

Exodus

Who, When, Where

Written by Moses. Moses was a Hebrew, born in Egypt towards the end of the 215 years that his people lived there. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter as a baby and raised as part of the royal family. He left (ran away) from Egypt when he was 40 and lived in Midian to the east where he married and worked as a shepherd for his father in law. When he was about 80 Yahweh called him to return to Egypt and lead his people back to their promised land. He did, but it was a journey that took another 40 years. Moses himself never entered it, but he died at 120, just before they finally entered the land under the leadership of his disciple, Joshua.

The exodus took place around 1450BC. Presumably Moses wrote Exodus shortly after that, during the 40 years they were wandering in the wilderness.

This story covers about 80 years, from Moses' birth to the Exodus itself.

The story is mostly set in Egypt, but it would have been written in the wilderness between Egypt and Israel.

Summary

Exodus is the pretty well known story of Yahweh rescuing his people, in an amazingly miraculous way, from a life of slavery in Egypt.

We don't know exactly how long they had been slaves. They were in Egypt for a total of 215 years, and since Moses' brother Aaron wasn't killed as a baby it was probably just before Moses was born. So they were probably living as slaves for about 80 of those years.

Before You Read

We don't understand slavery very well in our modern world. How would you feel if your whole people were slaves in some foreign country?

How would you feel about God if you thought he led you down there, almost forced you to go really, and then it ended up like this?

But was this really the end?

How does this good news, bad news, good news, bad news, good news, ... story of life reflect the same things which just happened to Joseph in the end of Genesis? How is it like your life?

If you knew now that the very last one in the sequece will be "good news" would that make it easier to endure the bad news times?

In Egypt they had a lot of gods. The sun, the Nile, frogs, ... even Pharaoh himself. As you read Exodus look for confrontations between these gods and Yahweh, the one true god. Which one would you choose after seeing that unfold?

The other thing to remember as you read is that this story took a long time. There are 80 years between chapter 1 and chapter 40. God's story takes time. Even the ten plagues took place over about a year.

Key Verses

Exodus 3:14

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM," and he said, "You shall tell the children of Israel this: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

I AM. Yahweh doesn't just control time, and predict the future by working out what will happen. He is independent of time. He existed before time began. He is outside it. He can see Eden, and he can see you, at the same time.

Yeshua is the same. Yeshua existed before Creation. One day he said that he had talked with Abraham, who lived 2,000 years before, and said "Before Abraham was, I am." Yeshua exists outside time. Abraham didn't.

Exodus 5:1

...This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says, 'Let my people go...'

It wasn't optional. Pharaoh thought it was. Yahweh showed him that it wasn't. People think they have a choice about becoming a Christian. God says, "You must believe in my son".

It isn't optional either. It's not "Please believe..."

Why does the modern church present it like that?

Exodus 16:17-18

... some gathered more, some gathered less, ... but nobody had anything left over.

This is God's idea of equality. Not that everyone has the same, but that everyone has what they need.

This is the idea behind Christian giving too. Not communistic equality, but that everyone has enough for what they need.

Exodus 17:11

When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

Might does not win battles. Neither does technology, training, superior numbers. There is so much more to this world than just the physical.

Yahweh decides who wins battles.

Exodus 20

The Ten Commandments

In Matthew 5&6 Yeshua expanded on these to show that these commandments are just the beginning of God's standard.

Even if you keep them, you still won't be righteous. We all fail. God knew we would, straight after giving Moses the ten commandments God said, "Now... when you break them, this is what you have to do to cover over your sin so I can tolerate you."

The other very important thing for Christians. These were rules for Jews. Christians are NOT under the Law. We do NOT have to keep these rules. But instead we need to listen to the holy spirit and be guided by him. We need to be wise in our choices. It is a great freedom and a great responsibility at the same time.

But even if we fail, we are completely righteous because our righteousness is based on what Yeshua did 2,000 years ago, not on what we did today.

Galatians 3:17

And this is what I'm saying – the laws, coming four hundred and thirty years later, doesn't invalidate a covenant which has been confirmed by God in the Anointed, so as to nullify the promise.

This is how we know how long they lived in Egypt. The Law came 430 years after the promise to Abraham. So we can calculate from other lifespans in Genesis that there were 215 years between Israel and his descenants moving to Egypt at the time of Joseph, to them all leaving again at the time of Moses.

In Genesis Yahweh told Abram that it would be 400 years before his descendants lived in their own land. He didn't say they would be slaves for 400 years.

Exodus 20:7

You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

God's name is Yahweh. It sort of means the one who was, and is, and who will be. It is sort of like "I am".

In the Ten Commandments the Jews were told not to misuse Yahweh's name. So they didn't use it at all just in case.

Modern translators often do that too. They write LORD instead of Yahweh.

God has a name. Let's use it to bring glory to him.

Yahweh.

Exodus 23:29-30

I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the animals of the field multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and inherit the land.

Israel taking control of the Promised Land is a picture of a Christian living the Spirit filled life. It requires the driving out of the things which had control before... our sins and bad habits.

But as with the Israelites, God says he won't drive them all out it one go because we wouldn't be able to keep control. Instead God drives them out for us, little by little, one at a time, usually throughout the rest of our lives.

Exodus 23:32-33

You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

So Christians live in the world. Yahweh is slowly unfolding his plan.

Do we serve their gods? Money, fame, looks, being cool, entertainment, judging others? Those things should not dwell in the life of a Christian. They should not be found in a church.

They will ensnare us and cause us to sin.

Exodus 32:1

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him."

So many things.

After all they had seen. A year of miracles from Yahweh. Miraculous deliverance from their slavery.

And their faith lasted less than 40 days.

Interesting too that they credited Moses with delivering them. Not Yahweh?

And now, just like the Egyptians, they wanted to make their own gods. (What can a god you make yourself possibly do for you! It's insanity).

Just like every generation before and after them. We make our own gods rather than serve Yahweh.

Do you? Do you try to do both? (It's impossible).

Exodus 32:2

Aaron said to them, "Take off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me."

And then Aaron. Moses' brother. Who had been up the mountain and seen God.

Literally.

Instead of standing up and encouraging them to trust in Yahweh, caves in and makes them idols from the gold which Yahweh had made the Egyptians give them as they fled their slavery.

How many times Aaron's stomach must have churned as he remembered that day and regretted it the rest of his life.

My days like that are at least pretty private. His was known by everyone. He could never escape that.

If you have days like that in your past. Hand them over to Yahweh. He will forgive you. Guaranteed. As long as you come in the name of Yeshua.

The memories will still gnaw away at you. But he will choose to forget that they ever happened.

Exodus 32:14

Yahweh relented of the evil which he said he would do to his people.

A controversial translation.

Some say "repented", most say "relented".

Some say "evil", some say "disaster".

Clearly Yahweh cannot do evil. But I guess he could threaten it to see how Moses would react, and to show Moses' character to all those witnesses that day.

Moses basically argued with Yahweh that if he wiped them out the Egyptians would lose respect for Yahweh, and say, "oh, that's why he took them out into the desert... to kill them all".

How would you have react if Yahweh said, "I will wipe out your entire nation, except you, and I will build a godly people from your descendants".

You in?

Exodus 32:24

I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them take it off;' so they gave it to me; and I threw it into the fire, and it became this calf."

Aaron reveals even more of his character. I'd guess that his love language is compliments. He can't let himself take the blame for offering to make them an idol.

He blamed the people, and claimed a miracle. He threw gold into the fire and a calf statue came out of it.

I wonder if anyone has ever read that and thought "wow, that's amazing!". I would think everyone who read it ever, saw it for the butt covering lie that it was.

Do you tell those?

Do you realise how obvious it is to the rest of us when you do it?

If you do wrong. Accept the blame.

Exodus 32:30

On the next day, Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. Now I will go up to Yahweh. Perhaps I shall make atonement for your sin."

Now it's Moses' turn. He thinks he can make atonement. He has sins of his own. In fact, so many that he cannot possibly atone even for his own sins, no matter what he does.

Yeshua is the only one who could ever atone for anyone's sin. He is the only one who didn't have sins of his own.

You a church leader? You think you're better than those you lead? That's pride. It's a sin. Ask Yahweh to show you the truth. (Maybe he just did).

Exodus 34, Galatians 3

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In this part of Exodus Moses received the Ten Commandments. The start of The Law. It is essential for Christians to realise, as Paulus explains in Galatians 3, the Law died with Yeshua.

Christians are NOT under the Law. We have forgiveness. And we have to stop behaving, even teaching, that Christians have to keep the Law.

Read Galatians 3. Realise for yourself.

Exodus 40:36-37

When the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys; but if the cloud wasn't taken up, then they didn't travel until the day that it was taken up.

Is that how you choose where to live? Where to go?

Or do you wait until Yahweh says, "Let's go here"?

Or do you just choose for yourself, and hope somehow Yahweh blesses that?

You could waste a life doing it that way.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

So, Yahweh raised Moses up for the very purpose of rescuing his people and leading them to the promised land. So 80 years before the Exodus, God's plan was already underway.

Yet they spent the next 80 years, crying out to God, "Why won't you rescue us! When will you save us!" But all the while, God's rescue was on the way.

Our focus is always on NOW. But God is all about timing. His plan will be completed when it is the perfect time, not when it is most convenient and comfortable for us.

Kind of like God's plan for saving mankind. It's exactly as he wanted. But he's had it underway for thousands of years, and it is progressing in fact as he willed. And yet so many people cry out, "Why do you allow this suffering!", "Why don't you do something about it?" He is.

When Moses was born everyone thought he was special. He didn't believe he ran away. And 40 years later he came back claiming to be special but they didn't believe him.

They were so impatient that just a few months after their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and eating bread from heaven every day, they give up on Moses, and Yahweh, when he's gone for a few weeks, and they build a golden calf to worship! Moses was taking too long!

Did you see their grumbling, complaining spirit come out in this story? It seems like that was all they ever did ... as soon as anything goes against what they want they complain not just to, but about God.

Don't be like them. Don't do that.

What similarities do you see between the stories of Moses and Yeshua? Things like hundreds of innocent babies being killed in Satan's attempt to kill them, but they escaped. ... you fill in the rest.

The Passover lamb is a picture of Yeshua. He is God's passover lamb for us, so we can be saved. Moses wrote Exodus about 1400 years before Yeshua was crucified, yet even tiny details, like that none of his bones were broken, were part of the Passover. God's plans do sometimes take a long time from our point of view, but God has been planning his rescue of the human race from their slavery to sin since the beginning of time. Remember he said back in Genesis 3, "Eve's seed, (Yeshua), will crush Satan's head."

Exodus also has the first battles of the Israelites. Against the might of Pharaoh's army, against the Amalekites. By now you already know that Yahweh won both of those battles. Have you thought about how?

Not by superior force. Not by superior skill (they were just untrained slaves against highly trained soldiers). They won both battles because God decided that they would win.

You will see this right through the Bible. God decides who wins wars. Not might, not power, but God's spirit...