

LEADER'S GUIDE

Introduction to Study of Exodus— From Bondage to Freedom

September 11, 2016

As we begin a study of the book of Exodus, we will note that it can be regarded as a metaphor for our personal deliverance from bondage to freedom in Christ. Begin this study asking for the Holy Spirit to instruct you in what God is saying to us in His Word.

The Book of Exodus

Exodus is the second book of the Old Testament and of the Pentateuch, or Torah, commonly called the Books of the Law. The Pentateuch is traditionally attributed to the authorship of Moses. Exodus is the story of God rescuing Israel from Egypt, where they were held in captivity as slaves. They were oppressed at the command of the Pharaoh who feared the overtaking of the rapidly multiplying Israelites. They were the descendants of the Abraham's grandson, Jacob, whose God-given name was Israel. God gave new names to several individuals of strong faith including Abraham, Jacob, Peter, and the Apostle Paul.

God blesses, calls, and transforms many individuals that we encounter in scripture. He called many to 'exodus', which means 'going out', or 'departure'. Adam and Eve departed the Garden of Eden. Noah was called out of his ordinary life to build the ark. Abram was called out of Ur. Many others were called from their homes and everyday lifestyles to follow Him. Each of these had to fulfill seemingly monumental tasks in executing their call. He called Moses to leave his comfortable life in order to lead his brethren out of bondage in Egypt into a rugged wilderness. There were many physical needs of the people in the wilderness, and much spiritual growth that needed to happen before they could enter the Promised Land. All of the people that God calls to leadership have human flaws and often seem inadequate for the task they were called to accomplish.

Read Genesis 29:31-35 and Genesis chapters 46 & 47

Sons of Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin

The brothers became very jealous of Joseph, as Jacob clearly favored him. Also, Joseph interpreted two dreams which indicated that he would rule over his brothers.

Joseph was sold into slavery, which took him to Egypt. He was 17.

Joseph's family went to Egypt in search of food, as Israel was experiencing a drought.

The Egyptians allowed the Israelites to settle in Goshen, in the Nile river delta.

Genesis 46- God tells Jacob that He will make him into a great nation in Egypt, and that He will lead him out. Vs. 27 states that 70 Hebrews in all went into Egypt. In vs. 8-27 God names these people. God knows us each by name. He cares about His people as a loving Father. We should likewise recognize that God knows each of us by name personally. He knows the names of our family members and neighbors. Do we treat each other as though we know that God cares for each one?

The People of the Exodus Story

Read Exodus chapters 1-3. List all key persons and any information given about them.

Moses

Born to Amram and Jochebed – Hebrew couple from the tribe of Levi. His mother creatively threw him into the Nile where he was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter. His mother was allowed to nurse him for about 3 years. He was raised in Pharaoh's house – trained to be an historian, ambassador to the court and leader of the people of Israel. As an adult, he killed an Egyptian and ran away because Pharaoh wanted to kill him. He was 40 when he escaped to Midian. There he married, became a shepherd and had children. He was in Midian for 40 years. He was 80 when he returned to Egypt to gain freedom for the Israelites. His name forms the second element in some of the Pharaohs names – Ahmose, Thutmose, and Rameses. God worked behind the scenes to raise Moses up to deliver His people. "Those whom God designs for great services He finds out ways to qualify and prepare beforehand." Matthew Henry

Pharaoh

There are two Pharaoh's – one in Exodus 1-2 and the other in Exodus 3. Neither Pharaoh is named in the book.

WHAT WE KNOW FROM THE TEXT: The Pharaoh in chapter 1 and 2 did not know Joseph. He was afraid of how numerous the Israelites had become and that they might join up with Egypt's enemies in a war, so he enslaved the Israelites. He also ordered the midwives to kill the Hebrew boy babies. When that fails he tells all the Egyptians to throw Hebrew male babies into the Nile River. The Pharaoh in Exodus 1 and 2 dies while Moses is in Midian and another Pharaoh (probably the son Moses would have been raised with) is king when Moses returns.

Pharaoh's daughter

WHAT WE KNOW FROM THE TEXT: she came to the Nile River to bathe, finds a baby in the basket, knew he was a Hebrew baby, she has compassion on him, she adopts the baby as her son and names him Moses. He now is the grandson of Pharaoh and will be raised in the king's house – a position of special favor and special education for service in government.

WHO IS SHE? If Thutmose I was the Pharaoh, she would have been Hatshepsut, she could not have children. She would have considered Moses a gift from the gods. If Rameses II was the Pharaoh, she would have been his daughter. He was known as an especially cruel Pharaoh. Either way, little did she think she was helping forward the purpose of "the Lord God" of the Hebrews despite being a woman of compassion.

Note: "God often raises up friends for His people even among their enemies." Matthew Henry

Moses's mother

Jochebed was a Levite and was married to Amram, also a Levite. Shortly before Moses was born, the Pharaoh ordered all Israelite male children to be killed by throwing them into the Nile. Jochebed craftily prepared a basket in which to float Moses in the Nile. She did put him into the river, but allowed for his survival. When Pharaoh's daughter discovered the baby boy, Moses's older sister Miriam offered to find an Israelite woman to nurse and take care of the child. In this way, Jochebed was able to care for her son for a few years before relinquishing him to the palace. Hebrews 11 identifies Moses's parents, Jochebed and Amram, as heroes of the faith because they hid Moses rather than letting him be killed as ordered by the Pharaoh.

Moses's sister

Miriam was the older sister of Moses and was 7 years older than him. When Moses's mother put the baby in a basket in the river, Miriam stood watch. When Pharaoh's daughter

found the baby, Miriam asked whether she could find an Israelite woman to nurse and take care of him. Miriam led Pharaoh's daughter to his own mother who took care of him. Miriam is identified as a prophetess in Exodus 15. She led women in celebrating God's parting of the Red Sea for the Israelites and the drowning of Pharaoh's army. Later, Miriam and her brother Aaron criticized Moses because he had a foreign wife, and because in their opinion, Moses exercised more leadership than they thought he should as a younger brother (Numbers 12). God was angry with them, and struck Miriam with leprosy. Moses asked God to heal Miriam, and she was healed. Miriam, like Aaron and Moses, died in the wilderness before crossing into the Promised Land.

Zipporah

She was the wife of Moses and the daughter of Jethro. She met Moses at a well when she was drawing water for the family flock. Moses drew the water for her. Zipporah told her father about the incident and he invited Moses to his home, eventually promising his daughter in marriage to Moses. She was a Midianite. It is likely that she was not with Moses during the Exodus, staying instead with her father Jethro and their two sons Gershom and Eliezer.

Jethro

Also known as Reuel, meaning 'friend of God'. He was a shepherd and priest in Midian. When Moses and the Israelites were in the wilderness after leaving Egypt, Jethro came to meet with Moses. During the meeting, he praised the God of Israel as "greater than all other gods" (Exodus 18:11). Jethro also advised Moses to appoint a team of judges who could help Moses deal with the host of people who were coming to Moses for resolution of disputes.

The midwives

Exodus 1:15 names two: Shiphrah and Puah. They may have been the supervisors of the midwives. They might have been Egyptian since Pharaoh thought they would obey him. Hebrew midwives helped women give birth and cared for the baby until the mother was stronger. Midwives were committed to helping babies be born, not to killing them. The text says they feared God. They disobeyed Pharaoh! This is the first recorded case of civil disobedience in the Bible – see also Daniel 1:3, Daniel 6 and Acts 4 and 5. The midwives were willing to brave Pharaoh's wrath and suffer the consequences. It appears that they lied, however, they may have responded slowly to the housecalls to deliver, or the Hebrew women – described as vigorous – were blessed by God with easy labors and deliveries and actually delivered before the midwives could get there. The "delivery stool" – it was the custom for mothers to deliver their babies while sitting on 2 stones. The midwives were blessed by God – not because they lied, but because they obeyed the higher law of God by not killing the babies.

The Jews have a list of people who helped some escape the holocaust of the 20th century. These people are called the 'Righteous Among the Nations'. These ladies are the original people that God used to save Israel from extermination.

APPLICATION: Stand firm for what is right regardless of the consequences

Aaron

Aaron is not mentioned until chapter 4 of Exodus, but he is a critical participant in the Exodus story. He was the older brother of Moses, 3 years his senior. When God called Moses to lead the Israelites, Moses pleaded with God that he did not speak well enough to lead the People; God then identified Aaron as the person who could speak for Moses. In this way, Aaron shared with Moses some of the leadership responsibilities in speaking to Pharaoh and to the Israelites. It was Aaron's staff that brought about some of the plagues that God inflicted on the Egyptians. Later, when Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive God's law, the Israelites came to Aaron for leadership. Aaron was responsible for constructing the golden calf, inciting the anger of God and Moses. Aaron also became the first high priest, although Hebrews 7:11 identifies him as an imperfect high priest. Aaron, like his brother Moses and his sister Miriam, was not allowed to cross into the Promised Land, dying in the wilderness.

When did the Exodus occur?

WHAT BIBLE SCHOLARS SAY: Among Bible scholars, there are two views regarding the date of the Exodus and the Pharaohs involved.

View 1 – known as the Early date is based on a literal reading of 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26. In 1 Kings 6:1, it states that the time between the Exodus and when Solomon begins to build the temple (in the 4th year of his reign as king) is 480 years. Solomon's 4th year as king was 996 B.C. Therefore, the Exodus occurred in 1446 B.C. Judges 11:26 states that by the time of Jephthah (1100 B.C.) Israel had been in the Promised Land 300 years. Adding this to the 40 years in the wilderness and the time to conquer Heshbon puts the Exodus in the 15th century B.C. According to this view, Moses was born around 1526 B.C., either the end of Amenhotep I or the beginning of Thutmose I, whose daughter, Hatshepsut would have rescued Moses. Amenhotep II would have been the Pharaoh during chapters 3-12 – the Exodus. Corresponding with this, when he dies, Thutmose IV becomes the next Pharaoh, he was not Amenhotep's oldest son. The oldest son would have died in the 10th plague. Also, archaeological discoveries show that events in Palestine in 1400 B.C. correspond with the conquest under Joshua.

View 2 – known as the Late date – places the Exodus around 1290 B.C. (or 1270-60). Exodus 1:11 is used; it states the enslaved Israelites were forced to build the "store cities" of Pithom and Rameses. These cities were indicated as being built at least 80 years before the Exodus, and before Moses was born. (It should be remembered that often cities like these were added to by succeeding kings and renamed by them. This could have been added into the text at a later writing). Rameses means begotten of Ra – the Hyksos son god – the city was originally spelled Raamses. One archeologist (whose methods are now under question) notes that no settlements in Edom, Moab and Ammon are found from 1900 – 1300 B.C., so Moses could not have encountered opposition there until later. However, these people (who were semi-nomadic) may have had military control over these areas. Also, archaeological evidence points to widespread destruction in Palestine in the 13th century B.C., not the 15th. It should be noted that Joshua's military tactics only destroyed Jericho, Ai and Hazor. There were other invasions which could account for the destruction. More recent archaeology shows a population group in Egypt during the late Rameside period (late 13th – 12th century B.C.) who were culturally and ethnically close to what we know as Israel in 1200-586 B.C. This Late view group considers the number 480 years in 1 Kings as symbolic, representing a completion of an era of 12 generations (x 40 years), although a typical generation was about 25 years.

As can be seen, there is evidence used to support both views, but actually, there is very little extra biblical evidence from which to argue. Archaeologic results are often open to more than one interpretation.

It does not really matter who was Pharaoh or the precise date of the exodus, but it does matter what Pharaoh did and what God did through Moses and Aaron. The story is not about Pharaoh, but about God and how He delivers His people, Israel, from Egypt.

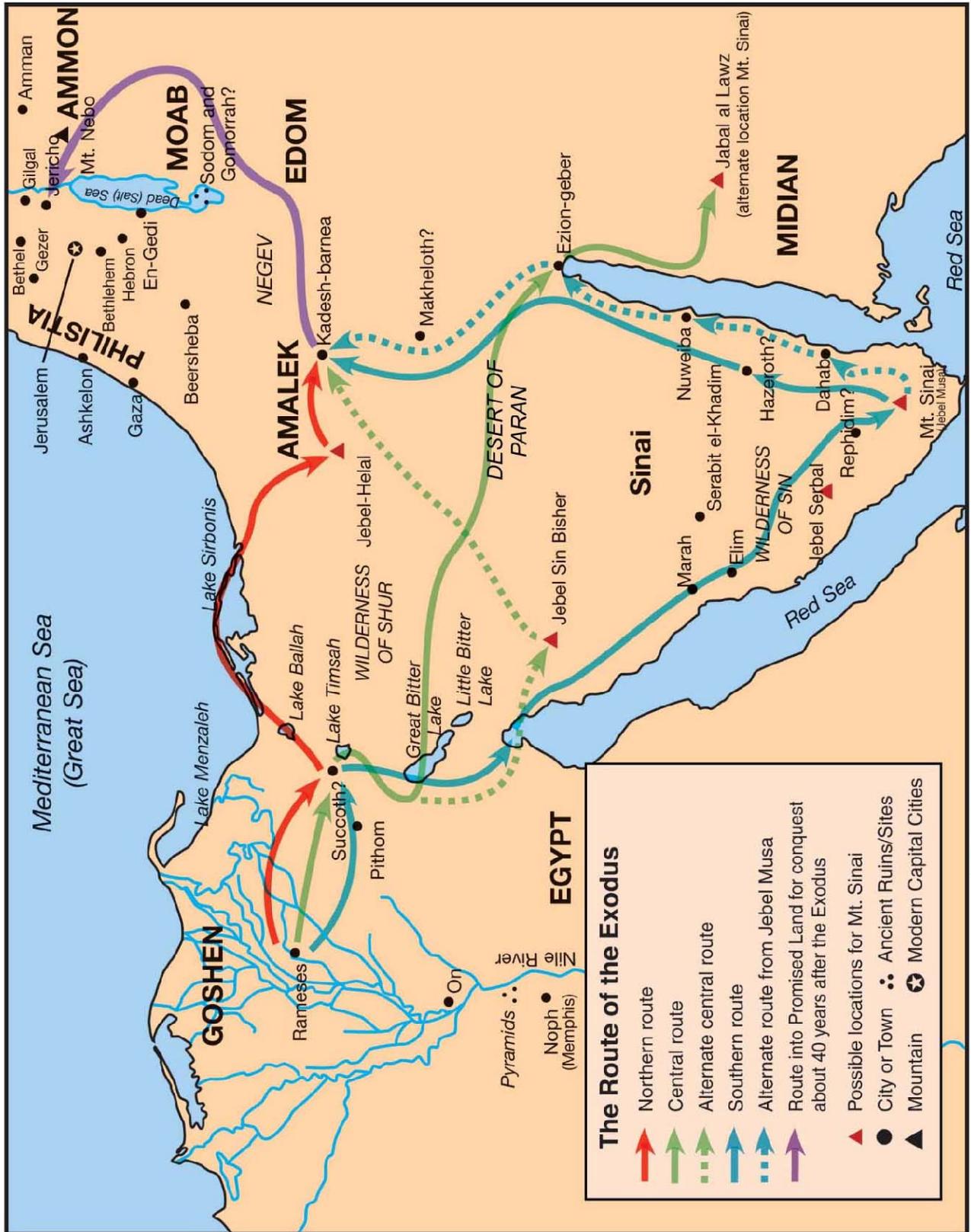
Egyptian Culture at the time of Exodus

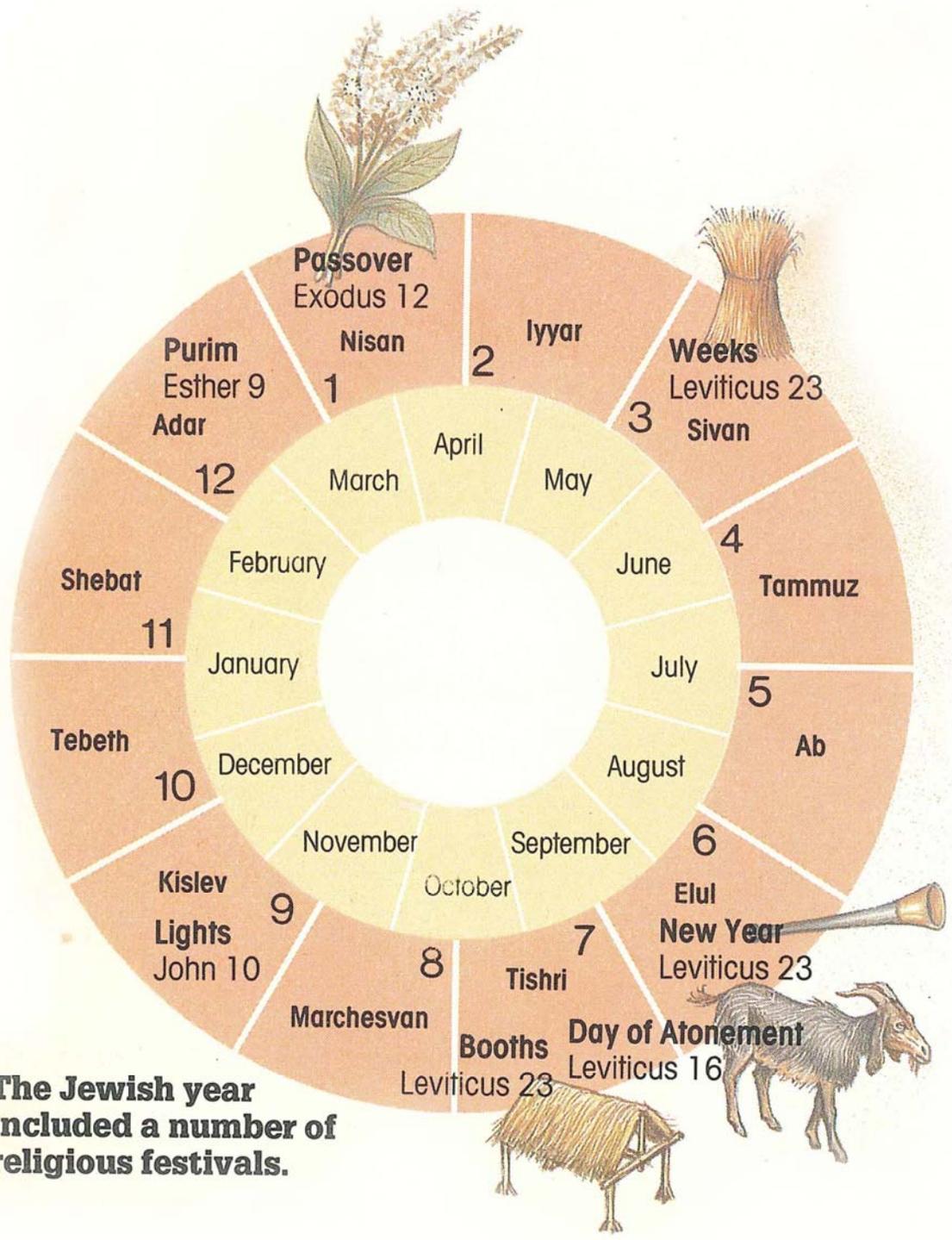
Polytheism--belief in many gods. The plagues were challenges to the false gods of Egypt. The river god was turned to blood. The sun god was turned to darkness. How could the magicians duplicate some of the plagues? They may have been accomplished by Satan. Their ability misled people, which is a hallmark of Satan. The one thing the magicians could never accomplish was to reverse a plague.

Education was prevalent among the wealthy. Food was plentiful. Society was complex and well developed. How is this similar to our world? What parallels can we draw?

Encourage the class to study the materials distributed each week, to spend time in the Word and in prayer. What enslaves us? How can we, like the Egyptians, be delivered? Remember that in this study we will see how the Exodus story is our own story – God leads us from bondage to freedom, as He did Israel many thousand years ago.

After 400 years of slavery, Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt. They cross the Red Sea and wander in the wilderness for 40 years. During wanderings, the Israelites receive the law of God, and worship in the Tabernacle. After 40 years of wandering, Moses dies on Mt. Nebo before the Israelites enter the promised land (Exodus – Deuteronomy).





The Jewish year included a number of religious festivals.