



Israel in Egypt and the Exodus

Introduction

The **Exodus** is one of the most defining events in biblical history. It marks **God's deliverance** of His people from slavery in Egypt and His covenantal formation of Israel as a nation. The narrative stretches from the closing chapters of Genesis through Exodus, and its theological impact reverberates throughout the Old and New Testaments.

The story begins with Israel's descent into Egypt during Joseph's time, continues with centuries of **bondage**, and climaxes in God's miraculous deliverance under Moses. As the Lord declared: "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" ([Exodus 6:6](#)).

This article traces the journey of Israel in Egypt, the rise of Moses, the **plagues**, the Passover, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the covenant at Sinai, highlighting their historical, theological, and prophetic significance.

Israel's Descent into Egypt

The family of Jacob migrated to Egypt during a famine, where they were welcomed by Joseph, who had risen to power through God's providence ([Genesis 46:6-7](#)). Seventy persons entered Egypt, where they were given the land of Goshen ([Genesis 47:6](#)).

What began as a refuge became a place of bondage. Over generations, the Israelites multiplied greatly: "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty" ([Exodus 1:7](#)). This fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham also set the stage for Pharaoh's oppression.

Oppression in Egypt

A new **Pharaoh** arose who did not know Joseph. Fearing Israel's growth, he enslaved them, imposing harsh labor ([Exodus 1:11-14](#)). He even commanded the death of Hebrew male infants ([Exodus 1:16](#)).



This oppression reflects both the fallen world's hostility toward God's people and the need for divine deliverance. Yet even in suffering, God's purposes advanced.

The Birth and Call of Moses

Moses' life begins with miraculous preservation. Hidden in a basket on the Nile, he was found and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter ([Exodus 2:5-10](#)). After fleeing Egypt for killing an Egyptian, Moses encountered God in the burning bush on Mount Horeb. God revealed Himself as "I AM THAT I AM" ([Exodus 3:14](#)), commissioning Moses to deliver His people.

The Plagues of Egypt

When Pharaoh resisted, God unleashed ten plagues, each demonstrating His sovereignty over Egypt's gods:

1. Water turned to blood ([Exodus 7:20](#)).
2. Frogs covered the land ([Exodus 8:6](#)).
3. Lice infested Egypt ([Exodus 8:17](#)).
4. Swarms of flies ([Exodus 8:24](#)).
5. Death of livestock ([Exodus 9:6](#)).
6. Boils on man and beast ([Exodus 9:10](#)).
7. Hail and fire ([Exodus 9:23-24](#)).
8. Locusts devoured crops ([Exodus 10:13-15](#)).
9. Darkness for three days ([Exodus 10:22](#)).
10. Death of the firstborn ([Exodus 12:29-30](#)).

These judgments revealed the Lord as supreme over all false gods and earthly rulers.

The Passover

The climax came with the final plague. God instructed Israel to sacrifice a lamb and mark their doorposts with its blood. "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you" ([Exodus 12:13](#)).

The **Passover** became Israel's defining festival, commemorating redemption by blood. It pointed to Christ, our Passover Lamb: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" ([1 Corinthians 5:7](#)).



The Exodus and the Red Sea Crossing

Pharaoh finally released Israel, but soon pursued them. At the Red Sea, God miraculously parted the waters, allowing Israel to cross on dry ground. “And the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left” (Exodus 14:22).

When the Egyptians followed, the waters returned, destroying Pharaoh’s army ([Exodus 14:27-28](#)). This event became the ultimate demonstration of God’s deliverance.

The Wilderness Journey

In the wilderness, Israel received manna ([Exodus 16:15](#)), water from the rock ([Exodus 17:6](#)), and victory over Amalek ([Exodus 17:13](#)). Yet they also grumbled and rebelled, revealing their need for transformation.

Paul applied these lessons to believers: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition” ([1 Corinthians 10:11](#)).

The Covenant at Sinai

At **Mount Sinai**, God gave Israel the Law, establishing them as His covenant people: “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people” ([Exodus 19:5](#)).

The Ten Commandments summarized God’s moral law ([Exodus 20:1-17](#)). The covenant was sealed with blood, prefiguring the new covenant in Christ ([Hebrews 9:19-20](#)).

The Tabernacle and God’s Presence

God instructed Israel to build the **tabernacle**, saying, “Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” ([Exodus 25:8](#)). The tabernacle symbolized God’s dwelling with His people, foreshadowing Christ, “the Word... dwelt among us” ([John 1:14](#)).

The sacrificial system pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Theological Themes of the Exodus

The Exodus highlights:



- **Redemption:** God delivers from bondage.
- **Covenant:** God binds Himself to His people.
- **Presence:** God dwells with His people.
- **Judgment and Salvation:** God judges Egypt but saves Israel.
- **Christological fulfillment:** Passover and deliverance prefigure Christ's death and resurrection.

As Jude summarized: "The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of **Egypt**, afterward destroyed them that believed not" ([Jude 1:5](#)).

Conclusion

Israel's time in Egypt and the Exodus form the central redemptive event of the Old Testament. Through miraculous deliverance, covenant, and presence, God revealed Himself as Redeemer and King. These events foreshadow Christ, who brings the greater exodus—delivering His people from sin and death. For believers, the Exodus is not just history but a pattern of salvation, pointing to the Lamb who redeems us by His blood.