

Lesson One | Exodus 1-4

“Exodus” (a going out) is the name given to the second Old Testament book in the Greek version (Septuagint), appropriately giving emphasis to the mighty act of deliverance from Egypt which is such a prominent theme of the book. “The Jews call it Shemoth (Names), or We’elleh Shemoth (and these are the names)” (Allis, GSM 59)—Hebrew for the first words of Exodus. As Keil points out, two main events form “the kernel and essential substance of tis book”: (1) The deliverance of Israel from the power of Egypt, this first stage of the history ending with the song of triumph after the crossing of the Red Sea (ch. 15); and (2) The adoption of the nation into covenant relations with God as his people, this second stage of the history ending with the setting up and consecration of the tabernacle (ch. 40). The subject of Lesson One is ...

A Deliverer for Israel

Growth of the Children of Israel in Egypt (1:1-7)

1. Review Question: How did the children of Israel come to be in Egypt?
2. What promise to Jacob (Gen. 46:3) was fulfilled in Egypt? Cf. also 12:37.

Beginning of Oppression (1:8-22)

1. What words to Abraham (Gen. 15:13f) were also fulfilled in Egypt?
2. Why did the new king of Egypt begin to afflict the Israelites?
3. Describe the measures taken against the Israelites?

Birth of Moses (2:1-10)

1. Name the mother and father of Moses (v. 1 with 6:20).
2. How did they show their faith? See Heb. 11:23.
3. Why was it necessary to hide Moses at his birth?
4. Did his mother, in a way, obey the king? (cf. 1:22).
5. How did it come about that Moses was brought up as “the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (Heb. 11:24)?
6. What would be the effect of being brought up in that way? See Acts 7:22.
7. How did it come about that Moses learned who he was, who his people were, and about the true God?
8. Describe the *two elements* in the education of Moses.

Discussion: The overruling providence of God, frustrating Pharaoh’s order and using Egyptian education to prepare the human deliverer of Israel.

Flight to Midian (2:11-15)

- 1a. How old was Moses at this time? and:
 - 1b. What did he have in mind to do when he killed the Egyptian? (Acts 7:23-25).
- 2a. What important decision did Moses have to make at this time? (Heb. 11:24-27).
- 2b. What were the choices before him?
- 2c. What did he decide?
- 2d. Do you see parallel situations in our lives today, in which we are called upon to make important decisions? Discuss the importance of being able to make great decisions.
- 2e. What is the wisest course when we are faced with situations like that of Moses? Why?

- 3a. Were the Hebrew people ready to accept Moses' leadership at this time?
- 3b. What was he forced to do?
4. How were the Midianites related to the Israelites? See Gen. 25:1-6.

Marriage to Zipporah (2:16-22)

1. Name Moses' (a) father-in-law, (b) wife, and (c) first son.
2. What else was his father-in-law called? (3:1).
3. Why do you imagine Moses was called "an Egyptian" in v. 19?

Cry of the Israelites (2:23-25)

1. In what way is this passage an introduction to ch. 3?
2. What "covenant" is meant in v. 24? See Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 15:12-21; 17:3-8; 28:13-15; 35:9-13; 46:1-4.

Call of Moses (3:1-4:17)

Manifestation of Jehovah in the Burning Bush (3:1-12)

1. How long a time had passed since Moses left Egypt? See 7:7 & Acts 7:30.
2. Consider what Moses had been doing all these years and how the years had changed and disciplined him, preparing him for his task.
- 3a. Who appeared to Moses? (v. 2).
- 3b. How?
- 3c. How else is this person described? (v. 4).
- 3d. Might this be a "foreshadowing" of the incarnation (being made flesh) described in John 1:1-3, 14?

4. What made this place “holy ground”? (v. 5).
5. What is the reason for this revelation of God? That is, what was God up to?

Consider the expression in v. 8: “I am come down.” God is not above history, but intervenes in history to accomplish his purposes. The Bible is the record of steps God has taken in history to accomplish his purposes.

- 6a. Consider v. 11 and describe the change in Moses since 2:11-15 (with Acts 7:23-25).
- 6b. “Who am I?” he asked. In fact, what had he been for all these years?
7. How would you describe the way God deals with Moses’ excuses, beginning with v. 12? What qualities does God show toward him? Harshness, impatience, kindness, long-suffering? How would you describe God?
- 8a. What is the assurance of success given to Moses? (v. 12).
- 8b. What great lesson can we learn here?
- 9a. What would be the “token” given Moses that God had indeed sent him?
- 9b. How would that serve as a token? What would it show?

The Name of God and the Mission of Moses (3:13-22)

1. Discuss the significance of a name among the Hebrew people. See, for instance, Gen. 17:5; 25:26 with 27:36; 32:27-28; and many other cases showing that names had meaning and significance among the Hebrews.
2. What, then, would be the meaning of the question: “What is his name?” (v. 13). Is it a question merely about a proper name, or something more?
3. Now apply all this to verse 14. Discuss the significance of the name of God. How was he about to show that he *is*?

Jehovah in Hebrew is related to the verb *to be*, hence is explained in verse 14.

4. What is meant by calling Canaan “a land flowing with milk and honey”? (v. 17; cf. v. 8).
5. What advance warning did God give Moses? (vv. 19-20).
- 6a. What is meant by “ye shall not go empty”? (v. 21, explained in v. 22).
- 6b. Was it right and proper for them to ask these things of the Egyptians?

Observe that the Hebrew in v. 22 means simply to “ask”—not “borrow” as in KJV.

Three Signs (4:1-9)

“Thus Moses was not only entrusted with the word of God, but also endowed with the power of God; and as he was the first God-sent prophet, so was he also the first worker of miracles, ...” (Keil).

1. What were the three signs God gave Moses?
2. Why were they given? i. e.: What was their purpose?
3. In what kind of situation, then, would one expect signs to be provided?
4. Compare Moses’ times to a similar situation in New Testament times with regard to such signs. See especially Mark 16:20, Second Cor. 12:12 & Heb. 2:1-4.

Aaron, Moses’ Spokesman (4:10-17)

1. What new difficulty is brought forward by Moses? (v. 10).
- 2a. What is the point of the questions in v. 11?
- 2b. Any lessons to learn here?

3. Jehovah has responded to the difficulties raised by Moses with all patience. But at last he becomes angry (v. 14). What aroused the divine anger against Moses?
- 4a. What solution to the difficulty (v. 10) is provided by Jehovah? (vv. 14-16).
- 4b. Define "prophet" by comparing 4:16 with 7:1.

Return to Egypt (4:18-31)

1. What forewarning did Jehovah give Moses with regard to the attitude he could expect from Pharaoh? (v. 21).
2. In what way was Moses to communicate to Pharaoh the gravity of God's demand? (vv. 22-23).
- 3a. What strange incident occurred on the way to Egypt? (vv. 24-26).
- 3b. Explain this incident in the light of Gen. 17:9-14.
- 4a. Who met Moses on the way?
- 4b. Where?
- 5a. What did the two men do upon reaching Egypt?
- 5b. What was the reaction of the people to their words?