

## Exodus Introduction - John Karmelich

I know you're not obligated to read this, but since you're in the neighborhood hopefully I can get a few minutes of your time! When I got near the end of my last project (Daniel) I started praying, "OK God, what's next?" I believe God said, "Exodus"! I thought, why Exodus?" It led me to ponder what should I call this introduction. That's when I believed God said, "You already got it, "Why Exodus?" As most of you know, my lessons focus on how God expects us to live for Him. That title fits this lesson well. I should start by saying, even if you've read Exodus a million times, hopefully I'll give you insights that you may not have consider before.

Before I even get to the who, what, when and how's of this book, let's remember why God called us to be a witness for Him. The Israelites were not separated just to be free from slavery. They were set free so they could use their lives as a witness for God. Even though we get "plague chapters" here, the vast majority of the book focuses on how God wants us to live as a witness for Him. Yes we'll get into "The 10 Commandments" which are in this book. Of course to believe in Jesus is about faith in what He did for us. Still the issue of obedience is a key point in this book, as well as understanding that God called us to be a living as a witness for Jesus. Yes Exodus has a lot of verses that tie to Jesus prophetically. I also will discuss the laws in this book that are applicable for the Jewish people versus Christians. Yes, there's a lot of history to be discussed here and yes I've studied "background notes" that hopefully peak your interest. However none of all that's as important as understanding why Exodus is important to the Christian: This book's a great model of what's expected of us after we believe Jesus is God. Hopefully, every study in this book will help us as we grow in the "Now what" aspect of how God desires we live!

Now that I got that speech out of my system, let me give some facts about this book. I am positive that this book was God ordained and written down by Moses. Some "scholars" exist, and I sarcastically use that term, argue others wrote it. If you believe Jesus is God, and you believe what is said about Him in the Gospels, well, you must believe Moses wrote this down. Jesus quotes from this book as well as the other four books that make up the first five bible books. Jesus attributed all five to Moses. How do we dispute with what Jesus said if we are positive He is God? Bottom line the book came from God and it was written by Moses, end of that issue!

Next issue is the "when". This book mainly focuses on the main character (and author) Moses. It goes from his birth to 80 years later when God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Realize the 1st chapter deals with a 400 year time period when one man's family moved to Egypt. By the 12th chapter of Exodus over 400 years later their descendants probably numbered around 2,000,000. In the book of Deuteronomy, also by Moses, that book says he died at 120. Of course his successor did write that last part! Since much of Exodus focuses on the time frame when the Israelites left Egypt, I'd argue the key year was 1,446 BC when that Exodus took place. All five of Moses' books were taken by the Israelites into the land of Israel a little over 40 years after the Exodus!

A few words on "where": The first 12 chapters more or less take place in Egypt. This book is divided into 40 chapters with the chapter breaks not being added until essentially the time of the printing press. The rest of it takes place in the desert northeast of Egypt, which today would be the Sinai Peninsula as well as other surrounding areas.

Next the "who": Obviously it's mostly about the Israelites. In Chapter 1, we learn 70 people moved to Egypt. By the time of the Exodus itself (Chapter 12), the best estimate is about 2 million. It was about 430 years after Chapter 1. Most of the book centers on the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. I

would also argue there's good historical evidence that the Pharaoh (the Egyptian king) in this book was not part of the same dynasty than the Pharaoh Joseph worked under. Joseph was an Israelite and the #2 man in Egypt when his family came to live with him! Realize the Israelites lived in Egypt for over 400 years and never became a part of their culture. It's a reminder that a witness for God is about separation from the rest of the world. It doesn't mean for example we can't work with nonbelievers. It just means our behavior should be different enough that we stand out of the "world" because of it!

Oh, I should talk about the word Exodus for a second: It's comes from the Greek translation. It means to exit (to relocate). The Hebrew title essentially means "names" as this book opens with the names of the Israelites who moved to Egypt!

OK then, let me finish the introduction lesson by coming back to the big question of "why exodus"? I'd argue the book centers around four key events: The first is the Passover, when the "death angel" spared the Israelites and the first born of just about everyone else was killed. One reason was "getting back" at the fact the Pharaoh decided to kill the Israelite male babies. More importantly it's a reminder that this life comes with a death sentence we can't get out of! To be passed over in death is to accept God's full payment for our sins, which is why lamb's blood was put on the door to spare them from that sentence. Remember when John the Baptist first introduced Jesus, he called him the lamb that was sacrificed for our sins! (Paraphrase of John 1:29.)

The next key event is the crossing of the Red Sea. One can find lots of references to that event through the bible. Why? I'd argue it's a type of baptism. It represents an effort on our part. Yes, eternal life is a free gift from God, but we must accept it. To go in faith is to accept that gift and go forward. I would argue that's what the crossing is all out.

The third is the giving of the law. I'm going to do a lesson on the 10 Commandments. Jewish scholars argue there are 613 laws in the first five books of the bible. Some of them apply to Christians as to act as a good witness for God and some of them do not (e.g., eating Kosher!) I don't believe we are saved by keeping the law, but I'll argue we're a good witness for Jesus when we rely on His power to live as God desires we live as a witness for Him.

The final aspect of the book is the construction of a portable worship center. If you don't think that is a big issue, realize half the book deals with its construction. There's much more text dedicated to how it was built than the plague chapters or even the exodus itself. Why? Because God didn't separate us as a group so we can do whatever we want! He separated us from the world to be a witness to it! Just know that all of that description of constructing a portable worship center is a model of centering our lives on being a witness for Him.

Obviously there's a lot more to this book as it is 40 chapters! My goal here is just to give us highlights as we study this book with a focus on how it affects our lives here and now!

With that said, the rest of this lesson is a more detailed account that I wrote about twenty years ago. If you'd like you can read the rest or call it a week now. Either way, I'm grateful for you reading this. To read the rest of it, click on one of the two links below. Everything else below is links to questions that you may have. If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me.

If interested, there are two other links on this chapter. They are for a more detailed lesson that I wrote about 20 years ago. Of course, you're welcome to read that if you'd like. Either way, I'm grateful that you did read this! If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again, John