

INTRODUCTION TO 2ND BIBLEBOOK

EXODUS (1447 B.C.)

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A. THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS

1. The name of the book.

In the Hebrew Bible, the first five books in the Old Testament are called by their first words. So in Hebrew this book is called 'and these are the names' (Hebrew: *we-ellé shemot*). In the oldest translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, it is called 'Exodus' which means '*departure*', referring to Israel's departure from Egypt. However, the name 'Exodus' only describes the first historical part of the book. The second legal part of the book describes 'God's covenant at Sinai'.

The name 'Israel' was the name God gave to Jacob after he struggled with God¹. Thereafter, the name 'Israel' described the descendants of Jacob that grew to a nation in Egypt (1:1-7). 'Israel' finally became the name of *the beginning of God's chosen and believing people*. They believed in the LORD God who revealed himself through the prophets during the Old Testament period. They consisted of *the remnant of chosen believers from the natural nation of Israel*² and *included non-Jews* who bound themselves to the LORD³. 'God's people' Israel has never been terminated (at the beginning of the New Testament period) or substituted (by the New Testament Church), but *continued* (on the higher level of realities instead of shadows) during the New Testament period in the believers in the Messiah (Jesus Christ)⁴ and *extended* to include the believers in Jesus Christ from all the nations in the world⁵.

2. The writer, the date and the place of writing.

It is clear that for the greatest part of the book, Moses himself was the author. In Exodus 17:14 the Lord commanded Moses to write things down so that they may be remembered. In Numbers 33:2 the Lord commanded Moses to record the stages of their journey through the desert. This shows that Moses kept a journal of the important events in the history of Israel. For the facts contained in Exodus 1:1 - 2:10, Moses must have relied on what his mother, sister and others had told him. In Exodus 6:13-27 some family records have been incorporated and in Exodus 15:1-21 a song of Moses has been recorded. In Exodus 24:4,7 we read that Moses wrote down everything the Lord had said to him on Mount Sinai and called this '*the Book of the Covenant*'. This book contained at least Exodus 20:22 to 23:33. In Exodus 34:27-28 we read that the Lord commanded Moses to write down the words of *the renewal of the covenant* after Israel had broken the covenant by making a golden calf.

Thus, according to the facts in Exodus, Moses was the writer of the historical and legal parts of the book. *The historical part* forms the backbone of not only the book of Exodus, but of all the first five books in the Bible. *The legal and poetical parts* originally existed separately, but were soon incorporated into the historical framework of these books by an editor. A verse like Exodus 11:3 and the additions of the family records of Reuben, Simeon and Levi in Exodus 6:13-27 show that a later writer edited the writings of Moses into its present form.

Moses wrote most of Exodus around the time of the departure from Egypt in 1447 B.C. and in the desert of Sinai. This time may be calculated as follows. The reign of king Solomon can be calculated from Assyrian rock inscriptions to be from 971-931 B.C. And according to 1 Kings 6:1, Israel departed from Egypt 480 years before the 4th year of king Solomon's reign, that is, in 1447 B.C. Thus the Pharaoh who made Israel slaves and oppressed them with forced labour (1:8-14) was Thutmosis III. He ruled from 1501-1447 B.C. The princess who raised Moses was probably queen Hatshepsut who lived from 1501 - 1479 B.C. The following king, Pharaoh Amenophis II ruled Egypt from 1447 - 1421 B.C. He was a very cruel slave driver (5:6-9) and the exodus (departure) from Egypt took place under him.

3. The character of the book.

The intention of Moses was clearly to record the important events in the history of Israel during his lifetime as well as the words of God spoken to him and Israel. However, it is remarkable that while nothing is said about what happened to Israel for three centuries between the arrival of Jacob and his family in Egypt (1877 B.C.) and the birth of Moses (1527 B.C.), the next 120 years in Egypt and Sinai are described in detail. This proves that the Bible is not simply a description of human history, but a description of *the history of God's deeds in the midst of his people and the record of God's words during that time*. The history in the Bible is *God's salvation history*. It views history from God's point of view and has God at its centre!

¹ Genesis 32:28

² Isaiah 10:22-23; Romans 9:6,27

³ Isaiah 56:3-8

⁴ Galatians 6:14-16

⁵ Matthew 28:18-20

B. THE GOAL AND THEME OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

As a whole the book of Exodus is a revelation of how God adopts the nation Israel that descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as his own people. In Exodus 6:6-8 God says, “I am the LORD, and *I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.* Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.”

*The goal and theme of Exodus: **God’s rescue of Israel from the house of slavery and their adoption as his people.***

C. THE DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

The book has two main parts: the exodus and the covenant.

1. Exodus 1:1 to 15:21: The exodus.

It relates how God led Israel out of Egypt in a miraculous way. The first part may be divided into four sections as follows:

- Exodus 1 to 4 relates the life of Moses. Exodus 1 reminds the readers of the arrival of Jacob and his family in Egypt about 300 years before, how Israel multiplied, became a great nation and was forced into slave labour by another Pharaoh who did not remember Joseph’s service to Egypt. Exodus 2 relates the early life of Moses, his birth, his rescue by Pharaoh’s daughter, and later his flight to Midian in northern Arabia. Exodus 3:1 to 4:17 relates how God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and called him to rescue Israel. Exodus 4:18-31 relates how Moses and Aaron met the elders of Israel.
- Exodus 5:1 to 7:13 relates the confrontation with Pharaoh and Pharaoh hardening his heart. Moses and Aaron announced God’s command to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says, ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert’.” Pharaoh refused and made his oppression of Israel even harder. God encouraged Moses by giving him the ability to perform the miracle of turning his staff into a snake (7:8-9). To this section was added the family record of Moses and Aaron (6:13-27).
- Exodus 7:14 to 12:30 relates the ten plagues that God sent over Egypt. To this section was added the institution of the Passover festival (12:1-28). This was written in Egypt before Moses wrote Exodus in the desert of Sinai.
- Exodus 12:31 to 15:21 relates the departure from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. To this section was added the legal parts about the Passover restrictions, the consecration of the firstborn (12:43 - 13:16) and the song of victory (15:21).

2. Exodus 15:22 to 40:38: The covenant.

It relates how God made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. This part may be divided into five sections as follows:

- Exodus 15:22 to 18:27 relates God’s care for Israel on their journey through the desert before they came to Mount Sinai. It relates the grumbling of the Israelites and the blessings from God, especially how God cared for their water and their food in the desert. It also relates how God gave Israel victory in war against the Amalekites. Finally it relates how Moses accepted the advice of his father-in-law, Jethro, and re-organised the administration of justice in Israel.
- Exodus chapters 19 to 23 relates God’s covenant with Israel at Sinai. On the same mountain where God appeared to Moses the first time, Moses heard God speaking to him again. There God revealed to Moses *the Ten Commandments* (the moral law): laws that regulate how God’s people must relate to God and relate to people. There Israel realised their need of a mediator. They desired that only Moses should approach God on their behalf and speak God’s words to them. In Exodus 20:22 to 23:33 God reveals various laws to Israel, which were recorded in *the Book of the Covenant* (24:4,7). These laws were partly *moral laws*: laws that regulate how God’s people should live and behave themselves (20:23, 23:1-9), partly *ceremonial laws*: laws that regulate how God’s people should approach and worship God (20:24-26, 22:29-31) and partly *civil laws* that regulate how God’s people should function as a nation (21:1 – 22:27).
- Exodus 24:1 to 31:18 relates God’s instructions concerning the tabernacle. ‘The tabernacle’ was a tent that functioned as a temple, the place where God was worshipped. During forty days and nights on Mount Sinai, God revealed to Moses the various prescriptions concerning the making of the tabernacle. While Moses himself recorded God’s instructions regarding the tabernacle, God himself recorded the Ten Commandments on two stone tables.
- Exodus 32:1 to 34:35 relates God’s renewal of his covenant with Israel. In the meantime Israel had broken the covenant with the Lord by making an idol of a golden calf. When Moses descended from the mountain and saw what Israel was doing, he broke the two tables with the Ten Commandments. God judged Israel and thousands of people died through the sword and the plague. After Moses interceded for Israel, God renewed his covenant with Israel. To this section was added Exodus 34:10-26, which consists of the so-called *cultic Ten Commandments*, the foundation for the renewal of the covenant. This covenant made the dividing wall between Israel and the other nations higher⁶.

⁶ cf. Ephesians 2:14

Moses is the representative of Israel (34:11 is singular). The commandments are directed against Israel becoming like the Canaanite nations⁷. Israel must not make idols or worship idols, but destroy them. Israel must not make a treaty with idol worshippers or inter-marry with idol worshippers.

- **Exodus chapters 35 to 40 relates the building of the tabernacle.** The building of the tabernacle enabled Israel to worship God independently and enabled God to lead Israel out of Egypt. The tabernacle was the visible sign of God's dwelling in the midst of Israel. 'The glory of the Lord' is the summary of all God's attributes and presence. It filled the tabernacle. Now God was visibly present in the midst of his people and Israel was ready to continue their journey to the Promised Land. The history of Israel's journey from Sinai to the borders of Israel is related in the book of Numbers.

D. THE MAIN CONTENTS OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

1. Exodus 1 to 4 relate the training of God's man for God's task of redeeming God's people in bondage.

It relates the birth, adoption and early education of Moses during the first 40 years of his life. Then it relates how he killed an Egyptian, was rejected by his own people and fled to Midian, where he married and stayed for another 40 years. This was the period in which God disciplined Moses' character and began a personal relationship with Moses. Then it relates how God called him to return to Egypt to bring Israel out of their slavery.

2. Exodus 5 to 18 relate the redemption of God's people from bondage.

It relates how through ten plagues God triumphed over Egypt, a mighty world power. This section contains *types (illustrations or patterns) of salvation*. The Passover lamb in the Old Testament was an illustration of Christ dying on the cross⁸. The crossing of the Red Sea was an illustration of the baptism with water⁹. The Manna coming down from heaven was an illustration of the Lord's Supper¹⁰. The water from the cleft rock was an illustration of the living water, the symbol of eternal life, that only Jesus Christ can give to people¹¹. And the appointment of officials over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties and over tens in order to serve as judges was an illustration of the organised community of God's people living in the world (18:17-23)¹².

3. Exodus 19 to 31 relate the moral and ceremonial (ritual) laws of God for holy living.

In Exodus 19:4-6 God explains that his election of Israel was for holy living. He says to Israel, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be *my treasured possession*. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*." The basic principles of a holy life under God's covenant are commanded in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. The special application of these Ten Commandments in Israel's own setting as a nation is described in the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 20:22 to 23:33, which contain holy conduct towards the neighbour and holy worship towards God. Exodus chapters 25 to 31 contains instructions for the making of the tabernacle. The tabernacle contained no idols and served to preserve Israel from worshipping the idols of the Canaanites.

4. Exodus 32 to 34 relate the failure of Israel and the mercy of God.

After Israel violated this covenant by worshipping the golden calf, God renewed the covenant with them. God especially repeated and emphasised the ceremonial laws of the covenant, which served to teach Israel how to approach and worship God.

5. Exodus 35 to 40 describe God's means of grace in order to prevent Israel from backsliding.

God graciously provided Israel with the Sabbath and the tabernacle. God emphasised the importance of the Sabbath as a day in which Israel should rest from their daily work and 'seek the Lord'¹³. The tabernacle with its altar for sacrifices was God's means of forgiving sins and for preventing Israel from making and serving idols as the surrounding nations did.

E. THE MAIN MESSAGES OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

1. Exodus teaches the beginning of God's people on earth.

As a whole, the book of Exodus is a revelation from God. The goal and theme of Exodus is *the adoption or acceptance of Israel as the beginning of God's people on earth*. Exodus relates the redemption of Israel from the house of slavery and the renewal of God's covenant of grace with her on a national basis. God said to Israel, "You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (19:6).

⁷ cf. 1 Corinthians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 6:15

⁸ 1 Corinthians 5:7

⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:2

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 10:3; John 6:31-35

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 10:4

¹² Acts 6:1-7

¹³ cf. Isaiah 55:6

Israel as the beginning of God's people during the Old Testament period was *not terminated or replaced* by the Church, but was *continued* during the New Testament period *on a higher level*¹⁴ and *extended (enlarged)* to include the believers in Jesus Christ from all the nations in the world¹⁵!

The Bible says about Christians (God's New Testament people), "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people; but *now you are the people of God*; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy"¹⁶.

2. Exodus teaches that God redeems his people from the house of slavery by coming down to them.

Especially the first part of Exodus describes how God redeemed his own people from the house of slavery in Egypt by coming down to them on earth; by redeeming them from their enslavement to sin and by passing over the house that is marked by blood.

In Exodus 3:8, God says to Moses, "I have come down to rescue (redeem) my people from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey." God has come down to the people on earth! It is not people who journey up to God, but God who comes down to people. Although many people try to climb up to God in their own strength and by means of the ladder of religion or keeping the law, they will not succeed! The Bible says, "God lives in unapproachable light"¹⁷. Nobody can climb up to the exalted God of the Bible! Only God himself can come down to man.

If God did not approach man, man would never have been able to know anything about God and man would not have been saved! God came down to earth and appeared to Moses as 'the Angel of the LORD' in flames of fire from within a bush (3:2). God appeared to Israel in a pillar of cloud to guide his people by day or in a pillar of fire to give them light by night (13:21). God appeared to Israel on Mount Sinai in fire amidst thunder and lightning, a thick cloud (19:16-18), or in a cloud of glory that looked like a consuming fire (24:15-17; 40:34-38). And yet, no one could see God's face and live (33:20)!

In the New Testament revelation God took on the human nature in Jesus Christ and came down to people on earth to reveal to all people who he is and to save people who believe in him.¹⁸

3. Exodus teaches that God redeems his people from their enslavement to sin.

The book of Genesis describes man's failure in all circumstances! It relates man's failure under the perfect circumstance of Paradise. It relates man's failure when the world was still a unity, when all people had one culture and one language, and when the world had a developing commerce and technology. It relates man's failure after God had given him a new start after the flood. And it relates man's failure even when he belonged outwardly to God's covenant people (the descendants of Abraham).

The book Exodus describes God's redemption or salvation. Salvation from what? The house of Egypt was a country worshipping many abominable idols, which is the first great sin in the eyes of the living God. Moreover, the house of Egypt was a country that made slaves of people. "The house of Egypt" is a type or symbol of 'sin' and 'slavery'. *Sin* means independence from the God of the Bible and service to dead gods, even tot yourself as a god. When someone lives in sin, sin makes him a slave. He cannot free himself from sin! Jesus Christ says, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin"¹⁹. The apostle Paul says, "You are slaves to the one whom you obey"²⁰. The book of Exodus describes God's salvation from the house of sin and slavery to sin!

4. Exodus teaches that God redeems his people by passing over the house that is marked by blood.

When God came down to punish the oppressors, he commanded that believers should put the blood of a lamb outside on their doors. In Exodus 12:23 we read, "When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the door frame and will *pass over* that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down." God will pass over and not judge certain people! When God sees the blood which he himself prescribed, then he will pass over that house and not kill the firstborn in that house. This means that God has come down to people not only *to save* the people who are under the blood, but also *to judge* the people who are not under the blood! *Those he passes over, he saves*, and those he does not pass over, he judges! This also means that God will only pass over Israel's sin when he sees the blood of a lamb on their door. "The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"²¹.

¹⁴ Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:10-12 'realities' instead of 'shadows'

¹⁵ John 10:16; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:2-6

¹⁶ 1 Peter 2:9-10

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 6:16

¹⁸ cf. Matthew 11:27

¹⁹ John 8:34

²⁰ Romans 6:16

²¹ Hebrews 9:2

During the New Testament period, the apostle John points to Jesus Christ and says, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”²²! “The blood of Jesus ... purifies us from all sin”²³. The God of the Bible will also pass over your sin only when you believe that Jesus Christ died and shed his blood for your sins!

Jesus Christ taught that everything written about him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled. He had to suffer on the cross²⁴. More than three times Jesus Christ prophesied that he *must* die²⁵.

During the first century A.D. there were false teachers who claimed that “the divine Christ came on the human Jesus at his baptism with water, but left him again before he died on the cross”. They could not accept that the divine Christ would die. Therefore they denied that Jesus Christ died on the cross.

The apostle John taught against these false teachers, saying: “Jesus Christ did not come by water only, but by water and blood” and he taught that this testimony is confirmed by the Holy Spirit²⁶.

- By his baptism with *water* Jesus Christ took upon himself the willingness to die for the sins of the world²⁷.
- By his death and shedding of his *blood* on the cross he fulfilled this task!

The Holy Spirit continues to testify that the death of Jesus Christ was absolutely necessary in order to make atonement for sins.

5. Exodus teaches the renewal of God's covenant of grace on a national basis.

Exodus clearly teaches three important truths about God's covenant with Israel:

- The basis of God's covenant is grace.
- The condition of God's covenant is faith shown in obedience.
- The purpose of God's covenant is to glorify God by holy living.

6. The basis of God's covenant is God's grace.

In Genesis chapters 12, 15 and 17, God made a covenant with Abraham, that he would multiply the descendants of Abraham, that he would bring his descendants into the Promised Land and *that he would bless all the nations in the world through one descendant* of Abraham. God made these promises to Abraham, not because Abraham deserved them, but by grace only. And Abraham believed God. He believed that God would keep his word and that God was able to do what he had promised²⁸.

God renewed this covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Exodus 6:7 God promised to Moses, “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.” And in Exodus 19:6-7 God promised to Israel, “Out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” God made these promises to Israel, not because Israel deserved them, but by grace only.

Hebrews 11:10-16 teaches that Abraham and all the true believers in the Old Testament looked forward, not to an earthly country, but to the heavenly country, to the New Jerusalem, of which God himself is the architect and builder. From a distance they welcomed the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They believed in the future Messiah, through whom God would bless all the nations in the world. Nevertheless, *they did not receive what had been promised, because God had planned that the believers of the Old Testament period would only be made perfect together with the believers of the New Testament period*²⁹! *The final chapter of God's salvation history with Old Testament Israel is the New Testament Church.*

7. The condition of God's covenant is faith shown in obedience.

God's covenant is not without conditions. In Exodus 19:5 God says, “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant”, then “you will be my people”. Abraham *believed* God's covenant promise and God imputed (ascribed, reckoned) it to him as righteousness³⁰. God imputed and imparted Christ's righteousness to believers³¹. And by faith Abraham *obeyed* God's command³².

If Israel really *believed* in God's words, then they would *obey* God's words. *The principle condition of faith shown in obedience is the only condition for salvation in both the Old Testament and the New Testament!*

²² John 1:29

²³ 1 John 1:7

²⁴ Luke 24:26-27,44-45; cf. Exodus 12:22-23; 24:8; Isaiah 53:5; Psalm 22:16

²⁵ Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34

²⁶ 1 John 5:5-8

²⁷ Matthew 3:14-15

²⁸ Romans 4:20-21

²⁹ Hebrews 11:39-40

³⁰ Genesis 15:6

³¹ 1 Corinthians 1:30.

³² Genesis 22:18; Hebrews 11:8

That is why the apostle Paul later says, that God gave him the task “to call people to the obedience that comes from faith”³³ and that the gospel is proclaimed “so that all nations might believe and obey” Jesus Christ³⁴. That is why the apostle Peter later says, “God chose you ... through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ”³⁵. And that is why James says, “His faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did”³⁶.

8. The purpose of God’s covenant is to glorify God by holy living.

The purpose of *choosing* Israel and calling Israel to be God’s own people is that they would be a *holy people* that would glorify the God of the Bible among the nations of the world³⁷! In Exodus 19:4-6 God says, “I brought you to myself ... to be for me ... a holy nation.” *Holy* means *separated from sin* and *dedicated to God* alone. God wanted Israel to be a nation who would be separate from sin in all its forms and separate from the idols of Egypt and Canaan. He wanted Israel to be a nation dedicated to the worship and service of the living God alone.

The reason why God *chooses* people in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is exactly the same. The apostle Paul says, “God *chose* us in Jesus Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight”³⁸. God’s election is not arbitrary, but sovereign and with the divine purpose to glorify his Name among all people in the world³⁹. And the apostle Peter says, “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so *be holy in all you do*; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’ ”⁴⁰.

9. Exodus teaches that God uses human instruments to save people, in spite of their weaknesses.

Exodus teaches that God uses ordinary people in spite of their weaknesses.

For the first forty years of his life Moses thought he was *somebody important!* Acts 7:22 relates that Moses was educated at Pharaoh’s court in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and he was powerful in speech and in action. In this way he learned to read and write and was brought in contact with the form and contents of the ancient laws of nations. Moses was a hot-tempered man; he killed an Egyptian in anger and fled to Midian in Northern Arabia.

Then, for the next forty years of his life Moses learned that he was *nobody important!* There in Midian God disciplined his character and revealed himself to Moses. Moses married and had two sons. Between his fortieth and eightieth year of age, Moses lived in the desert. It seemed as if the Egyptians and his own people in Egypt had forgotten him completely.

Finally, for the last forty years of his life Moses discovered *what God can do with an unimportant man*. Moses was a courageous man. After his many years in the desert he regarded speaking to other people as something very difficult (4:10-12). Nevertheless, he spoke to the mightiest people in the world. When Moses led Israel out of Egypt through the desert of Sinai to the borders of Canaan, we see both his shortcomings and his virtues.

Moses was a hot-tempered man, striking a rock to make water come out of it instead of speaking to it as God had commanded (17:5-7)⁴¹. He would throw down the tables of the Ten Commandments and shatter them because he was angry with the idolatry of Israel (32:19). But he was also a meek person⁴², bearing the many grumblings and criticisms of Israel against his leadership.

Moses was an unselfish person. After the idolatrous nation of Israel had made a golden calf as their idol, God wanted to destroy Israel and make Moses into a new nation of God. But Moses pleaded with God to spare the nation and God spared Israel (the believers). But those guilty of idolatry he blotted out of his book of life (32:31-34).

Moses was a faithful person. Sometimes he was very disappointed with Israel. Nevertheless, he persevered to serve God and serve God’s people year after year.

Moses was a man of faith. Because he believed what God said to him, he obeyed and did what God said to him. In Hebrews 11:24-27 we read, “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.”

10. Exodus teaches that God made Moses a type of the coming Mediator, Jesus Christ.

³³ Romans 1:5

³⁴ Romans 16:26

³⁵ 1 Peter 1:1-2

³⁶ James 2:22

³⁷ Deuteronomy 7:6

³⁸ Ephesians 1:4

³⁹ Isaiah 43:7

⁴⁰ 1 Peter 1:14-16

⁴¹ Numbers 20:7-12

⁴² Numbers 12:3

God commanded Moses to write all the words of God in a book (34:27-28)⁴³ and to teach them to Israel. Moses was a mediator between God and man. Israel also requested Moses to speak on their behalf to God (19:7-8). So only Moses could approach God and mediate between people and God.

Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God and he spoke to God, and God allowed only Moses to meet him at the top of the mountain (19:17-23). Limits were put all around the mountain as a visible sign that ordinary people could not approach the living and holy God! The ordinary people trembled with fear at the realisation of the reality and presence of the living God (20:18-21)! Although God was high and exalted, God allowed only Moses to approach him. God commanded Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the (ordinary) people may not come up with him” (24:1-2).

Moses regularly met the Lord in *the tent of meeting* outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud representing God’s glory would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshipped each at the entrance to his tent. And “the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend” (33:7-11).

God gave all his words and laws to Moses to write down and to teach to Israel. Later when the tabernacle was constructed, God commanded Moses saying, “There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites” (25:22).

In Galatians 3:19-20 we read that the Law was put into effect through angels by a mediator, who represented both God and the people. Thus, the Bible calls Moses *a mediator*. John says, “The law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”⁴⁴. And the author of the Letter to the Hebrews says, “Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house”⁴⁵. *The service of Moses was to organise Israel as a people with God’s laws and institutions. Moses was a shadow or type (an illustration) of the real Mediator, Jesus Christ*⁴⁶. *Everything Moses did in God’s house, that is, in the midst of God’s people, would in the future be exceeded by Jesus Christ. While Moses was only the servant in the house of God, Jesus Christ is the Builder of the house of God. In the Old Testament the house of God represented all the people who feared and believed in the God of the Bible. In the New Testament the house of God represents all the people of all nations who believe in Jesus Christ and who persevere in their faith in Jesus Christ!*

11. Exodus teaches that salvation is by grace through faith, not by works of the law.

Exodus teaches us two important truths about the Law: first, the Old Testament Moral Law is given in the context of salvation and secondly, the Old Testament Moral Law is summarised by the Ten Commandments.

God’s Old Testament Law is given to Israel in the context of their salvation. In Exodus 20:1-2 God says, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” God gave the Ten Commandments to people, not that they should obey them as a condition for salvation. God gave the Ten Commandments to his people only AFTER he had brought them out of the house of slavery and thus had saved them from their idols and sin. Only after God had saved his people by his grace and mercy and Israel had believed in God, he gave them the Ten Commandments as rules by which God’s saved people should live.

12. Exodus teaches that God’s eternal Law is summarised by the Ten Commandments.

Exodus teaches that the Ten Commandments is the summary of all God’s moral laws. Although Moses was commanded to record all the other laws in a book, it was God himself who wrote the Ten Commandments on two stone tables⁴⁷. This fact is to show the value of the Ten Commandments above all the other Old Testament laws! In the New Testament, Jesus says that the greatest commandment of all God’s commandments⁴⁸ is to love God with all your heart, soul and strength⁴⁹ and to love your neighbour as yourself⁵⁰. And the apostle Paul teaches that love for God and your neighbour is the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament Law⁵¹.

The first four of the Ten Commandments teach how God’s people should love God. They should only worship the living and true God of the Bible. They should not make idols of any kind. They should respect God. And they should make time every week to seek, worship and serve God. The last six of the Ten Commandments teach how God’s people should love other people. They should honour their own parents. They should not kill any human being. They should not commit adultery or be engaged in any sexual immorality. They should not steal, cheat or bribe anyone.

⁴³ Deuteronomy 31:24-26

⁴⁴ John 1:17

⁴⁵ Hebrews 3:1-6

⁴⁶ 1 Timothy 2:5

⁴⁷ Deuteronomy 5:22

⁴⁸ Mark 12:30-31

⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 6:5

⁵⁰ Leviticus 19:18

⁵¹ Romans 13:10

They should not tell lies or give false testimony against innocent people. And they should not desire the possessions, power, fame or success of other people.

The Old Testament Law as a whole may be divided into three parts:

- The purpose of *the ceremonial laws* in the Old Testament was to teach God's people *how to approach God in worship*. The ceremonial law has been *fulfilled, cancelled and abrogated* ⁵²
- The purpose of *the civil laws* in the Old Testament was to teach God's people *how to be an organised theocracy*, a state in which God is the King. The civil law of the state of Israel has been replaced by Christ's teachings about the Kingdom of God.
- The purpose of *the moral laws* in the Old Testament is to teach God's people *how to live as God's saved and holy people within this world*. The moral laws are still valid during the New Testament period⁵³ and are summarised in the New Commandment⁵⁴.

F. JESUS CHRIST (THE MESSIAH) IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

1. The Passover feast in the Old Testament is a type (illustration) of salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ on the cross.

The only way the Israelites could escape God's judgement through the tenth plague was by slaughtering a lamb and applying its blood to the door frames of their houses (12:5-7). *Blood was shed only at the first Passover* and this was a type of Jesus Christ shedding his blood *once for all* in order to do away with sin⁵⁵. The blood of the lamb pointed forward to the blood that Jesus Christ would shed on the cross as a sacrifice of atonement for his people. John 1:29 says, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" And 1 Corinthians 5:7 says, "Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed!"

After this first historical Passover (1447 B.C.), the yearly Passover festival was a feast of commemoration in which people used no blood, but only ate a festive meal together (12:14-20)⁵⁶. The Passover festival was a reminder to Israel that not only creation, but also salvation is from beginning to end a work of God and not of man.

2. The feast of unleavened bread in the Old Testament is a type (illustration) of sanctification in which Christians should remove sin from their lives with haste.

At the departure from Egypt, Israel had to eat the Passover lamb together with bread made without yeast (12:8). They had to eat it standing and in a great hurry (12:11), because they were departing from the house of enslavement to idolatry and sin. The Bible teaches that *yeast* in the feast of unleavened bread symbolised all kinds of sin, like for example malice and wickedness. Yeast takes time to rise and Christians should not give any place or time for sins to grow in their lives. Christians must "get rid of the old yeast so that they may be a new batch without yeast"⁵⁷. Christians *celebrate their salvation through sanctification*: by quickly and continually getting rid of their sins and by rejoicing in sincerity and in truth.

3. The crossing of the Red Sea, the eating of the manna and the drinking of the water from the cleft rock are types (illustrations) of the Christian sacraments with a view to the beginning and continuance of Christian life.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-3 we read, "I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all *baptised* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all *ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink*; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ!"

The apostle Paul teaches that *there was a spiritual background to what literally happened to Israel during the Old Testament period*. The entire nation of Israel received God's benefits. Those benefits had a spiritual character. The Source of those benefits was Jesus Christ. But 1 Corinthians 10:5 warns that Christians must distinguish between receiving the benefits and continuing in God's favour till the end. 1 Corinthians 10:6-11 teaches that *all the things that happened to the Israelites during the Old Testament period apply to Christians during the New Testament period*.

- God's people must not set their hearts on evil things as idolatry, pagan revelry and sexual immorality.
- God's people must not test the LORD.
- God's people must not grumble.

The Old Testament history of salvation is a type (illustration or pattern) of the New Testament history of salvation.

By passing through the Red Sea, the Israelites were forever separated from their old life-style in Egypt and were joined to God's prophet, Moses. They shared in all the gifts God gave through Moses and were compelled to follow Moses to the Promised Land.

⁵² Matthew 5:17; Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:14-15

⁵³ Mark 12:30-31

⁵⁴ John 13:34-35

⁵⁵ Hebrews 9:26

⁵⁶ See Matthew 26:17-30

⁵⁷ 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Compare Christian baptism (with the Holy Spirit and its sign: baptism with water) in Romans 6:1-14 in which Christians share in the completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ (are united to Christ's death and to Christ's resurrection) and are compelled to follow Jesus Christ in offering the parts of their body to God as instruments of righteousness leading to holiness⁵⁸.

By eating the manna in the desert and drinking the water from the rock, the believing Israelites during the Old Testament period shared in the future salvation work of Jesus Christ. Compare Christians sharing in Christ's salvation through faith⁵⁹, which Christ expressed in the similar symbolic language of 'eating his flesh' and 'drinking his blood'⁶⁰.

The baptism with water in the New Testament is not a magical means of receiving salvation, because the baptism with water is *God's visible sign of the invisible reality*, namely, the baptism with the Spirit⁶¹. Also faith in Jesus Christ is not a magical means of receiving salvation, because faith is ultimately a gift from God⁶² that requires the production of fruit in keeping with conversion⁶³.

4. The tabernacle (the tent functioning as a temple) is a type (illustration) of the perfect tabernacle in heaven, where the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross made Christians perfect forever.

Hebrews 8:5 says that the tabernacle (and later the temple) on earth was only "a copy and shadow" of what is in heaven. Hebrews 8:1-2 says that the true tabernacle and sanctuary of God ("the reality") is in heaven. It is set up by God and not by man. Hebrews 9:24-26 says that, after his death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus Christ entered heaven to appear in God's presence for the sake of all people who believe in him. From heaven Jesus Christ applies his completed work of salvation on the cross to the hearts and lives of his people on earth. Hebrews 9:11-12 says, "Christ did not enter the greater and more perfect tabernacle of heaven by means of the blood of goats and calves; but entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption."

The Bible teaches that the function of an earthly tabernacle or temple has been terminated for ever! When Christ was crucified, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom⁶⁴. This symbolised that the body of Christ was broken for our sins in order to open the way for his people to enter into the presence of the living God⁶⁵! Not a single religious building in the world can bring you into the presence of God or reconcile you with God! Only Jesus Christ can reconcile you with God and bring you into a living relationship with God⁶⁶!

⁵⁸ Romans 6:13,19

⁵⁹ John 6:40

⁶⁰ John 6:54

⁶¹ Titus 3:5-7; Acts 10:45,47; 22:16

⁶² Acts 13:48; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29

⁶³ Matthew 3:8

⁶⁴ Matthew 27:51

⁶⁵ Hebrews 10:19-20

⁶⁶ John 14:6; Hebrews 5:14-16