

Exodus

After nearly four hundred years of growth in Egypt, the infant nation Israel is now ready to leave behind the chains of slavery and seek a new homeland. Exodus narrates the liberation of Israel from Egyptian captivity and the migration of God's new nation to the wilderness of Sinai. Moses, the great deliverer, announces ten devastating plagues of judgment upon Egypt, then leads the Israelites on the first leg of their journey to the Promised Land. Chapters 1-18 relate Israel's exodus from bondage in Egypt, while chapters 19-40 record the instructions given by God on Mount Sinai to direct the life and worship of the nation.

INTRODUCTION

Exodus is the record of Israel's birth as a nation. Within the protective "womb" of Egypt, the Jewish family of seventy rapidly multiplies. At the right time, accompanied by severe "birth pains," an infant nation, numbering between two and three million people, is brought into the world where it is divinely protected, fed, and nurtured by God Himself. The word exodus often speaks of physical death. This embodies Exodus' theme of redemption because redemption is accomplished only through death.

Exodus begins in the Hebrew with "*And*" to show it as a continuation of Genesis. The Greek title is *Exodus*, a word meaning "exit, departure, or going out."

AUTHOR

Portions of Exodus are directly attributed to Moses (see 17:8-14; 20:1-17; 24:4, 7, 12; 31:18; 34:1-27). Moses' usual procedure was to record events soon after they occurred in the form of historical annals. It is clear from Exodus that the author must have been an eyewitness of the Exodus and an educated man. He was acquainted with details about the customs and climate of Egypt and the plants, animals, and terrain of the wilderness. A consistency of style and development also points to a single author.

Exodus has also been attributed to Moses since the time of Joshua (see 20:25; Josh. 8:30-32). Other biblical writers attribute Exodus to Moses: Malachi (Malachi 4:4), the disciples (John 1:45), and Paul (Rom. 10:5). This is also the testimony of Jesus (see Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 20:37; John 5:46-47; 7:19, 22-23). Jewish and Samaritan traditions consistently hold to the Mosaic authorship of Exodus.

DATE & SETTING

Exodus covers the period from the arrival of Jacob in Egypt (c. 1875 b.c.) to the erection of the tabernacle 431 years later in the wilderness (c. 1445 b.c.).

It is assumed that the book was composed during the forty-year wilderness journey, between 1445 b.c. and 1405 b.c. Moses probably kept an account of God's work, which he then edited in the plains of Moab shortly before his death.