

E. Interval of Time Between Genesis and Exodus

When we open the book of Exodus we must bear in mind that many years have intervened between the events recorded in the last chapters of Genesis and the events which are now to occupy us. Also many changes have taken place. At the close of Genesis we left the chosen people of God (the descendants of Abraham through Jacob, or Israel) just a small family, consisting of Jacob's twelve sons with their wives and children, living in Egypt in the land of Goshen. Then they were the most favored people in the land. When we open Exodus, we find them grown to a great multitude; and instead of being the most favored by the peoples in Egypt, they are in bitter bondage to Egypt's rulers.

2. Make a list of the major *events* of Exodus and the major *characters*.

3. What about the *geography* of Exodus? Show the major areas (not individual places as such) of Exodus's geography on your chart.

4. Compare the general content of the first half of Exodus with that of the last half.

5. What is the main difference between the content of chapters 25–31 and that of chapters 35–40?

6. Name three major truths about God that appear prominent in the text of Exodus.

7. From your knowledge of Christ's ministry, what items of Exodus illustrate particular aspects of that ministry?

Having accomplished the above survey study thus far on your own, now proceed to read the remainder of this lesson as an amplification of your survey study.

A. The Structure of Exodus

Study the accompanying survey chart of the major groups of content in Exodus.

Note the following:

1. Exodus has forty chapters. Each numbered space in the above chart, represents a segment, segments usually being the length of one chapter.

2. There are, in Exodus, eight principal subjects; eight great facts around which the smaller facts group themselves; eight words by which one can hold the contents of the book in mind

and think through consecutively. Look at the chart and observe that these eight subjects are:

BONDAGE (1:1-22) BIRTH OF MOSES (2:1-25) CALL OF MOSES (3:1-7:13) PLAGUES (7:14-11:10)	PASSOVER (12:1-51) RED SEA (13:1-15:21) WILDERNESS (15:22-18:27) SINAI (19:1-40:38)
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It should be noted that the last plague, as threatened in chapter 11, does not fall upon Egypt until 12:29-30, in the middle of the Passover chapter.

3. Observe that under SINAI, there are four subdivisions, viz:

a. Law, chapters 19-24

b. Tabernacle instructions, chapters 25-31

c. Idolatry, chapters 32-34

d. Tabernacle construction, chapters 35-40

4. Considered geographically, Exodus falls into three chief divisions as indicated on the chart:

a. Israel in Egypt, chapters 1-12

b. Israel to Sinai, chapters 13-18

c. Israel at Sinai, chapters 19-40

See the map on page 63, and fix in your mind this geographical divisions in Exodus.

B. Types of Christ

C. I. Scofield states: "A type is a divinely purposed illustration of some truth. It may be (1) a person (Rom. 5:14); (2) an event (1 Cor. 10:11); (3) a thing (Heb. 10:20); (4) an institution (Heb. 9:11); (5) a ceremonial (1 Cor. 5:7). Types occur most frequently in the Pentateuch, but are found, more sparingly, elsewhere. The anti-type or fulfillment of the type, is found usually in the New Testament."

Some of the great types of Christ in Exodus are:

GENERAL TYPES

1. The *Paschal Lamb*. Type of Christ our Redeemer (Ex. 12:1-28; cf. John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:6-7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

2. The *Manna*. Type of Christ as the Bread of Life, come down from heaven to die "for the life of the world" (Ex. 16:1-36; cf. John 6:35, 48-51).

3. The *Rock*. (Ex. 17:5-6; cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-4).

4. The *Tabernacle* (Ex. 25:1-31:18; 35:1-40:38; cf. Heb. 9).

HUMAN TYPES

1. *Moses*. Type of Christ the Deliverer (Ex. 5:1; cf. Luke 4:16-21)
2. *Aaron*. Type of Christ our High Priest (Ex. 4:27; 7:1-2, 19; cf. Heb. 5:4; 9:4, 11-12, 25-26)

C. Symbolism in Exodus

The part of Israel's history recorded in Exodus presents a wonderful symbolism that many Bible readers entirely overlook, but which, if observed, makes this whole narrative a veritable treasure-house of spiritual and practical truth. Our authority for calling it symbolic or typical is found in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11.

C. I. Scofield has said of the Pentateuch: "The five books ascribed to Moses have a peculiar place in the structure of the Bible, and an order which is undeniably the order of the experience of the people of God in all ages. Genesis is the book of origins—the beginning of life, and of ruin through sin. Its first word, 'In the beginning God,' is in striking contrast with the end, 'in a coffin in Egypt.' Exodus is the book of redemption, the first need of a ruined race. Leviticus is the book of worship and communion, the proper exercise of the redeemer. Numbers speaks of the experiences of a pilgrim people, the redeemed, passing through a hostile scene to a promised inheritance. Deuteronomy, retrospective and prospective, is a book of instruction for the redeemed about to enter that inheritance. In the Pentateuch, therefore, we have a true and logical introduction to the entire Bible; and, in type, an epitome of the divine revelation."

This symbolism is especially apparent in the book of Exodus. Israel in bondage to Pharaoh presents a picture of the human soul in bondage to Satan, and as we see Israel being delivered by God out of bondage, wandering in the wilderness, and at last reaching their promised inheritance, we behold a striking picture of the history of the individual soul.

Look at the map on page 63, and note the three geographical places: Egypt, the Wilderness, and Canaan. These three geographical places mark the three stages of Israel's journey and suggest the following three stages in the history of the redeemed soul:

1. *Egypt* stands for the world, or Satan's domain. Israel in Egypt, in bitter bondage, with death as the only outlook, exactly portrays the condition of a soul before salvation.

2. *The Wilderness* setbacks stand for the unsundered Christian life. Israel in the wilderness, murmuring, stumbling, wandering, longing for the things left behind, powerless and dissatisfied,

is a true picture of that experience of so many of God's children, wherein they are saved indeed from the penalty of sin but not yet from its power.

3. *Canaan* stands for the surrendered Christian life, the Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled life, that in which God's children may have constant victory and delight. Israel in Canaan, as related in the book of Joshua, presents a picture of the soul wholly surrendered to God, filled with His Spirit, and enjoying His daily presence.

III. SUMMARY

Just as the story of Genesis proceeds from man's problem to God's solution, so Exodus opens with a nation's problem and closes with its redemption by God. The atmosphere of chapter 1 is indicated by the word *groan*, the atmosphere of chapter 40 by the word *glory*; and it is God throughout who brings about the change. His design of redemption for the descendants of Abraham, His beloved people, included the following:

1. Appointing a leader for Israel	(Moses)
2. Making its enemy impotent	(Plagues)
3. Delivering Israel from Egypt	(Red Sea)
4. Confirming the covenant relationship	(Promises)
5. Instituting a program of worship	(Law and Tabernacle)

From an overall view of Exodus one can thus see what a grand picture, graphically portrayed through history, is presented of God's redemptive ways with mankind. This overall view can only enhance the analytical studies of its parts, which is the object of your remaining studies in Exodus.