

# Exodus

## Original Historical Setting

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** Written around 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

**Audience:** Israelites who have fled Egypt

**Occasion:** To encourage Israelites while they prepared to enter the Promised Land (Canaan)

### **Timeline:**

- ~1700 B.C. – Israelites in bondage in Egypt
- ~ 1527 B.C. – Moses born
- ~1446 B.C. – Moses led Israelites out of Egypt
- ~1445 B.C. – Ten Commandments given

## World Events that occur simultaneously

- 1700 B.C. – Hammurabi rules Babylon
- 1766 B.C. – Shang Dynasty (1<sup>st</sup> in China)
- 1500 B.C. – Sundials used in Egypt

## Genre/Literary style

Historical narrative, with some laws

## Features and Structure

- Exodus is organized around the life and travels of Moses. The action occurs wherever Moses is present.
- The covenant God makes with Moses and the Israelites is similar to the “suzerain-vassal” covenant in which the master (suzerain) promises to protect and bless the subjects (vassals) as long as they obey and submit to him.
- The first half of Exodus Ch 1-18 (Israel’s deliverance from Egypt) and the last fourth Ch 32-40 (Israel’s violation of the covenant, restoration and building of the tabernacle) are mainly historical narrative in nature.
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- Sandwiched between the historical sections are law chapters Ch 19-24 (the covenant at Sinai) and Ch 25-31 (rules concerning the tabernacle and priesthood).

## Key text(s)

- 3:14 – God stating His name is “I AM” at the burning bush
- 5:1 – Moses telling Pharaoh, “Let my people go.”
- 12:1-30 – Death of first born/Passover
- 20:1-17 – 10 Commandments
- 29:45-46 – God’s solemn pledge that He would dwell with the people, He would be their God, and they would know that He was the Lord their God Who brought them out of Egypt

## What to look for

- Notice how God is not a passive observer, but an active participant in His creation
- As you read the description of how the tabernacle was to be constructed and the items to be placed within it, see if you can see parallels with the person of Jesus Christ and His ministry.
- 1) God’s Power (10 Plagues)  
2) God’s Holiness (10 Commandments)  
3) God’s Presence (Tabernacle)

## Interesting facts

- Exodus is the Greek word meaning “way out” or “departure.” Thus it tells the story of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt
- Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt in the Six-Day War of 1967. But they returned it in 1979 under terms of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.
- The ten plagues were probably God’s way of targeting the false gods of Egypt to show He was the One True God. For example, when darkness covered the land (plague 9) He proves He had power over the supposed chief Egyptian deity, Ra, the sun god.