

Creative Living Bible Study




Journey to Freedom



Exodus through the Ten Commandments

This book belongs to:



Journey to Freedom

Exodus through the Ten Commandments

© Copyright 1997 by Diana Schick

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from Creative Living International, 11560 Brass Lantern Court Reston, Virginia 20194.

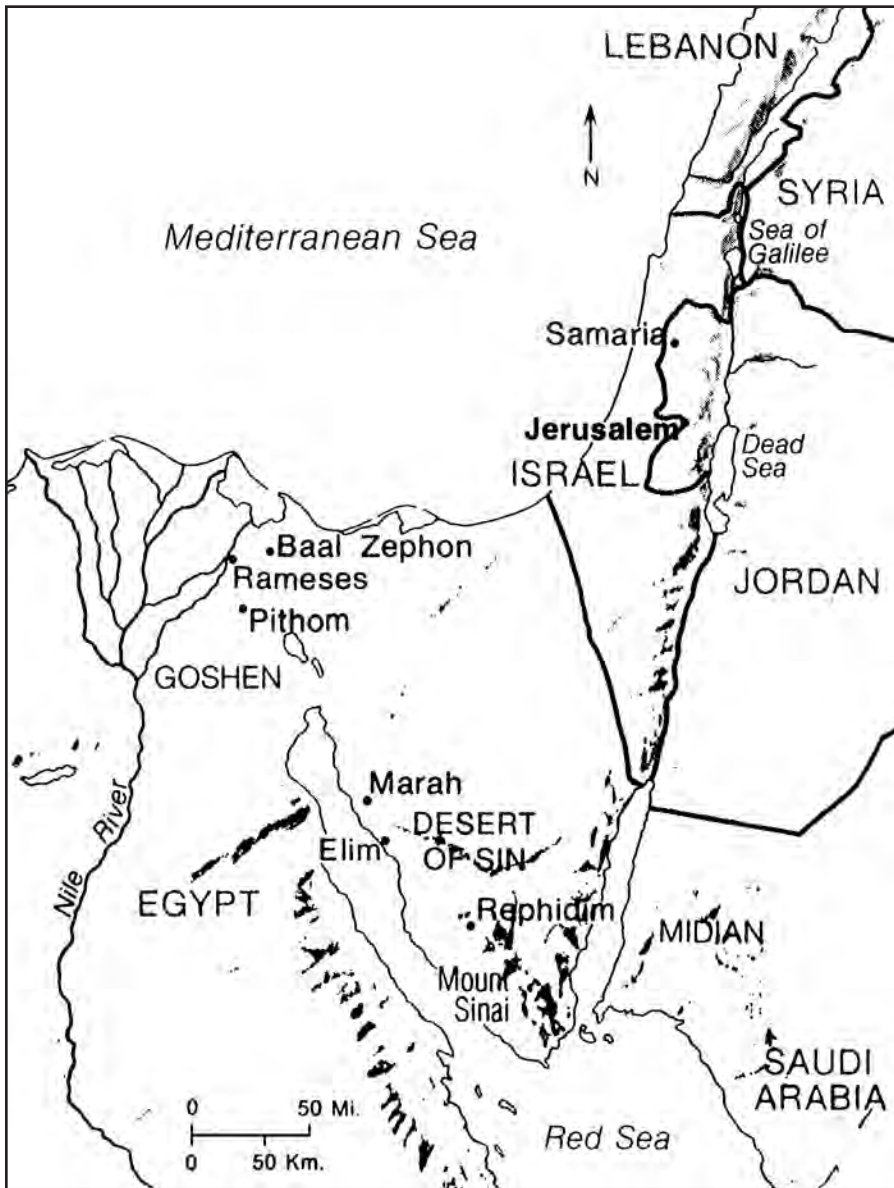
Creative Living International is a Christian organization designed to help individuals find practical biblical principles for today's challenges.

Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible: *New International Version (NIV)*. Copyright 1973,1978,1984, International Bible Society.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 1-932395-32-6

Key Places in Exodus



Journey to Freedom

Studies from Exodus 1-20

Introduction		3	
1	The Birth of a Deliverer	When God Seems Distant	5
2	Divine Call & Human Response	When We Feel Inadequate	14
3	It's All in a Name	The Grace We Need in Desperate Times	24
4	The Plagues: Part I	Freedom from Stubbornness	33
5	The Plagues: Part II	Freedom from Greed	42
6	Passover: Past and Present	Beginnings of Freedom	50
7	Victory at the Red Sea	Freedom from Fear	61
8	Song at the Sea	Reason to Celebrate	70
9	Murmuring and Manna	Freedom from Complaining	80
10	Freed to Form Community	Keys to Leadership: A Submissive & Teachable Spirit	92
11	Covenant at Sinai	The Rewards of Reverence	80
12	The Ten Commandments	God's Gift of the Ten Commandments: Part I	110
13	The Ten Commandments	God's Gift of the Ten Commandments: Part II	123
	Footnote and Chart Directory		130
	Bibliography		132
	About the Author		

Note: This study is taken from the Creative Living Bible Study *Journey to Freedom: Studies on Exodus through Joshua*.

PART I

FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew Bible uses the opening words, *we'llah shemoth*, "Now these are the names..." as the title for the book that we call *Exodus*. These words echo the listing of the sons of Israel who went down to Egypt in Genesis 46:8 and connect Exodus to the previous book of Genesis.

Genesis concerned itself with the beginnings of the world, of human beings and their institutions, and of the people of Israel as a tribal family. The focal point of Genesis was the covenant that God made with Abraham¹ in which God promised two things: to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation through whom the whole earth would be blessed, and to give Abraham's descendants the land extending from the river of Egypt to the great Euphrates River.

On the day that God sealed His covenant with Abraham, He also foretold that his descendants would be strangers in a foreign land where they would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. "But I will also judge the nation that they will serve," God promised, "and after-ward they will come out with many possessions" (Genesis 15:13-14).

In the years to come, the promises and predictions of God began to unfold in amazing ways. The end of Genesis records that Abraham's grandson, Jacob (later renamed "Israel" by God), had twelve sons.

Because ten of Jacob's sons were greatly jealous of their brother, Joseph, they sold him as a slave to a passing caravan traveling to Egypt. But God was with Joseph, and he gained tremendous favor with the king of Egypt, Pharaoh,² who eventually made Joseph his prime minister in charge of the whole land.

Later, when famine threatened to wipe out Jacob's entire family in Canaan, God had placed Joseph in a position to rescue them from extinction. He brought his father Jacob and family, seventy persons in all, out of Canaan and to the land of Goshen where he provided for them from the storehouses of Egypt. The book of Genesis closes with Abraham's offspring firmly planted in the land of Egypt as God had foretold and orchestrated.

The book of Exodus picks up on the dramatic story of Abraham's offspring some 400 years later. The Israelites, or Hebrews as they were called, had increased in numbers to about two million. God had indeed made of Abraham's offspring a great nation as He had promised. But, as foretold, they were now slaves in a foreign land with a new Pharaoh who was threatened by their numbers and who oppressed them with hard labor and cruelty.

The title *Exodus* comes from the Greek word, *Exodos*. The name means "going out" or "departure" and was given to this book by the translators of the Septuagint³ in the third century B.C. because it reflected the theme of the book.

The first "going out" for the Israelites was their departure from Egypt,⁴ being freed from slavery and oppression to become the people of God. On this journey Moses, God's chosen leader, and the people began to receive God's revelation of Himself through His mighty acts of deliverance.

A second "going out" took place through Israel's forty years of wilderness wanderings. There the fledgling nation learned to put aside her old life and live a new life of trust and obedience to God.

The final "going out" for God's people occurred as the nation left the wilderness and entered the Promised Land. The book of Joshua recounts the incredible story of how God led Israel in the supernatural conquest of

the very land He had promised Abraham centuries before. There, the people of God found peace and freedom as they worshipped the one true God and made Him known to the world.

Israel's journey to freedom holds many applications to the development of our own faith in God. Studying God's direct involvement in the history of His people will help us see and trust His involvement in our complex lives today. As we watch God sanctifying His people through many experiences over a long period of time, we will better appreciate how God uses everyday circumstances to produce holiness in us. As we observe God's workings with Israel in the midst of a hostile world, we will learn to expect opposition to our faith, and learn to face the challenges of life with courage and certainty of God's ultimate victory.

As we embark on this fascinating study of ancient history, we will above all become more aware of His faithful hand on our lives and find new freedom in trusting Him more.

THE BIRTH OF A DELIVERER

Exodus 1-2

Joseph had died and a new king, who did not know Joseph and therefore had no sympathy toward his people, ruled the nation of Egypt. This king enslaved the Israelites and forced them to do hard labor to further build his kingdom. Yet God was blessing Abraham's descendants, as He had promised, even while they were slaves in a foreign land. The Israelites became so numerous that the new Pharaoh was threatened by their potential power and set out to weaken them by increasing their forced labor.

But the more oppressed they were, the more the Hebrew people multiplied and spread until they were all over the land! One translation of Exodus 1:6 reads, "Yet the Children of Israel bore fruit, they swarmed, they became many, they grew mighty in number--exceedingly, yes, exceedingly; the land filled up with them."

Because hard labor and ruthless treatment failed to curb the Israelites' growth in numbers, the king resorted to violence. He instructed the Hebrew midwives to kill all male babies at birth. However, the Hebrews midwives proved more shrewd than Pharaoh. Out of fear and respect for God, they disobeyed the king. When he required an explanation, they told him that the Hebrew women were so vigorous that they gave birth before a midwife could get there. Clearly obsessed with a perceived power struggle between him and the Hebrew slaves, Pharaoh responded with the order that all male babies be thrown in the Nile.

It was against this backdrop that Israel's future deliverer, Moses, was born. When he was born, Moses' parents sensed that he was special and hid him for three months (Hebrews 11:23). When he could no longer be hidden, his mother, Jochebed, made a waterproof basket in which she placed her son wrapped in a blanket. As Jochebed set the basket afloat on the Nile, Moses' sister, Miriam, ran along the bank to watch. It so happened that Pharaoh's daughter, who was out bathing in the Nile, discovered the basket and decided to adopt the beautiful Hebrew infant. Miriam stepped forward to offer to find a nursemaid among the Hebrews. Pharaoh's daughter agreed and ended up paying Jochebed to nurse Moses through infancy (probably about three to four years).

Both Pharaoh and the Nile River were worshipped as gods in Egypt but were unable to prevail against the God who was with the Hebrew slaves. Indeed, Pharaoh had no idea of the power that stood against him on behalf of these people. In His providence, God used the natural love of a mother for her child and the tender heart of Pharaoh's own daughter towards a baby's cry to thwart the evils of Pharaoh. God would deliver His people, and the deliverer would be raised in Pharaoh's palace by his own daughter!

After he had grown up, Moses went out to where his own people labored and saw an Egyptian beating a slave. Moses came to the defense of this fellow Hebrew by killing the Egyptian and hiding the body in the sand! The next day when Moses went out to his people, he came upon two Hebrews fighting. When he stepped in to try to settle the differences, the man in the wrong rejected Moses' authority, saying, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" This taunting statement told Moses that the murder was public knowledge, and he fled Egypt in fear. Sure enough, Pharaoh determined

to kill Moses when he discovered what had happened. Moses traveled through the Sinai Desert on foot, finally stopping in Midian,⁵ some two hundred miles from Egypt. As he sat down to rest by a water well, Moses encountered yet another incident of injustice, this time among foreigners. When the daughters of Reuel, a priest of Midian,⁶ came to water their father's flocks at the well, some shepherds came and pushed them aside. But Moses stepped in, forced the shepherds back and watered Reuel's flocks himself. Consequently, the girls' father asked Moses to stay at his home. Later, Moses married Reuel's daughter, Zipporah, and had a son whom he named Gershom. Moses would have another son and reside in Midian for some forty years (cf. Acts 7:29-30).

During this time, the king of Egypt died, and the new Pharaoh intensified the oppression of the Israelite slaves. In desperation, they cried out for help. Chapter 2 closes with the spotlight turned toward God and what He would do. The author of Exodus⁷ used four short phrases to describe God's response: God *heard* their groaning; God *remembered* His covenant with Abraham; God *saw* the Children of Israel; and God *knew*. God was intimately aware of their sufferings and was working behind the scenes to bring about their promised deliverance.

Read Exodus 1:1-2:10.

1. God had promised Abraham innumerable descendants who would form a nation. Even though enslaved and oppressed in Egypt, what indicated that God was working out His promise to Abraham in spite of the circumstances (1:7, 12)?

Reference: Note 1, *Abrahamic Covenant*, p. 12.

2. a. Why did Pharaoh fear the increase of the Hebrew slaves (1:9-10).

b. What first attempts did Pharaoh make to try to curb the Hebrew population growth (1:14, 16)?

3. a. How did the midwives respond wisely to the Pharaoh's command (1:17-19)?

Note: Biblically, *fear* of the Lord (vs. 17) denotes "reverent trust" in the Lord.

b. How did God reward the courage and godly choices of the midwives (1:20-21)?

4. What final attempt did Pharaoh make at thwarting the Hebrew population growth (1:22)?

5. Women were regarded as the most weak and powerless in ancient society. Even so, what women did God use to confound the powerful Pharaoh's plans (1:17-21; 2:1-10)?

Read Exodus 2:11-25.

6. a. Moses would become God's chosen leader and judge for Israel as they became a nation. What attitudes and character traits were evident in his life which would equip him for these tasks (2:11-13, cf. Acts 7:23-28, esp. v. 25)?

b. Why did Moses flee Egypt, and where did he go (2:14-15)?

Reference: Note 5, *Midian*, and Note 6, *priest of Midian*, p. 13.

7. a. What did Moses' response to the situation at the Midian well reiterate about his character (2:16-17)?

b. What resulted from Moses' actions at the well (2:18-22)?

8. a. The situation in Egypt intensified while Moses was in Midian. What did the Israelites do (2:23)?

b. What was God's response (2:24-25)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

When God Seems Distant

During their terrible bondage, the Israelites had only the promise of God to their forefather, Abraham, to hold onto for hope. But as the years passed, their prayers remained unanswered, and the situation became unbearable. There seemed no end in sight, and God seemed distant, if there at all.

We all go through times when things seem to only get worse, and we are tempted to believe God has distanced Himself from our great need.

Prayers of faith and hope may become groans of pain accompanied by a growing lack of faith in God's ability to help or that He is even aware or concerned about our distress.

These are times to remember the story of Israel's deliverance. During Israel's suffering, God was not distant nor detached, but silently working to bring about the promised freedom from bondage. Despite Pharaoh's cruelty, God continued to build the Hebrew nation and raise up their deliverer, Moses, in Pharaoh's own palace! Although God may have seemed non-existent or uninvolved, He was in fact preparing to move in a phenomenal way to fulfill His promises to Abraham and his descendants.

Perhaps the most important truth to be learned here is that it is always too soon to stop trusting God. When we are in distress and the answers to our prayers seem delayed, He is not distant, but near. He is working silently toward deliverance and the fulfillment of His promises to those who love Him.

As we begin our study of *Journey to Freedom*, let's make some observations about the wonderful implications of these truths and examine other Scriptures that have to do with times when God seems distant.

1. a. What are some long-term "bondages" or recurring distresses that are common to our human experience?

 - b. What negative thoughts about God might result from enduring the pain of these issues?
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
2. What do these Scriptures encourage us to believe even when we cannot see what God is doing?

Psalm 34:18

Psalm 121:2-3

Isaiah 33:6

3. Psalm 68:19 promises that the Lord daily bears our burdens. What does Hebrews 7:24-25 promise those who come to God through His Son, Jesus Christ?

4. As Jesus prays for us, what are we to do?

Philippians 4:6-7

I Peter 5:7

Deuteronomy 31:6

Psalm 27:14

Psalm 55:22

5. What is the promise God will surely fulfill as we trust in Him?

Jeremiah 29:11

Summary

6. In what ways was God at work on behalf of His people even though they may have felt He had abandoned them?

7. a. What areas of trust are you confronted with in your life today?

b. What does this story say to you about your own situation?

8. Psalm 86 is a beautiful guide for prayer in times of difficulty. List the attributes of God that are proclaimed in this Psalm. Then list the attitudes and choices we can make to experience the freedom of faith to be discovered in times of adversity.

LESSON 1 NOTES

1 *The Abrahamic Covenant* (Genesis 12:1-4). God's promise to Abram was first given to him when God called him to leave his father's household and his own country to follow Him into a new land. The promise involved two things: 1) Abraham would have numerous descendants and become a great nation which would be blessed by God; 2) Through his descendants, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Later, the promise was confirmed with an everlasting covenant, and a third promise was added: 3) God would give Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan, where he then lived as an alien, as an everlasting possession (17:1-8). God's original blessing on all mankind (Genesis 1:28) would be restored and fulfilled through Abram and his offspring. In various ways and degrees, these promises were reaffirmed to Abram (15:5-21; 17:4-8; 18:18-19; 22:17-18), to Abram's son Isaac (26:2-4), to Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15; 35:11-12; 46:3) and to Moses (Exodus 3:6-8; 6:2-8). The promise to bless the world through Abraham's descendants is quoted

in Acts 3:25 with reference to Peter's Jewish listeners (see Acts 3:12)--Abram's physical descendants--and in Galatians 3:8 with reference to Paul's Gentile listeners--Abram's spiritual descendants.

2 *Pharaoh*. This meant "great house" in Egyptian. It was a royal title, not the king's personal name. (*The NIV Study Bible*, p. 88). Pharaoh was considered a god in Egypt, along with many other gods such as the Nile.

3 *Septuagint*. The first and most important of a number of ancient translations of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek between 280 and 180 B.C.

4 *The date of the exodus*, or departure from Egypt, "seems to be fixed with a fair degree of accuracy by 1 Kings. We are told that 'the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel' was the same as 'the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt' (1 Kings 6:1). Since the former was c. 966 B. C., the latter--and thus the date of the exodus--was c. 1446 (assuming that the 480 in 1 Kings 6:1 is to be taken literally). The 40-year period of Israel's wanderings in the desert, which lasted from c. 1446 to c. 1406, would have been the most likely time for Moses to write the bulk of what is today known as the Pentateuch" (see Note 7 below). *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 2. Also see note on Exodus 1:11, p. 105, *The NIV Life Application Bible*.

5 *Midian*. The Midianites probably descended from one of Abraham's younger sons (Genesis 25:2). They lived in southeastern Sinai and west central Arabia on either side of the Gulf of Aqaba (an arm the Red Sea).

6 *Priest of Midian*. His personal name was Reuel, which means, "friend of God." This name is used interchangeably with Jethro, which may have been a title meaning, "his excellency." (2:18; 3:1). *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 90.

7 *The author/compiler of Exodus* and the other four books of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) is historically believed to be Moses by Jews and Christians alike. Several statements in Exodus indicate that Moses wrote certain sections of the book (see 17:14; 24:4; 34:27). Joshua 8:31 refers to the command of Exodus 20:25 as having been "written in the Book of the Law of Moses." New Testament passages, such as Mark 7:10; 12:26 and Luke 2:22-23, point to Moses as the author of Exodus. Taken together, these references strongly suggest that Moses was largely responsible for writing the book--a traditional view not convincingly challenged by the commonly held notion that the Pentateuch as a whole contains four underlying sources. *The NIV Study Bible*, pp. 2 and 84.