

Introduction to Exodus

I. Introduction

A. It is no accident that much of our language of salvation comes from Exodus - Exodus is the story of how God redeemed a people, called them to Himself, made a covenant with them and dwelt in their midst

1. The story of Exodus is the story of salvation, but, at the same time, Exodus has been one of the most argued over books in Church History
2. What is the purpose of the Covenant in Exodus 20-24? How do we relate to the Covenant in Exodus? How do we relate to the people of Israel? What authority do the 10 Words, the 10 Commandments, have for us? What is the purpose of Exodus?
3. To understand these questions, we need to step back and ask some more basic questions first

B. We need to start by placing Exodus in context, so first we need to ask is, what is the Old Testament?

1. The Old Testament begins with the story of God, the Creator, calling His creation into existence and ruling over it, especially through His handmade regents and image, man and woman
2. But, the man and the woman rebelled, they did not want to be a regent, an image of the king, they wanted to rule themselves, so they rejected God's command and brought death and destruction to themselves, their offspring and creation - by their actions creation is bound to futility and death, creation and mankind are enslaved to the results of sin
3. But, God does not abandon His creation, He pronounced His judgment, but He also made a promise - a son of the woman would come and defeat the rebels and undo the curse
4. Skipping forward, we can see that the ultimate fulfillment of this promise is in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man come to undo the curse
5. But, if the promise is made in Genesis 3 and fulfilled in the New Testament, it begs the question - what is everything between Genesis 3 and Matthew 1?
6. Since, from our perspective, we know that the rest of the Old Testament is not the fulfillment of the promise, we can see it is full of pictures of what the fulfillment will look like. The Old Testament is the story of how God is going to fulfill His promise - each story asks 'how is the promise of Genesis 3 going to be fulfilled?'
7. So, throughout history, God ordained and enacted patterns in history so that we would be able to know and appreciate the promise when it was fulfilled - God developed and displayed what He would do in the fulfillment of the promise throughout the Old Testament so that we would have a vocabulary and an expectation for what the promise would entail.

C. We saw this question start to be answered in Genesis

1. After the promise of Genesis 3, we saw a grand drama of sin, judgment and redemption in the flood and saw God renew His promise to preserve the human race until the promise of Genesis 3 is fully accomplished
 - a. How will God keep His promise? By judging and destroying sin while saving a remnant through the obedience of one man who accomplished salvation - the flood wasn't the fulfillment but it taught us about it
2. The next section of Genesis was the story of the patriarchs, and we saw that God would accomplish salvation by choosing another people, a people based on faith in God's promises and God would make this people His people after Adam and Eve lost that position
 - a. How will God keep His promise? By choosing a new people to be His people, making this people fruitful, and by giving them an inheritance, a land to dwell in - again, not the fulfillment, but it teaches us about it

D. The answer to this question continues in Exodus - How is God going to fulfill His promise?

1. Exodus is the start of another saga in the Old Testament story line - God has chosen a people in Abraham's chosen offspring, but that isn't the end of the promise - God will not only choose a people, He will release that people from bondage and bring them into His land
2. Exodus starts with a clear connection to Genesis - the genealogy of the sons of Jacob and then we see the promises of God being fulfilled in Egypt - the people are fruitful and multiply - but this isn't enough because the people end up in bondage and God's blessing makes the Egyptians hate God's people
3. God's chosen people are under a foreign power held in bondage and cannot enjoy the blessings of God - God must deliver His people and bring them to His own land where they can live as His people and enjoy His presence
4. Exodus is the story of God's judgment on those who enslave His people, God's judgment on the gods who would stand up against Him and His redemption of His people to bring them out of the land of slavery, out of the house of bondage and start on the journey to His land
5. But, as part of this journey, the people must be prepared to live in God's land - God's holiness will be upheld in His land, so God makes a covenant with His people to be their God and for them to be His people, and then God teaches them the meaning of holiness in a detailed law given at Sinai, which is recorded in the second half of Exodus and in Leviticus.
6. God's covenant and law are preparations for God's people to enter His presence in His land, because without holiness no one will see God
7. Exodus teaches us that creation's bondage to sin will be undone through a cataclysmic act of judgment and redemption that will prepare the way for a new covenant to be made with the people of God so that God's people can be brought into God's land

E. For those of you who had the opportunity to participate in the Biblical Theology class last year, you may be hearing some familiar words

1. In the Biblical Theology class, we saw that the Old Testament was the story of the Kingdom of God, defined as God's people in God's place under God's rule
2. Exodus fits into this story, and advances our understanding of the Kingdom of God - in Genesis, the Kingdom of God is lost, but is promised again, and, with Abraham, a new people of God are chosen and are promised a place
3. But, the people of God are not enough to make the Kingdom of God, they need to be brought into God's place and put under God's rule
4. If Genesis tells us the story of how God is going to choose a new people to be His People, the next section, starting with Exodus and ending in Joshua, tells the story of how God is going to bring His New People into His Place, and Exodus specifically deals with the fact that God's people are in bondage outside of God's place - how is God going to act to free His people and to prepare His people to live in His presence?

F. So, as I said at the beginning, it is no accident that much of our language of salvation comes from Exodus

1. The Saga of Exodus is designed by God to teach us about what Christ is going to do - Christ will bring judgment upon the gods of the nations, Christ will redeem His people with sacrifice, Christ will free His people from slavery, Christ will sustain His people in the wilderness, Christ will make a covenant with His people and Christ will dwell in the midst of His people
2. To understand Exodus, we must be looking forward to Christ - how will these pictures of God's promise be superseded and eclipsed by the glories of Christ? How should these pictures of God's promise cause us to rejoice in and run after Christ all the more? How is Jesus Christ the center of Exodus?

G. As I introduce Exodus this morning, I want to briefly discuss four points this morning to help us understand Exodus

1. First, we'll look at some background information about Exodus - who, when, where, etc.
2. Then we'll look at the major themes of Exodus - what topics does Exodus bring to the forefront?
3. Third, we'll discuss the outline of Exodus - how is the book put together?
4. Finally, we'll look at Christ and Exodus - how is Exodus all about Jesus Christ?

II. Background

A. As usual when we start a book, I want to start by describing several background facts about the book

1. So, let's look at author, date, recipient and purpose

B. Who wrote the book?

1. Although modern scholarship may argue and reject this, the book of Exodus is one of the easiest books to identify the author of - Moses
 - a. Moses is the only character who would have knowledge of many of the events of Exodus (the burning bush, the audience with God on the mountain, etc.) and thus the recording of those events must start with Moses
 - b. Not only that, but the Old Testament and the New Testament consistently refer to Moses as the author
 - c. And, beyond that, the Pentateuch itself records Moses' writing activity, claiming that Moses wrote the books
2. Now, this doesn't mean that Moses was necessarily the final editor of each word in the books or that there was not a process for the scribes of Israel to edit the books over time, but the origin of Exodus is clearly Moses

C. When was the book written?

1. The time when Exodus was written is complicated somewhat by our lack of complete understanding of when Moses was or when the Exodus from Egypt was
2. But, to our best understanding, Moses was around sometime between 1450 and 1250 B.C. and so the book was written during this time period
3. The book was likely recorded very close to the events it described - it was probably recorded at Mount Sinai or during the wandering in the desert
4. The book started as a record of what God had just done so that it could be passed down to other generations

D. To whom was the book written?

1. Since Moses wrote the book, the initial audience would have been the generation that saw the Exodus from Egypt and the generation that went into the land of Canaan with Joshua
2. Moses wrote this book, by the inspiration of God, to remind the people of the mighty works of God that had brought them out of Egypt and to remind them of the covenant they had made with God and to give them an authoritative account that they could pass down through their generations to remember what God had done

E. What is the purpose of Exodus?

1. The purpose of Exodus is to record what God had done to bring His people to Himself - to record the awesome demonstration of God's power in the plagues, to record the gracious condescension of God to make a covenant with His people, to record the holiness of God enshrined in the law of God and to record the glory of God dwelling in their midst
2. And, as the people were reminded over and over again what God had done, they would be called to seek after this God, to obey this God, to live under the covenant that they had made with this God and to rest in this God
3. Exodus records God's mighty acts so that all generations will know that He is the Lord and seek after Him

III. Themes

A. Once Central Theme: the Glory of God

1. When I introduced Genesis, almost a year and a half ago, now, I used the theme the sovereignty of God - Genesis is the book of God's sovereignty
 - a. In a similar way, Exodus can be seen to have one central theme running through its pages - Exodus is the book of God's glory
2. Exodus is designed to answer one central question that appears in the mouth of multiple characters - who is the Lord?
 - a. Moses asks this question at the burning bush, when He asks God what name he should give the Israelites
 - b. Pharaoh asks this question when He says, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go."
3. And God is only too eager to provide the answer to this question
 - a. God judges the Egyptians with plagues so that they will know that He is the Lord
 - b. God relieves the Egyptians of the plagues so that they will know that He is the Lord
 - c. God distinguishes between the Israelites and the Egyptians so that they will know that He is the Lord
 - d. God hardens Pharaoh's heart so that all the Egyptians shall know that He is the Lord
 - e. God provides meat for His people in the wilderness so that they will know that He is the Lord
 - f. God makes a covenant with His people so that they will know that He is the Lord their God
 - g. God will dwell in the midst of His people in the Tabernacle so that they will know that He is the Lord
 - h. God gives His people a law to keep so that they will know that He is the Lord
4. Every story in Exodus is designed to show us who God is, to show us the glory of God displayed in judgment, redemption and covenant
 - a. God will judge the Egyptians to display His glory
 - b. God will redeem His people to display His glory
 - c. God will make a covenant with His people and dwell in their midst to display His glory
 - d. Every aspect of salvation is for the purpose of displaying the glory of God to all who look on
5. So, Exodus is the book of God's glory - many different events will take place in Exodus but each of them will serve to display the glory of God so that all will know that He is the Lord

B. Five Major Themes

1. Glory is the central theme of Exodus, but the glory of God is displayed in other themes, so there are at least five major themes of the book of Exodus (and many more minor themes that I don't have time to cover this morning)
 - a. These five themes are judgment, redemption, provision, covenant and presence
 - b. And these five themes loosely describe five sections of the book of Exodus
2. Exodus starts with the theme of Judgment
 - a. The enemies of God's people have put them in bondage, in slavery and held them captive in the land
 - b. Moreover, the enemies of God's people reject the voice of God and refuse God's demand to free His people
 - c. So God will act to judge the land of Egypt, through ten carefully designed plagues, God destroys the land of Egypt and demonstrates that the gods of Egypt are nothing before Him and their representative, Pharaoh, is merely the puppet of God, performing His will
 - d. Exodus shows us that God's judgment against His enemies is terrible and God will destroy all rebels
3. But then Exodus continues with the theme of Redemption
 - a. While God is destroying the land of Egypt and defeating her gods, God starts to distinguish between the people of Egypt and the people of Israel
 - b. But, why can God do this? Are the people of Israel better than the people of Egypt? No, so how can God act differently toward Egypt and Israel?
 - c. God shows us how when God provides a way for His wrath to turn away from His people, He provides a sacrifice that will bear God's wrath instead of the people so that they can be set free from God's wrath
 - d. The story of the Passover is the story par excellence of redemption and how redemption forms the basis of God's people

4. After redemption, Exodus develops the theme of Provision
 - a. Actually, the theme of provision is developed twice in the book of Exodus - Exodus starts with a story of God's provision - God provides a deliverer and preserves Him and prepares Him to do God's work
 - b. And then, after the Passover, God provides for His people, He provides water, bread, meat, and organization so that His people will be able to journey to His place
 - c. The five stories spanning the Passover and Sinai show us that God will provide everything necessary for His people to come back to Him
5. At Mount Sinai, we see the theme of Covenant come back
 - a. God has made multiple covenants with His people already in Genesis, and the theme of the covenant making God continues in Exodus, but the covenant at the center of Exodus is a much larger, much more formal and a different than anything that has gone before
 - b. God makes a covenant with the Israelites that makes them His people and makes Him their God, in fact, this covenant is very similar to a covenant we still use today - the marriage covenant, God joins Himself to His people and His people to Him giving them the right to live in His land, just as a wife is given the right to live with her husband when she is bound to him in marriage
 - c. The story of Exodus teaches us that God will bring His people into His land by making a covenant with them, binding them to Himself as a husband to a wife
6. Exodus concludes with the theme of Covenant Presence
 - a. After making a covenant with the people, God prepares to dwell in their midst - again, just as a husband and wife will dwell together after being joined in marriage
 - b. This follows naturally from the covenant - the covenant gives direction for how the people must act if they are to be in God's presence, and God seals the covenant by being present with the seventy elders of Israel
 - c. After the covenant, God continues His instruction by describing how to build the tabernacle, the focal point of His covenant presence
 - d. And, following an episode of rebellion and restoration, the people follow God's direction, build the tabernacle and God dwells in their presence

IV. Outline

A. As I've hinted already, the outline of Exodus follows the themes of Exodus very closely, for simplicities sake, we could break Exodus down into eight major stories, each approximately five chapters long (3-7)

1. Introduction (chapters 1-6)
 - a. Here we see the introduction of the bondage of Israel, the introduction of Moses, the introduction of Pharaoh, and the introduction of God - all the characters and settings for the book of Exodus are set up in the first six chapters
2. Judgment on Egypt (chapters 7-11)
 - a. Here we see the ten plagues that God brings on Egypt in judgment for their refusal to hear His voice and let His people go
3. Redemption of God's People (Chapters 12-15)
 - a. Set within the story of the last plague, here we see the first Passover, the Exodus from Egypt, the plundering of Egypt, and the story of God's deliverance through the Red Sea
4. Provision in the Wilderness (Chapters 16-18)
 - a. After the final destruction of the Egyptians at the Red Sea, God's people move toward Mount Sinai to make a covenant with God, but the people are given to grumbling, but God provides water, bread, meat and leadership to bring His people to Him
5. The Covenant of God (Chapters 19-24)
 - a. Probably the most famous passage in all the Bible, we see the purpose of the covenant in chapter 19, the stipulations of the covenant in chapter 20, the case law of the covenant in chapters 21-22, the blessings of the covenant in chapter 23, and the covenant meal in chapter 24
6. Preparation for the Presence of God (Chapters 25-31)
 - a. After sealing a covenant with His people, God gives instructions for how He will dwell in their midst by instructing Moses on how to build the Tabernacle
7. Rebellion and Restoration (Chapters 32-34)
 - a. While Moses is 'delayed' on the mountain receiving God's instructions for the Tabernacle, the people of Israel grow impatient and seek to invoke God's presence their own way through a golden calf, this imperils God's ability to dwell with His people, but, through the mediation of Moses, God continues with the people
8. The Presence of God in the Midst of His People (Chapters 35-40)
 - a. After the miserable failure of chapter 32, God's people turn around and obey God, obeying word for word the instructions for how to build the Tabernacle, and following their obedience, God comes and dwells in their midst

V. Christ

- A. As I close out my introduction of Exodus, I want to look forward and see how we are going to see Christ in our study**
1. My purpose this morning isn't to describe or explain each of these references in detail, but rather to give you a taste for all of the ways that the book of Exodus will find its fulfillment in Christ - to whet your appetite, as it were, so that we can dive into Exodus together to find Christ
 2. So, just listen to some of the ways that Christ fulfills the book of Exodus
- B. Christ is the better Moses**
1. Christ is the child that God preserves from death to be the Savior of His people - as Moses did at his birth
 2. Christ is the man who has seen God face to face and proclaims God's name to His people - as Moses did at the burning bush
 3. Christ is the one who works judgment on the enemies of God's people - whether it is in His body, disarming the rulers and authorities and putting them to open shame, or in the final judgment when He will cast down the pretenders to His throne - as Moses did in the plagues
 4. Christ is the one who delivers the message of salvation to God's people - as Moses did in the Passover
 5. Christ is the one who mediates a new covenant with God's people - as Moses did on the mountain
- C. Christ is the Passover Lamb**
1. Christ is the firstborn son, sentenced to death - as all the firstborn of Egypt were sentenced
 2. Christ is the sacrifice that spares the firstborn of God's people - as the Passover lamb did for the Israelites
 3. Christ is the blood that turns away God's wrath - as the blood of the Passover lamb was painted on the doors
 4. Christ is the nourishment of God's people for their journey to God - as the roasted lamb was for the Israelites
- D. Christ is the Provision for the journey**
1. Christ is the living water sustaining us on our way to God's land - as the rock in the wilderness
 2. Christ is the bread of life nourishing us on our way to God's land - as the manna in the wilderness
 3. Christ is flesh provided by God to sustain us on our journey - as the quail in the wilderness
 4. Christ is the judge provided by God - as the judges in the wilderness
- E. Christ is the Fulfillment of the Law**
1. Christ is the only one who stands before God
 2. Christ is the only one who is the perfect image of God
 3. Christ is the only one who bears the name of God
 4. Christ is the only one who can possibly accomplish the work of God
 5. Christ is the only one who perfectly honored His Father
 6. Christ is the only one who, far from committing murder, undoes the curse of death
 7. Christ is the only one who is perfectly faithful to His bride
 8. Christ is the only one who, far from stealing or coveting, has humbled Himself to bring us riches
 9. Christ is the only one who, far from lying, has perfectly revealed the truth about God
- F. Christ is the Tabernacle**
1. Christ is the bread of the presence of God
 2. Christ is the lampstand and lamps lighting the way to God
 3. Christ is sacrifice on the altar preparing us to meet God
 4. Christ is the priest of the tabernacle representing us before God
 5. Christ is the basin for washing cleansing us for God's presence
- G. Exodus is all about Christ - there is so much about Christ in Exodus that it will be a challenge simply to note them all, much less to meditate and expound on them all**
1. So, as we go through Exodus, let us keep our eyes open so that we can see each of these pictures and appreciate how much Christ is for us - God ordained the events of the Exodus and has preserved their record so that we would be able to see a better picture of Christ and rejoice in Christ all the more