



FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM | *The Story of Israel*
the books of EXODUS & LEVITICUS & NUMBERS

CLASS INSTRUCTIONS

Every Class will have Biblical reading for preparation. However, *we will not read the whole text in classes.* Please **pre-read** before the class. *Take Home Review Sheets* for notes will be provided on a weekly basis.

Regarding Health and Safety, we will sit in comfortable distanced seating during class – and it is recommended that masks be worn to your seat and as you leave.

#FALL 2020

LESSON SCHEDULE

1.	9/8	Introduction to the Class and the Exodus of Israel
2.	9/15	Bondage and the Rise of the Deliverer Exodus 1-2
3.	9/22	The Call of the Deliverer Exodus 3:1-4:23
4.	9/29	Liberation Begins Exodus 5:1-6:30
5.	10/6	The Prophet and The Power of God Exodus 7:1-11:10
6.	10/13	The Prophet and The Power of God (2) Exodus 7:1-11:10
7.	10/20	The Passover* and Feast of Unleavened Bread Exodus 12-13 with Leviticus 23:4-8
8.	10/27	The March to Freedom Exodus 14-15
9.	11/3	The Journey of Complaint and the Testing of the People Exodus 16-17
10.	11/10	Jethro and Moses, the Law Giver Exodus 18-19
11.	11/17	Covenant Is Made with Ten Commandments: The Moral Code Exodus 20
12.	12/1	Covenant Ordinances (Ex. 21:1): Obedience and Disobedience (Lev. 26:14-46 with Deuteronomy 28-30) and Capital Crimes (Exodus 21)..
13.	12/8	Covenant Ordinances: Holiness (Ex. 22:31; Lev. 19:1-3; 20:7, 26): <i>"You must be holy" involves many things, including respect, Sabbath and the Tithe</i> (Ex. 22:29-30; 23:19; Lev. 27:30-34).
14.	12/15	The Covenant Calendar Special days of the Tabernacle (Ex. 23:14-17; 31:12-17; 34:18, 21-26; 35:1-3; Lev. 16:1-34; 19:30; 23:1-44; 25:1-24; 26:2): The Sabbath Day (Ex. 31:12-17; 34:21; 35:1-3; Lev. 19:30; 23:1-3; 26:2); The Sabbath Year (Lev. 25:1-7). The Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-24); *The Passover (Lev. 23:4-5); The Festival of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 34:18; Lev. 23:6-8); The Festival of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:9-14); The Festival of Harvest (Lev. 23:15-22); The Festival of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25); The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1-34; 23:26-32); The Festival of Tabernacles (Shelters) (Lev. 23:33-44).

Lesson 1**Introduction to the Class and the Exodus of Israel**

The three books we will consider in this class are bookended by Genesis, the Beginning of the Jewish story (which is the beginning of the human story), and Deuteronomy, the retelling of their story by Moses before the Nation embarks on their own beginnings in the promised land – led by Joshua: From Beginning to Beginning.

Exodus | Exodus, the second book of Torah, begins where Genesis ended—with Israel in Egypt. In the Hebrew Bible, it is titled, “And these are the names,” taken from the first two words of the book where the same phrase occurs in Genesis 46:8 where it likewise introduces a list of the names of those Israelites “who went to Egypt with Jacob” (1:1). In the Greek Bible (i.e., the Septuagint, or LXX), it is titled “the way out,” “exit” or “departure” (see Luke 9:31; Hebrews 11:22). The story begins after the twelve brothers of Israel had settled and reunited with Joseph whom God had placed in Egypt to rescue both Egypt and Israel. Exodus is the story of God’s deliverance of his chosen people from slavery to freedom at Sinai, where they are given the law from Moses, the presence of God in the tabernacle and the laws as a nation which sets out the framework of the Bible story as well as the foundations in history, redemption, ethics and law for the nation of Israel. Thus, as a book, Exodus was not intended to exist separately, but was thought of as *a continuation of a narrative that began in Genesis* and was completed in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The first five books of the Bible were together known by the Jews as the Pentateuch. This name by which the first five books of the Bible are designated, is derived from two Greek words, *pente*, “five,” and *teuchos*, a “volume,” signifying that it is marked as a fivefold volume. Originally, these books formed one continuous work in the Hebrew manuscripts known as the *torah* (i.e. law) and they are still connected in one unbroken roll. When they were distinguished into five portions, each having a separate title, is not known; However, it is certain that the distinction dates at or before the time of the Septuagint translation since that the first appearance of a Pentateuch with the Torah. These books are foundational because they contain God's revelation about human origins in the image of God, how sin entered human history and the judgment that followed, and the origin of the nation of Israel and its covenant-relationship to Yahweh.

The events of the Exodus occurred in c. 1446 B.C. This is based on the calculation of 480 years from Israel’s departure from Egypt to the fourth year of Solomon’s reign (c. 966 B.C.; see 1 Kings 6:1). The “three hundred years” of Judges 11:26 also fits comfortably within this time span of this earlier, traditional view. Although Egyptian chronology relating to the 18th dynasty remains somewhat uncertain, there is research that supports the traditional view that two of this dynasty’s pharaohs, Thutmose III and his son Amunhotep II, were the pharaohs of the oppression and the exodus respectively.

On the other hand, because Exodus 1:11 depicts Israel working on a city called Raamses, some have suggested that the Exodus occurred during

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the reign of Raamses II in Egypt (c. 1279–1213 B.C.), possibly around 1260 B.C. in the 19th-dynasty pharaoh of Seti I and his son Rameses II (i.e. the movie *The Ten Commandments*). Further, archaeological evidence of the destruction of numerous Canaanite cities in the 13th century BC is advanced as proof that Joshua’s troops invaded the promised land in that century.

The identity of the cities’ attackers, however, cannot be positively ascertained. The raids may have been initiated by later Israelite armies, or by Philistines or other outsiders. In addition, the archaeological evidence itself *has become increasingly ambiguous*, and recent scholarship has moved it back earlier to the traditional view. Also, the name Rameses in 1:11 could very well be the result of an editorial updating by someone who lived centuries after Moses—a procedure that probably accounts for the appearance of the same word in Genesis 47:11. In short, there are no compelling reasons to modify in any substantial way the traditional 1446 BC date for the Exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.

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Further, there are several statements throughout the Pentateuch (and the Bible) that indicate Moses wrote the book. In Exodus 17:14, the Lord told Moses **to write** an account of the battle with Amalek. In 24:4, Moses, at Mount Sinai, **wrote down** all the words and laws spoken by the Lord and repeated to the people. In Numbers 33:1-2, **Moses recorded** the Israelites’ journey out of Egypt. In Deuteronomy 31:9, **Moses wrote** this law and gave it to the priests and commanded them to read this law. The literal understanding of this text requires that a written copy of the Law must have been in existence. Then, in Deuteronomy 31:24, it states that after Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end he commanded the Levites to “Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord.” Last, Joshua 8:31 refers to the command of Exodus 20:25 as having been “written in the Book of the Law of Moses.” Even the New Testament, namely Jesus, claims Mosaic authorship (Mark 7:10; 12:26, Luke 2:22–23). Taken together, these references strongly suggest that Moses was largely responsible for writing the book of Exodus along with the other four books of the Pentateuch—the traditional view.

Leviticus | Leviticus receives its name from the Septuagint and means “relating to the Levites.” Its Hebrew title is the first word in the Hebrew text of the book and means “And He [i.e., the Lord] called.” Although Leviticus does not deal only with the special duties of the Levites, it is so named *because it concerns mainly the service of worship at the tabernacle*, which was conducted by the priests who were the sons of Aaron, assisted by many from the rest of the tribe of Levi. Exodus gave the directions for building the tabernacle, and now Leviticus gives the laws and regulations for worship there, including instructions on ceremonial cleanness, moral laws, holy days, the sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee. These laws were given during the year that Israel camped at Mount Sinai, when God directed Moses in organizing Israel’s worship, government and military forces.

As a manual of regulations, Leviticus explains how Israel, and Aaron particularly, should be holy and worship Yahweh in a holy manner. Holiness in this sense means to be separated from sin and set apart exclusively to the Lord for his purpose and for His glory. So the key thought of the book is holiness (see 11:44 and Exodus 3:5)—the holiness

of God and his people. In Leviticus perfect animals are demanded for its many sacrifices (1–7) and requires priests without deformity (8–10). A woman’s hemorrhaging after giving birth (12); sores, burns or baldness (13–14); a man’s bodily discharge (15:1–18); specific activities during a woman’s monthly period (15:19–33)—all may be signs of blemish (a lack of perfection) and symbolizes in these human spiritual defects, humanity’s spiritual emptiness and need for wholeness. Even the person with visible skin disease must be banished from the camp, the place of God’s special presence, just as Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. Such people can return to the camp (and therefore to God’s presence) when they are pronounced whole again by the examining priests. Before they can reenter the camp, however, they must offer the prescribed, perfect sacrifices (which becomes the writer of Hebrews argument for the atoning work of the perfect Christ).

Numbers | The book of Numbers continues the history with preparations for moving on from Sinai to Canaan. The English name of the book also comes from the Septuagint and is based on the census lists found in chapters 1 and 26. The Hebrew title of the book (“in the desert”) is more descriptive of its contents. Numbers relates the story of Israel’s journey from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab on the border of Canaan. Much of its legislation for people and priests is similar to that in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The book tells of the murmuring and rebellion of God’s people and of their subsequent judgment. Those whom God had redeemed from slavery in Egypt and with whom He had made a covenant at Mount Sinai responded not with faith, gratitude and obedience but with unbelief, ingratitude and repeated acts of rebellion, which came to extreme expression in their refusal to fully conquer Canaan. Their faithlessness condemned them to live out their lives in the desert; only their children would enjoy the fulfillment of the promise that had originally been theirs (cf. Heb 3:7–4:11).

Exodus, however, is the big idea of the Bible. It unveils how God intended and did fulfill His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Though Israel was enslaved in a foreign land, God miraculously and dramatically delivered them to freedom. He made them a nation under His covenant with Moses on Mount Sinai. The ten plagues, the Passover, the parting of the Red Sea, the fearsome majesty of God’s presence at Mount Sinai, the giving of the Ten Commandments, the building of the tabernacle . . . these events from Exodus *are foundational* to the Jewish world view – and the message of the New Testament redemption in Christ. The frequency of references to Exodus by various biblical writers, and even Jesus’s own words, testify to its importance.

The exodus is central to the biblical understanding of who God is and of who God’s people are. But it’s also, then, hugely important to the way in which the New Testament writers (who are mostly Jews themselves) tell the story of what Jesus has done, and it is central to the way in which Jesus actually saves them. So remember, this is not just an interesting detail about history. It’s not just that they came out. It is that Israel was redeemed by the Passover Lamb, came out through the Red Sea, and went on to the Promised Land.

Even to this day when we take the Lord’s Supper, baptize a person, disciple a person, preach the gospel, or we talk about resurrection, we

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are doing exodus-like things. We're communicating that the Lord's Supper echoes this communion meal that they had, and baptism echoes this experience they had through the sea. Your future hope is based—like theirs was—on reaching a land flowing milk and honey.

The whole story of the Christian life is effectively an exodus story *in a different key*. And so, it is hard to overemphasize the significance of this book to the understanding of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The use of the Old in the New was not to establish that one fulfills the other – but to make us understand is that the story of God in the lives of us all is a story from slavery to freedom – Jesus Christ.

Next week's lesson and reading: **Bondage and the Rise of the Deliverer | Exodus 1-2**