

An Introduction to Exodus

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – an introduction to the Old Testament book of Exodus
2. aim – to cause us to understand the context of the book which will help us see its purpose
3. passage – Exodus 20:1-3

b. outline

1. The Context of the Book
2. The Background of the Book
3. The Purpose of the Book

c. overview

1. a natural segue from Genesis – after a 400-year gap

I. The Context of the Book

Content

a. the historical context

1. the Early Bronze Age (3150-2200BC)
 - a. Mesopotamia (modern Iraq)
 - a. cuneiform writing (wedge shaped characters) appears during this period (c. 3100BC)
 - b. the “early dynastic period” characterized by city-states, with a language of Sumerian (i.e. Ur)
 - b. Egypt
 - a. pyramid building occurred during dynasties III through VI (prior to the Israelite enslavement)
 - b. hieroglyphic writing appears
2. Middle Bronze I Age (2200–2000BC) – tents/nomads - no cities or city-states
 - a. Abraham enters Canaan during this period (c. 2091BC)
3. Middle Bronze II (2000–1550BC) – relatively large city states
 - a. the code of Hammurabi developed
 - b. XV-XVI Dynasties ruling in Avaris (eastern Delta)
 - c. the Hyksos (“rulers of a foreign country”) begin to rule in Egypt
 - a. Semites who came from Canaan and settled in Goshen (like the Israelites)
 - b. Josephus calls them “shepherd kings”
 - d. Jacob enters Egypt during this period (c. 1876BC)
4. Late Bronze I (1550-1400BC) – the period of the Exodus and the Conquest
5. Late Bronze II (1400-1200BC) – the period of the Judges

b. the Egyptian context

1. Egypt during LB age (the **XVIII Dynasty** [1567-1320BC]) – consolidated kingdom ruled from Thebes
 - a. Ahmose I (1570-1546BC) – stabilizes Egypt; expels the Hyksos; takes control of all of Egypt
 1. possibly the “new Pharaoh” of **Exodus 1:8** – abandons the sympathetic view of the Hebrews
 - b. Amenhotep I (1546-1526BC) – birth of Moses (1526BC)
 - c. Thutmose I (1525-1512BC) – campaigns to Canaan to Syria to Euphrates (very militaristic Egypt)
 - d. Thutmose II (1512-1504BC) – continues to expand the might of Egypt
 - e. Hatshepsut (1503-1482BC) – sister/queen of Thutmose II; expands Egypt S to Nubia / Cush
 - f. Thutmose III (1504-1450BC) – greatest king of Egypt; expanding into Cush, Libya, Canaan
 - g. Amenhotep II (1450-1425BC) – begins the decline of the XVIII Dynasty (i.e. the Exodus)

c. the Hebrew context

1. the enslavement of Israel in Egypt *predestined* by God (**read Genesis 15:13-14**)
2. the expansion of Israel in Egypt *purposed* by God (**read Exodus 1:5-7**)
3. the exodus of Israel from Egypt *planned* by God (i.e. connection between the people and the law)

II. The Background of the Book

Content

a. the author of the book

1. the “scholarly” view = a compilation of multiple authors dating to the 8th C. and later
 - a. based on the way God is referenced in each section (JEDP)
 - b. based on the view that Moses was too “early” for written communication of this sort
2. the traditional view = Moses, who wrote the entire Pentateuch (except **Deut. 34**)
 - a. there is ample evidence from the Late Bronze Age that writing was in wide use by this time

b. the date of the book

1. the controversy over the date of the Exodus itself
 - a. the “late date” theory (c. 1270BC) – the “scholarly date” (also the assumption of *The Ten Commandments* movie)
 1. based on dating the destruction of a number of Canaanite cities to c. 1230BC
 2. based on references to the two cities of Exodus 1:11 named after later Pharaohs (Ramses II)
 3. based on new settlements in Palestine which appear c. 1200BC
 4. based on the death of Ramses II firstborn (20th year of his reign c. 1270BC)
 - b. the “early date” theory (c. 1446BC) – the “traditional date”
 1. based on the dating of Solomon’s reign in **1 Kings 6:1**
 - a. Solomon’s reign begins in 970BC
 - b. 970BC – 480 years = 1446BC: the Exodus
 2. based on the mention of “apiru” (Hebrews?) in Canaan c. 1400BC
 - a. ~400 cuneiform tablets mentioning the “apiru” attacking cities in Palestine
 3. based on the mention of a “*new Pharaoh in Egypt*” (**1:8**)
 - a. the expulsion of the Hyksos (i.e. “foreign rulers”) to start the LB age (1500-1200BC)
 - b. a Hyksos king would have been more sympathetic to Joseph than a native Pharaoh
2. the date of the book related to the date of the Exodus
 - a. the book was probably written during the 40 years of “wandering” in the wilderness

c. the content of the book

1. the unique nature of the book with varying literary styles
 - a. the book as *biographical* – recounting the life of Moses
 - b. the book as *historical* – recounting the history of Israel as a nation being freed from Egypt
 - c. the book as *didactic* (instructive) – recounting the giving of the Law
 - d. the book as *prototypical* – recounting the correspondence of the Exodus to Christ’s redemption

III. The Purpose of the Book

Content

a. the biblical value of the book

1. the rejection of the Old Testament as “irrelevant” to modern Christian beliefs and life (Andy Stanley)
 - a. the O.T. represents more than 75% of the content of the Bible as a whole
 - b. the O.T. recounts the promise-plan of God through the “seed” of Abraham (i.e. Hebrews)
 - c. rejection of the O.T. is based on a faulty *soteriology* – the belief in human self-determination

b. the soteriological value of the book

1. the purpose-statement of the book (**read Exodus 20:1-3**)
 - a. who God is, what God has done, how we are to respond to who he is and what he has done
 - b. the book outlines a proper *view* of the human condition
 1. the Hebrews were enslaved just as human beings are enslaved by sin
 2. the Hebrews had no knowledge of God (**see Exodus 3:13**) – humans do not know God
 3. the Hebrews had no hope of escape (**see Exodus 2:23**)
 - c. the book outlines a proper *order* in redemptive matters (see **Exodus 2:25b** – “*God knew*”)
 1. **what God does always precedes any relationship to him by human beings**
2. the redemptive intention of the book (as a *prototype* of the Gospel)
 - a. Egypt as a prototype of sin/evil – an oppressive force under a God-rejecting leader
 - b. Moses as a prototype of Christ – one who comes to redeem/free a people
 - c. Israel as a prototype of the church – a group of people redeemed from oppression