

**Exodus:**

The Redemption of God's People,  
a Covenant with God's People,  
the Renewal of the Covenant for God's people,  
and the Worship Center of God's People.

IV. Comment on the Writing

A. The Redemption of God's People, 1:1-18:27

1. The situation in Egypt, 1:1-22
2. The deliverer of Israel from Egypt, 2:1-4:31
3. The Struggle of Moses with Pharaoh in Egypt, 7:1-13:16
  - a. The preface to the struggle with Amenhotep II, 5:1-6:27
  - b. The confrontation with Pharaoh, 6:28-11:10
    - 1) The instruction of the Lord to Moses, 6:28-7:13
    - 2) The plagues (9) upon Egypt, 7:14-11:10
    - 3) The tenth plague announced, 11:1-10

Israel cried out to pharaoh because of pharaoh's oppression; now the Egyptians will cry out because of God's judgment. This is the final, and most severe, of the plagues.

The most interesting interpretative issue in these verses is the meeting by Moses with pharaoh (v. 10). The text tells us that after the ninth plague he would not speak to Pharaoh again (10:29). Perhaps the best interpretative option is to see the phrase, "I will not see your face again (10:29)," as an official appointment while this one was not official since it was "during the night," 12:31).

That the promise of a final plague is specific as to its occurrence is interesting. In the ancient mind, what we call midnight meant the deepest, darkest time of the night, a time in sleeping when people are most defenseless and vulnerable.

The firstborn in Egyptian and Israelite cultures was significant, but the firstborn of pharaoh was most important. Pharaoh was

considered a god, the son of Re, the sun god, for the specific purpose of ruling over Re's chief concern, the land of Egypt. To manifest himself, the supreme god assumed the form of the living king and gave seed, which was to become the next king, the next "son of Re." Moreover, the Pharaoh was the incarnation of the god Horus, a falcon god whose province was the heavens. Horus represented the living king who succeeded the dead king Osiris. Every living king was Horus; every dead king was worshipped king embodying the hopes and aspirations of the Egyptians. To strike the firstborn son of Pharaoh was to destroy this cardinal doctrine of the divine kingship of Egypt. Such a blow would be enough for pharaoh, for then he would drive the Israelites out. This is, also, an attack on Min, the god of reproduction, and Isis, the goddess that protects children as well.

4) The Institution of Passover, 12:1-13

There is a break in the delineation of the plagues between the announcement of the tenth plague, its execution, and the departure from Egypt. God not only instructions them how to prepare for the eventful night ("the night no one slept"), but how to remember it. Instructions are reiterated on four different occasions (12:1-13, 42, 43-52; 13:3) suggesting its central importance, the need to remember!

Israel is given a new calendar; a new era is about to begin. Remember Israel has two calendars, one civil (Day of Atonement and Tabernacles in the Fall) and the other religious (this one is in the "first" month [April, Nisan]).

a) Instructions, vv. 1-11

The events surrounding the final plague and Israel's departure are occasions for two of the nation's great celebrations: Passover (14th of April) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>). A special meal, eaten in haste, with the blood of sacrifice as a covering on the doorposts, marked a special night of deliverance. Israel was redeemed in the shedding of blood that protected them. "...when He sees the blood...the LORD will pass over the door" (v. 23). This was a family festival that arose before the inauguration of the priesthood.

“Abib” is a Canaanite term for Nisan or April. Passover is Israel’s only night festival; it is also a family affair. It is the first month in Jewish religious calendar.

Here is the first occurrence of the phrase “the congregation of Israel” (v. 3).

Bread without leaven means that it could be baked quickly, not requiring time for the leavening ingredient to cause the bread to rise. In Deut. 16:3, it is called “bread of affliction.”

- b) The reason, vv. 12-13
- 5) The Feast of Unleavened Bread, 12:14-28

- a) The instruction, vv. 14-23

- (1) To Moses and Aaron, 14-20

This feast, like all of them, celebrates the saving acts of God. Leaven (yeast), a symbol of corruption, is removed. The number seven suggests completion or perfection.

Hysop (v. 22) was a small bush that was common to the wilderness of Sinai. Its branches were ideal for sprinkling liquids.

- (2) To the elders, vv. 21-23

The instruction in 12:1-20 was given privately to Moses and Aaron; however, in 12:21-28 it is given to the elders to transmit to the people (to clan leaders and who would instruct families). The instruction is abbreviated.

- b) The continuance, vv. 24-27

It is to become the first of the three mandated appearances before the Lord annually.

- c) The compliance, vv. 27b-28

- 6) The tenth plague, 12:29-36

- a) The death of the firstborn, vv. 29-30

The sojourn begins amid the cries of the Egyptians for their dead. The departure began 430 years (v. 42, Gal. 3:17) “to the day” of Jacob’s entrance into Egypt with seventy souls; they leave a huge body of people (600,000 warriors plus families).

There is evidence from Egyptology that the man who succeeded Amenhotep II, the pharaoh of the plagues, was not his first-born son. His successor was Thutmose IV (1425-1417 B.C.), a son of Amenhotep II, but evidently not his first-born. Thutmose IV went to some pains to legitimize his right to the throne. This would not have been necessary if he had been the first-born. So far scholars have found no Egyptian records of the death of Amenhotep II's first-born son.

b) The unconditional release, vv. 31-32

(1) The circumstances of the departure, vv. 33-41

(2) The plea of the Egyptians, v. 33

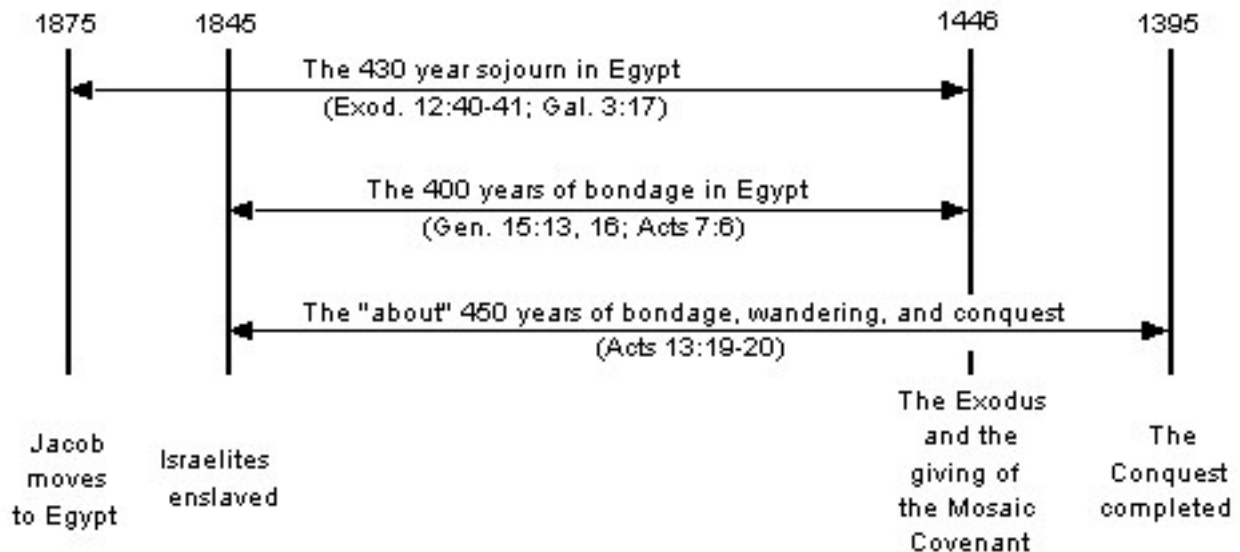
(3) The packing, v. 34

The issue seems to be haste as it was in eating the Passover meal.

(4) The request, vv. 35-36

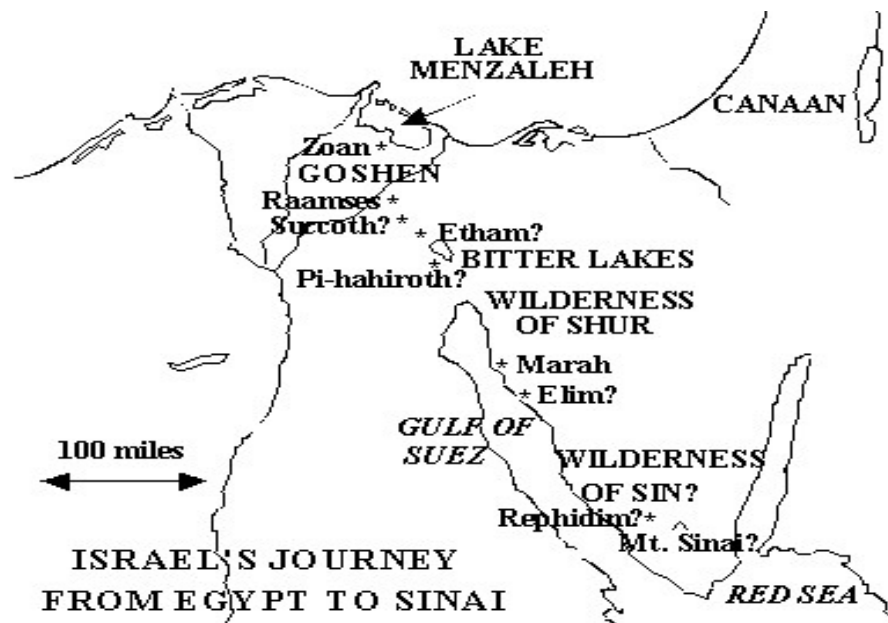
7) The beginning of the Exodus, 12:37-42

### REFERENCES TO ISRAEL'S YEARS IN EGYPT



Conservative scholars have generally placed the date of the exodus at 1445 BC. I Kings 6:1 indicates that the exodus occurred 480 years prior to the fourth year of the reign of Solomon, the

year of the beginning of the temple construction. The beginning of the temple is dated ca. 967 BC.



8. Further instruction concerning the Passover, 12:43-51

The requirement for the observance of the Passover was faith in the covenant of God through Abraham, symbolized by circumcision. It was a family celebration of remembrance. These several regulations for the Passover were apparently necessitated by the non-Israelites who joined the Exodus and had identified with the religion of the Hebrews. If a man did not identify with the covenant promises by the rite of circumcision, he could not celebrate the Passover (12:44, 48-49). The feast was to be centered in the home and observed by the entire community (cf. vv. 3, 6, 19).

9) Consecration of the Firstborn, 13:1-2

The redemption price of the firstborn male children is not stated. It likely entailed an animal sacrifice though later it was set at five shekels (Num. 18:16). Clearly, they were to be given to the Lord through a substitute! Firstborn animals were to be sacrificed to the Lord.

10) Feast of Unleavened Bread, 13:3-16

This section of instructions is like what is found in 12:1-28 and 12:43-52 relative the Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened

Bread. Here the instruction is given by Moses to the people, and it deals with the celebration in the land of promise.

Like the Passover (12:26-27), the Feast of Unleavened Bread had great educational value in the home (13:8-9). The feast was like a sign on their hand or, that is, it was a continual reminder of God's mighty deliverance from Egypt. Some orthodox Jews today interpret that passage (and Deut. 6:8; 11:18) literally and bind passages of the Law (Ex. 13:2-10; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21) on their arms and foreheads in small pouches, so-called phylacteries, though this was probably not God's intention.

4. The Deliverance of Israel from Egypt, 13:17-18:27

a. The beginning of the exodus, 13:17-22

This short section marks the beginning of the journey of the Israelites toward the sea and Sinai. The emphasis here is on the leading of the Lord. Although a primary application of such a passage would be difficult, the general principle is clear: God, by his clear revelation, leads his people to the fulfillment of the promise.

Leaving Rameses, they journeyed south to Succoth and turned north presumably to follow the Mediterranean route, the most direct passage to the Promised Land. These directionally erratic movements enticed pharaoh to think they are confused, weak, and easy prey. The shortest exit route was near the sea, but the Lord led them into the wilderness, away from Egyptian fortifications that guarded the land. This was providential (3:17).

Further, the Lord led them by the cloud and the pillar of fire (vv. 21-22). Some conservative scholars believe the pillar/cloud was a single entity with a dark and light side (at Sinai the mount was on fire yet covered by a dark cloud [Deut. 4:11, 5:22]). God had already appeared to Moses in the fire of the bush, and so here again is revelation with fire. Whatever the exact nature of these things, they formed direct, visible revelations from God, who was guiding the people in a clear and unambiguous way. Both clouds and fire would again and again represent the presence of God in his power and

majesty, guiding and protecting, his people, as well as by judging their enemies.

It must be admitted that the location of the places, including the site of the crossing of Red or Reed Sea, listed in the sojourn-itinerary, are unknown to us except for Kadesh Barnea. The reference to a crossing of the Red Sea, today the Gulf of Suez, is rooted in the Septuagint translation of the third century BC. The Hebrew phrase is "Sea of Reeds." The Israelites were opposite Baal Zephon (Ex.14:2), identified as Tel Dafanneh, just west of Lake Menzaleh, a southern bay of the Mediterranean Sea.

The taking of Joseph's mummified body, later to be buried at Shechem (Joshua 24:32), fulfilled a promise (Gen. 50:25) and links the two books.

#### Applications:

1. If there is a lesson for us in our passage it is that the God of the Bible alone is God. He alone is all-powerful, compassionate, and caring; He alone is worthy of our complete trust. God humbled the false deities of Egypt including Pharaoh himself. There is a tendency in all of us not to trust God but put our faith in circumstances and people. Pharaoh and the nation paid a terrible cost for their pride and misplaced trust. Do we not also? Think of instances in your life when you have put your faith in circumstances or people to help you and it proved hazardous. What are you doing to deal with distrust of Him?
2. God not only created a nation by delivering a people from bondage through miracles of deliverance and preservation, He gave them symbols of that deliverance as reminders to focus the minds and memories on God's great acts of provision and promise. He gathered them in families to celebrate the first Passover, deliverance from death through death from the land of death. It was a great night to be celebrated. Do you celebrate your deliverance from bondage as an individual and as a family? God is gracious to give us occasions to remember our past deliverances through His grace. What do you need to praise Him for in bring you help recently?
3. The deliverance of God's people in our passage, the greatest event in the Old Testament Scriptures, is a picture of the greatest moment in the New Testament Scriptures, the deliverance from death through the death covering

of Christ for us at Calvary. The Passover is a picture of Christ, the true lamb of God. Christ, the true Passover, was crucified on the 14th of Nisan [Abib, April], 33AD. Just as God delivered His ancient people, He has delivered us! Do you not rejoice in God's great merciful redemption from your "land of bondage" through the covering of blood? Do you "remember (13:3)" the great day of your deliverance?

4. It is interesting that the ancient people of God longed for deliverance from bondage, but adversity caused them to doubt and complaint. It seems a truism that we soon forget what we have sought from God when the method He employs to answer our pleas frighten us. What does this say about us? Have you sought something from the Lord but doubted and became frightened with the means He used to answer us? Have you asked to be delivered from something, but wondered if God was bringing disaster instead of blessing? Immediate fear tends to obscure our understanding and we complain (14:11). When we complain, the reason is a result of myopia.
5. If God leads us into danger, be assured that He will lead us through it. To say it another way, there are times when God, to deliver us out of danger, takes us into what we think are frightening circumstances. We must realize that God's means of deliverance may be discomfiting, yet it will only cause your thankfulness to be deeper when you experience His deliverance. Think about the ancient people of God and allow their example to be both a warning and blessing. God delivered them and He will deliver us though the method may be disconcerting at times. Can you bear witness to these truths? What have you learned that might help others who think "Egyptian chariots" are coming upon them? Therefore, when trials come, do not focus on the frightening moments before you but on the power of God to deliver you
6. Several times in our passage today, as it relates to the Passover celebration, it is stated that it was centered in the family. A family lamb or goat was selected on the 10<sup>th</sup> day; it was sacrificed for a covering on the 14<sup>th</sup> day at twilight, roasted, and eaten in haste. I like the idea that it was to be family oriented. God has placed great value on the family unit. For us, it is especially celebrated in the Advent season and Resurrection Day. Let us not neglect the heritage we have in biblical Judaism and the lessons it can teach us in this new age of less shadows. What the Passover prefigured has come to fruition in the "true Passover Lamb," our Lord Jesus Christ!
7. Just as God is faithful in keeping His promises to His people though the fulfillment of them may be far less than immediate, so also the threats and



dire promises of judgment. The plagues were promises and they came upon Egypt. The final one brought death just as God promised. God is true to His promises and that should function as a serious warning not to act toward Him in rebellion and a great comfort leading to obedience and trust. In a culture that believes that the road to peace and fulfillment is that of tolerance and privatized values, called mere preferences, God declares that there is a way that seems right, but the end is death. Do you believe this? Do you conduct your life determining your moral values considering God's justice as well as grace?