

# Exodus

## Formation into a Nation Begun

Chapters 1–18				Chapters 19–40			
Receive Freedom from Slavery				Receive Law from God			
Getting Israel Out of Egypt				Getting Egypt Out of Israel			
Narration				Legislation			
Free People				Government			
Subjection		Deliverance		Instruction			
Egypt		Wilderness		Sinai			
400 Years		2 Months		10 Months			
Toil & Confrontation (1–11)		Redemption & Protection (12–18)		Covenant Revealed (19–31)		Covenant Ratified (32–40)	
Moses as Returned Fugitive		Moses as Wilderness Leader		Moses as Intermediary		Moses as Lawgiver	
Preparation (1:1–7:13)	Plagues (7:14–11:10)	Memorials (12:1–15:21)	Provisions (15:22–18:27)	Preparation (19)	3-Part Covenant (20–31)	Broken & Renewed (32–34)	Tabernacle Built/Filled (35–40)

**Key Word:** Formation

**Key Verse:** “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6)

**Summary Statement:**

Israel's **formation** as a nation begins under God as King by a miraculous redemption from Egypt and revelation of the Mosaic Law to provide a kingdom over which a descendant of Judah could rule and to promote holiness and trust in God.

**Application:**

We as believers need to remember God’s provisions to form us into a people of God (Christ’s death) and to make us individual believers in Christ (specific events God has accomplished on your behalf).

# Exodus

## Introduction

- I. **Title** The Hebrew title for Exodus is "And These Are the Names" (וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹתַי *we'elleh shemoth*), taken from the first phrase which follows ancient custom for naming a text (LaSor, 131). The English title *Exodus* ("a going out") transliterates the Septuagint title *Exodus*, a compound word composed of *έκ*, "out," and *ὁδος*, "way," meaning an exit, departure, or going out. Although Israel's departure from Egypt constitutes only a few chapters, this is a major emphasis in the book and therefore is a fitting title.

## II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** Both Scripture and tradition have attributed the authorship of Exodus to Moses since the time of Joshua (Josh. 8:30-32). Other persons in Scripture name Moses as author, including Malachi (Mal. 4:4), the disciples (John 1:45), Paul (Rom. 10:5) and, most importantly, Christ Himself (Mark 7:10 quotes Exod. 3:6; 12:26; cf. Luke 20:37; John 5:46-47; 7:19, 22-23). Jewish and Samaritan traditions held to Mosaic authorship as well, although early in the Christian era some theologians vacillated between Moses and Ezra as the author of the entire Pentateuch (Ross, *BKC*, 1:15).
- B. **Internal Evidence:** Portions of Exodus are directly attributed to Moses (ch. 15; 17:8-14; 20:1-17; 24:4, 7, 12; 31:18; 34:1-27). This makes sense since no one else could have been better qualified than Moses to write the book. "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22) and had the literary skills necessary to compose such a work. The author definitely was an eyewitness of the Exodus as the book shows acquaintance with the customs and climate of Egypt as well as the plants, animals, and terrain of the wilderness (*TTTB*, 13). The book also evidences a consistency of style characteristic of a single author.

## III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Mosaic authorship of Exodus places the writing during his lifetime (1525-1405 BC). More specifically, Exodus covers Israel's history only up to the encampment at Mt. Sinai in 1444 BC, assuming the early date of the Exodus. It is logical that Moses would have recorded these incidents shortly after these events took place in 1444 BC.
- B. **Recipients:** Moses died before Israel entered the Promised Land so the original readers comprised the Jews in the wilderness with him.
- C. **Occasion:** Since Moses knew that he would be passing on while the nation of Israel continued for generations, he wisely and under the direction of the Spirit recorded the history of the birth of Israel as the nation that would bring God's rule on the earth (*TTTB*, 14). This historical work was written to provide the nation a lasting remembrance of God's work on its behalf, especially in its deliverance from Egypt.

## IV. Characteristics

- A. Many Bible students are fooled by the title of the book, thinking that Exodus records only the narrative of Israel's redemption from Egypt. The fuller understanding is that Exodus contains more information about the Passover, the Law, and the tabernacle than any book in Scripture. Exodus lays the foundation for the entire Mosaic Law.
- B. The date of the Exodus falls into two scholarly camps: late date advocates postulate a 13th century BC Exodus (ca. 1290 BC, in the reign of Rameses II) and early date adherents date it in the 15th century BC (ca. 1445 BC, in the reign of Amenhotep II). A comparison of the chronological systems supplements these Exodus notes (pp. 108-110), but the best evidence supports the early date (so more evangelicals advocate it):

1. Scriptural Evidence:
  - a. 1 Kings 6:1 claims that 480 years transpired between the beginning of Solomon's temple construction (966 BC in the fourth year of his reign) and the Exodus. This places the date at about 1446 BC.
  - b. Judges 11:26 records that Israel had been in the land for 300 years during the time of Jephthah (ca. 1100 BC). Adding the 40-year wilderness wanderings places the Exodus date in the middle of the 15th century BC.
2. Archaeological evidence from Egypt during the 15th century corresponds to the biblical record of the Exodus that includes use of bricks and huge building projects. Also, the best evidence indicates that Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were destroyed about 1400 BC.

## Argument

The Book of Exodus begins where Genesis concludes—Jacob's family in Egypt awaiting the fulfillment of God's promise initially given to Abraham. Exodus records how God intervenes to fulfill this promise by beginning to form Jacob's family into a nation that operates under God's own rule as a theocracy.

In order to become a nation Israel needed three things: (1) freedom, (2) a charter/government, and (3) land. Exodus records two of these three necessities. First, Israel must be free from foreign control to be under God's rule, so Moses records the nation's miraculous redemption from Egyptian bondage in the Exodus (chs. 1–18). Second, the redeemed nation must have its own charter under which God may rule, so the latter half of the book reveals the Mosaic Covenant and the nation's agreement to its terms (chs. 19–40). The only characteristic of a nation lacking is a land, which is secured in the Book of Joshua. The final verses (40:34-38) demonstrate that God accepts the Covenant by agreeing to dwell among the people as King. Exodus does not simply record historical events, but does so with the purpose of revealing Israel's sin and motivating the people to trust in God who demonstrates his sovereignty over Egypt and faithfulness to his covenant given to Abraham.

## Synthesis

### Formation into a nation begun

### National Elements:

1–18	Receive Freedom	People
1–11	Toil and Moses confronts Pharaoh	
1	Redemption needed	
2–4	Moses prepared	
5–11	The LORD introduced in confrontation	
5:1–6:12	Words - Work	
6:13-27	Genealogy	
6:28–7:13	Rods	
7:14–11:10	Plagues	
7:14-25	1 Blood	
8:1-15	2 Frogs	
8:16-19	3 Gnats	
8:20-32	4 Flies	
9:1-7	5 Livestock	
9:8-12	6 Boils	
9:13-35	7 Hail	
10:1-20	8 Locusts	
10:21-29	9 Darkness	
11	10 Firstborn	
12–18	Redemption and protection	
12:1–15:21	Memorials	
12	Passover	
13:1-16	Consecration	
13:17–14:31	Sea	
15:1-21	Songs	
15:22–18:27	Wilderness provisions	
15:22-27	Marah/Elim water	
16	Manna/Quail/Sabbath	
17:1-7	Rock water	
17:8-16	Amalekites	

18	Jethro	
<b>19–40</b>	<b>Receive Law</b>	<b>Government</b>
19–31	Covenant revealed	
19	Preparation	
20–31	Covenant in three parts:	
20:1-21	1 Decalogue	
20:22–24:18	2 Book of the Covenant–holiness	
25–31	3 Ceremonial regulations–worship via priests	
25–27	Tabernacle	
28–29	Priests	
30–31	Service/Sabbath	
32–40	Covenant ratified	
32	Israel breaks	
33–34	God renews	
35–40	Tabernacle built/filled	

## Outline

### Summary Statement for the Book

**The reason God begins to form Israel into a nation by delivering her from Egypt and giving her the Law and tabernacle is to motivate holiness as a priestly kingdom where God dwells as King.**

- I. **The reason God begins to form Israel into a nation by delivering her from Egypt and preserving her in the wilderness is for her to see God's care and power over Egypt's gods (Chs. 1–18).**
  - A. God uses Moses to urge Pharaoh to free Israel from slavery to show Israel that the LORD cares, is faithful to the Abrahamic Covenant, and sovereign over Egypt's gods (Chs. 1–11).
    1. Egypt's enslavement of Israelites and attempt to kill their newborn boys shows Israel's need for redemption from bondage to become a nation of promise in its own land (Ch. 1).
    2. God's preparing Moses as Israel's leader despite his inadequacy, pictures Israel's own need to trust in God's adequacy and faithfulness to the Abrahamic Covenant (Chs. 2–4).
      - a) God prepares Moses to lead Israel through his upbringing by his mother and Pharaoh's household and his self-imposed forty-year desert exile as a shepherd to convey that God is committed to the Abrahamic Covenant (Ch. 2).
      - b) God calls Moses back to Egypt to lead Israel out despite his inadequacy to remind Israel to trust in God's adequacy as it prepares to conquer Canaan (3:1–4:17).
      - c) Moses returns to Egypt and Israel accepts him as leader to recall for the nation God's concern for the suffering of his people (4:18–31).
    3. Moses confronts Pharaoh with words and signs that affirm God will lead Israel from Egypt but his refusal shows that God is sovereign over Pharaoh and Egypt's gods (Chs. 5–11).
      - a) Moses confronts Pharaoh with words alone but Israel gets more work and Moses despairs at rejection by the Israelite foremen to teach Israel the cost to follow the sovereign LORD (5:1–6:12).
      - b) The genealogy of Moses and Aaron reveals their prominent position before Pharaoh and Israel (6:13–27).
      - c) Moses confronts Pharaoh with the miracle of Aaron's rod becoming a snake and Pharaoh's magicians duplicate it but Aaron's snake eats their snakes to show the LORD's superior power (6:28–7:13).
      - d) Moses confronts Pharaoh with ten plagues that show the sovereignty of the LORD over Egypt's gods (cf. 12:12) to remind Israel to rely upon God's strength (7:14–11:10).
        - (1) The **water becoming blood** shows God sovereign over Hapi (god of the Nile), Khnum (guardian of the river's source), Osiris (Nile was his bloodstream), Hapi (god of crocodiles), and various fish-deities (7:14–25).

- (2) The **frog** plague shows God sovereign over Heqet, goddess of birth with a frog head (8:1-15).
  - (3) The **gnat** plague shows God sovereign over Set, god of desert or earth (8:16-19).
  - (4) The **fly** plague shows God sovereign over Re, a sun god (or possibly the god Uatchit, possibly represented by the fly) (8:20-32).
  - (5) The **livestock** deaths show God sovereign over Hathor (goddess with a cow head), Apis (bull god and symbol of fertility), and other gods associated with bulls and cows (9:1-7).
  - (6) The **boils** plague shows God sovereign over Sekhmet (goddess of power over disease), Sunu (pestilence god), and Isis (goddess of healing) (9:8-12).
  - (7) The **hail, thunder and lightning** plague shows God sovereign over Nut (sky-goddess), Osiris (god of crops and fertility), Set (god of storms), and Shu (god of the atmosphere) (9:13-35).
  - (8) The **locust** plague shows God sovereign over Serapia (protector of locusts), Nut (sky goddess), and Osiris (god of crops and fertility) (10:1-20).
  - (9) The **darkness** plague shows God sovereign over Re, Amon-Re, Aten, Atum, Harakite, and Horus (sun-gods), Thoth (moon-god), Nut and Hathor (sky-goddesses) (10:21-29).
  - (10) The **death of all firstborn** men and animals shows God sovereign over all of Egypt's gods, but especially Min (god of reproduction), Heqet (goddess who attended women at childbirth), Isis (goddess who protected children) and Pharaoh's firstborn son, also considered a "god" (Ch. 11).
- B. God redeems Israel from Egypt and protects them in the desert to show his sovereignty, ability, and care for the nation until she has her own land (Chs. 12–18).
1. Israel celebrates the first Passover in her redemption from Egypt, consecration of her firstborn, and songs of Moses and Miriam to recall God's sovereignty and care (12:1–15:21).
    - a) The Passover plague on the firstborn and freedom from bondage shows God's sovereignty and unique concern for Israel, his covenant community (Ch. 12).
      - (1) The tenth plague kills the firstborn in Egypt while Israel is redeemed through the Passover to verify God's unique concern for his people (12:1-30).
      - (2) Pharaoh demands that Israel leave that very night—exactly 430 years of dwelling in Egypt and Canaan (1875-1445 BC; cf. Samaritan Pentateuch & LXX on 12:40)—to show God's sovereign control for his people (12:31-43).
      - (3) God restricts future Passovers only to Israelites and circumcised proselytes to convey that people outside the covenant community have no reason to celebrate since they are not under the blood (12:43-51).
    - b) God commands the consecration of the firstborn sons of Israel as a perpetual reminder of their deliverance by God in the tenth plague (13:1-16).
    - c) The miraculous crossing of the Sea of Reeds and death of the pursuing Egyptians shows God's sovereign redemption of Israel from their power (13:17–14:31).
    - d) Moses and Miriam lead Israel in praising God through songs of redemption as a permanent musical tribute to God's sovereign work in the Exodus (15:1-21).
  2. God miraculously protects Israel from Egypt to Mount Sinai to show his concern and ability to take care of the nation until she has her own land (15:22–18:27).

- a) The miracle of sweetening the bitter water at Marah and provision of the waters of Elim shows God's ability and concern to protect his people from thirst (15:22-27).
- b) The miracles of manna and quail show God's ability and concern to deliver his people from hunger (Ch. 16).
- c) The miracle of water from a rock shows God's ability and concern to protect his people from thirst again (17:1-7).
- d) The miracle of defeating the Amalekites shows God's ability and concern to protect his people from destruction by enemies (17:8-16).
- e) The wise counsel of Jethro shows God's ability and concern to protect his people from chaos resulting from an overburdened Moses (Ch. 18).

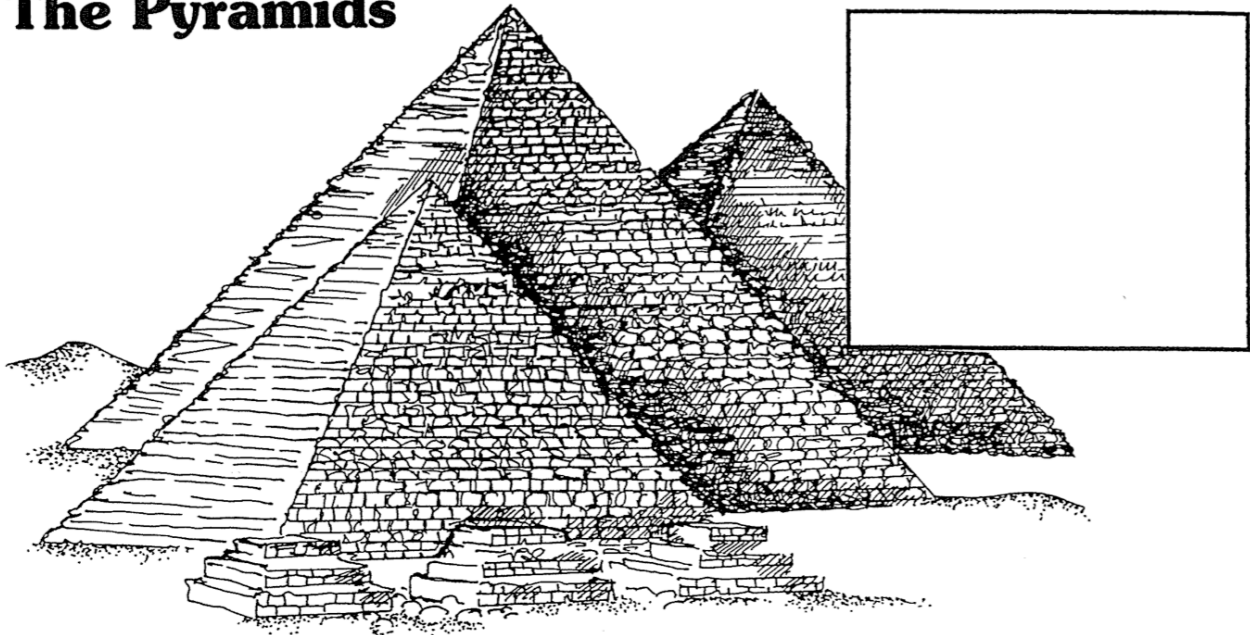
**II. The reason God begins to form Israel into a nation by giving the Law and filling the new tabernacle is to motivate holiness in a kingdom where God dwells as King (Chs. 19–40).**

- A. God reveals his **Law** to his prepared people through Moses to motivate them to holy living in a special covenantal relationship with a holy God (Chs. 19–31).
  - 1. Israel prepares to receive God's covenant on Mount Sinai by agreeing to its terms and sanctifying themselves to be mediators for pagan nations as a kingdom of priests (Ch. 19).
  - 2. The covenant's three parts (Decalogue, Book of the Covenant, and ceremonial regulations) reveal Israel's sin in contrast to God's holiness (Chs. 20–31).
    - a) The Decalogue (Ten Commandments) condemns Israel by revealing its sin in contrast to God's righteousness (20:1-21).
      - (1) God recalls Israel's redemption from Egypt as the basis for the ten commands (20:1-2).
      - (2) Ten commandments in both vertical and horizontal relationships condemn the nation by revealing its sinfulness in contrast to God's holiness (20:3-17).
      - (3) The people remain at a distance for fear of God (20:18-21).
    - b) The Book of the Covenant provides various stipulations to motivate Israel to holy living as a theocracy where God dwells as King (20:22–24:11).
      - (1) Social, moral, religious, and conquest stipulations motivate Israel to holy living in a special covenantal relationship with God (20:22–23:33).
      - (2) The people confirm the covenant to make Israel a theocracy—a government ruled by God (24:1-11).
    - c) The ceremonial regulations show Israel that proper worship must be through divinely appointed priests who serve at the tabernacle (24:12–31:18).
      - (1) Moses climbs Sinai to receive two stone tablets that contain the Decalogue and commands for Israel's worship (24:12-18).
      - (2) Instructions to build the tabernacle describe its pieces and furniture to prepare for God to live among his people (Exod 25–27).
      - (3) Instructions on God's appointed priests specify their clothing and consecration to represent the people before God in the nation's religious life (Exod 28–29).
      - (4) Instructions on the tabernacle service convey how to use the tabernacle and the importance of the sign of the covenant—the Sabbath (Exod 30–31).

Epilogue (31:18) Moses receives two stone tablets to witness of the strict obedience to the covenant that God prescribes.

- B. God dwells with Israel in his newly constructed **tabernacle** after Israel breaks the covenant then repents to show the gracious hand of God who dwells as King (Chs. 32–40).
1. Israel breaks the covenant by worshipping a golden calf despite agreeing not to worship idols (cf. 20:4-6), recorded to teach the nation not to revert to old ways (Ch. 32).
  2. God renews the covenant after Israel repents and Moses prays for the nation to teach Israel that God is faithful to his promises (Chs. 33–34).
    - a) The people repent when they hear from Moses that God will not accompany them to the Promised Land (33:1-6).
    - b) Moses prays for God's presence to attend the nation and even gets to see some of God's glory (33:7-23).
    - c) God renews the covenant on two new stone tablets that Moses chisels out and inscribes to teach Israel that God is faithful to his promises (Ch. 34).
  3. Israel obeys the covenant by building the tabernacle exactly as God intends so that his very glory fills it to show his guiding presence and rule as King (Chs. 35–40).
    - a) The people obey the covenant by giving many offerings to construct the tabernacle (35:1–36:7).
    - b) The tabernacle and courtyard are built with their furnishings and priestly clothes, then inspected and erected exactly as God intends (36:8–40:33).
      - (1) The tabernacle itself is erected with its curtains, boards, and veils (36:8-38).
      - (2) The tabernacle furnishings are erected: the ark, the table of showbread, the gold lampstand, and the altar of incense (Ch. 37).
      - (3) The courtyard furnishings are erected: the altar of burnt offerings and the bronze basin (38:1-8).
      - (4) The courtyard itself is erected (38:9-20).
      - (5) The priestly garments are fashioned for Aaron and his sons (39:1-31).
      - (6) Moses inspects the tabernacle and blesses it as completed as God commanded (39:32-43).
      - (7) The tabernacle is erected (40:1-33).
    - c) God's very glory fills the tabernacle in a cloud and remains as a sign of his guiding presence and rule as King (40:34-38).

# The Pyramids



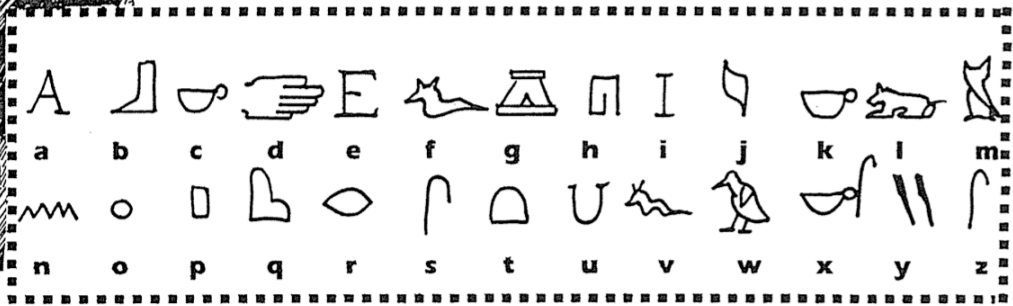
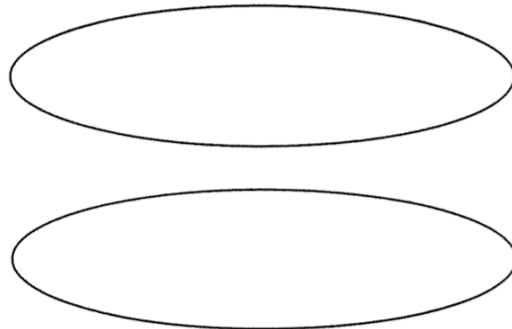
The great Egyptian pyramids served as elaborate tombs for the pharaohs. They are one of the seven wonders of the world.

1. The pyramids were built without machines. Peasant farmers built them in exchange for food, oil and cloth. Write why pyramids are a wonder of the world next to the title.
2. There are more than 30 pyramids in Egypt, but the most famous ones are located in Giza. Draw a map of ancient Egypt in the top right box. Draw a small pyramid where Giza is located.
3. The most famous pyramids were built for kings Khafre, Khufu and Menkaure. King Khufu's is known as the Great Pyramid. Label King Khufu's pyramid.
4. The chief queens of the three kings were buried in the small pyramids. Do you think if pyramids were still being built, that women's pyramids would be this size today? Write why on the back of this page.
5. King Khufu's pyramid is 147 meters high. Write how many feet this is at the bottom of his pyramid.
6. Each pyramid block weighed an average of 2,300 kilograms. Write how many pounds this is above the pyramids.
7. King Khafre's pyramid has about 2,300,000 blocks. Write how many pounds of rock this is under the number of pounds each block weighs.
8. The large blocks were dragged on sledges. Wheels were not used at all! Draw a sledge under the map.
9. There were so many blocks leftover from building the Great Pyramid, that the builders decided to build the Great Sphinx. Draw it to the left of the pyramids.
10. On the back of this paper, write why you think the U.S. has no pyramids.



ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

# Hieroglyphics



Hieroglyphics is a form of writing used by the ancient Egyptians in which picture symbols represent ideas and sounds. This type of writing was first done on stone.

1. The Rosetta Stone, a slab in which a decree is carved in hieroglyphics, gave the world the key to the understanding of this writing when it was found in 1799. Under the stone, write how many years ago this was found.
2. Egyptians also wrote on a type of paper made from the papyrus reed that grew along the Nile. Write the plural of papyrus under the title.
3. For legal documents and everyday records, the Egyptians invented demotic script. This was a simpler version of hieroglyphics. Next to the title, write why you think they wanted something simpler.
4. From about 3000 B.C. onward, each year in Egypt was named after an important event. Write what you would call the current year to the left of the title.
5. Use the hieroglyphics above to write your mother's name at the bottom of this page. Note: Capital letter vowels are represented as we know them since there were no vowels in hieroglyphics.
6. A cartouche was an oval frame enclosing the name of a ruler. Write your name in hieroglyphics in one of the ovals above.
7. Write the name of your best friend in hieroglyphics in the other oval.
8. Cartouches are often seen on monuments as nameplates of ancient rulers. On the back of this paper, design a monument including your cartouche.
9. Circle three proper nouns on this page.
10. On another piece of paper, write a letter to a classmate using hieroglyphics.

## How Hieroglyphics Were Deciphered

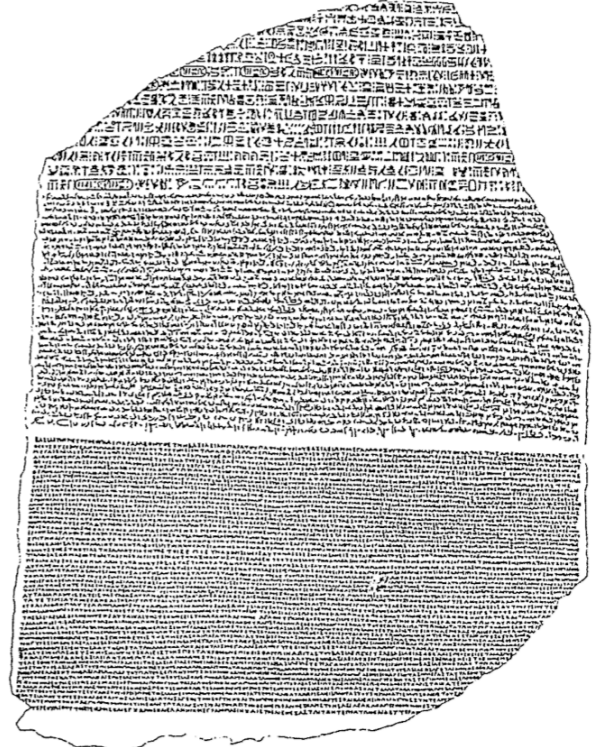
P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *Ancient Inscriptions: Voices from the Biblical World* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996), 35

### ROSETTA STONE

In July 1799, in the aftermath of the French invasion of Egypt, a detail of Napoleon Bonaparte's troops was dispatched to build a fort on the left bank of the western or Rosetta branch of the Nile. The site was not far from the town of Rosetta (Arabic Rashid, ancient Bolbetine), situated about nine miles south-southeast of the Rosetta mouth, where the Nile empties into the Mediterranean Sea. While digging foundation trenches for the fort, the soldiers uncovered an ancient wall containing a large, broken slab of black basalt inscribed with ancient writing. Though reused as a building block in the construction of the wall, the Rosetta Stone, as it is called, is a fragment of a commemorative stela, which once stood in an Egyptian temple. It records the text of a decree issued in 196 B.C.E. at Memphis by an assembly of Egyptian priests extolling the deeds and virtues of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes (210–180 B.C.E.) and prescribing that copies of the decree should be displayed in temples throughout Egypt. In its unbroken condition, the Rosetta Stone was probably more than 4 feet high, but what remains is approximately 3 feet 10 inches high, 2 feet 6 inches wide, and just under 1 foot thick; it weighs 1,676.5 pounds. After the defeat of Napoleon's army, the stone, along with other antiquities, was ceded to the British under the terms of the Treaty of Alexandria (1801). It was then shipped to England and found its way into the collection of the British Museum before the end of 1802.

The Rosetta Stone is a bilingual inscription, that is, it bears copies of the priestly decree in two languages, Egyptian and Greek. The Egyptian text, moreover, is written in two scripts, hieroglyphic and demotic, so that altogether there are three versions of the decree, which are arranged on the stone as follows: hieroglyphic at the top, demotic in the middle, and Greek at the bottom. French scholars immediately recognized that the document might be bilingual when they examined the stone in Cairo shortly after its discovery. They made and distributed copies to other scholars in Europe in the hope that comparison of the undeciphered hieroglyphic and demotic texts to the fully understood Greek version might shed light on the language and writing of ancient Egypt.

Early efforts to exploit the potential of the Rosetta Stone for the decipherment of Egyptian concentrated on comparison of the Greek text to its demotic, not hieroglyphic section. There was more than one reason for this. The middle part of the stone, where the demotic text is recorded, is nearly complete, whereas much of the upper part, which bears the hieroglyphic section, is broken away. In the early 19th century, moreover, hieroglyphic...



Rosetta Stone

## The Plagues and the Gods of Egypt

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 85

PLAGUE	REFERENCE	POSSIBLE EGYPTIAN DEITY DIRECTED AGAINST
NILE TURNED TO BLOOD	Exodus 7:14-25	Khnum: guardian of the Nile Hapi: spirit of the Nile Osiris: Nile was bloodstream
FROGS	Exodus 8:1-15	Heqt: form of frog; god of resurrection
GNATS (MOSQUITOES)	Exodus 8:16-19	
FLIES	Exodus 8:20-32	
PLAGUE ON CATTLE	Exodus 9:1-7	Hathor: mother-goddess; form of cow Apis: bull of god Ptah; symbol of fertility Mnevis: sacred bull of Heliopolis
BOILS	Exodus 9:8-12	*Imhotep: god of medicine
HAIL	Exodus 9:13-35	Nut: sky goddess Isis: goddess of life Seth: protector of crops
LOCUSTS	Exodus 10:1-20	Isis: goddess of life Seth: protector of crops
DARKNESS	Exodus 10:21-29	Re, Aten, Atum, Horus: all sun gods of sorts
DEATH OF FIRSTBORN	Exodus 11:1-12:36	The deity of Pharaoh: Osiris, the giver of life

These are only some of the gods whom the plagues may have been directed against. It is not necessarily conclusive.

\*Perhaps too early for this deity to have been involved.

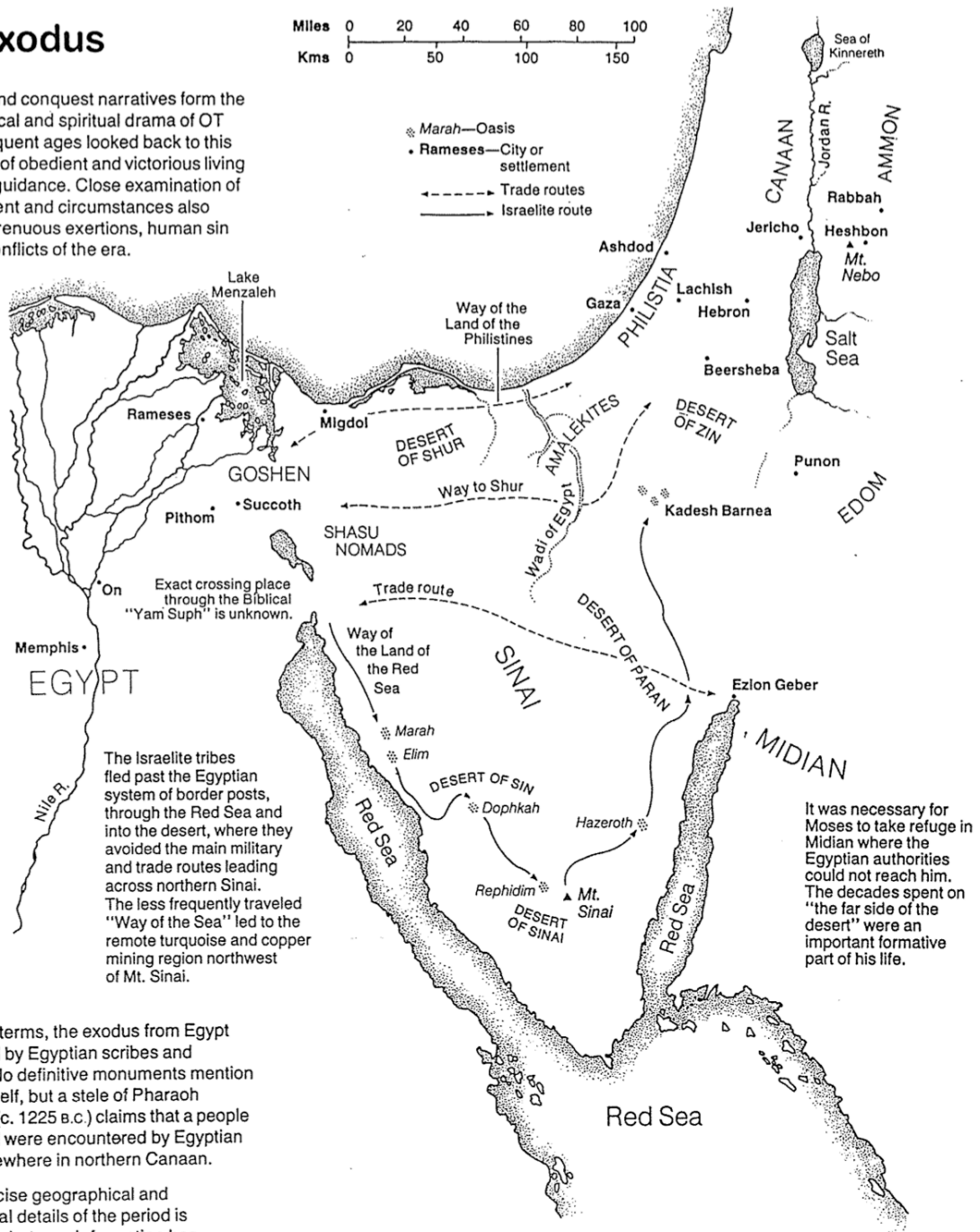
# Map of the Exodus

The Bible Visual Resource Book, 23

## Exodus

### The Exodus

The exodus and conquest narratives form the classic historical and spiritual drama of OT times. Subsequent ages looked back to this period as one of obedient and victorious living under divine guidance. Close examination of the environment and circumstances also reveals the strenuous exertions, human sin and bloody conflicts of the era.



In historical terms, the exodus from Egypt was ignored by Egyptian scribes and recorders. No definitive monuments mention the event itself, but a stele of Pharaoh Merneptah (c. 1225 B.C.) claims that a people called Israel were encountered by Egyptian troops somewhere in northern Canaan.

Finding precise geographical and chronological details of the period is problematic, but new information has emerged from vast amounts of fragmentary archaeological and inscriptional evidence. Hittite cuneiform documents parallel the ancient covenant formula governing Israel's "national contract" with God at Mount Sinai.

The Late Bronze Age (c. 1550-1200 B.C.) was a time of major social migrations. Egyptian control over the Semites in the eastern Nile delta was harsh, with a system of brickmaking quotas imposed on the labor force, often the landless, low-class "Apiru." Numerous

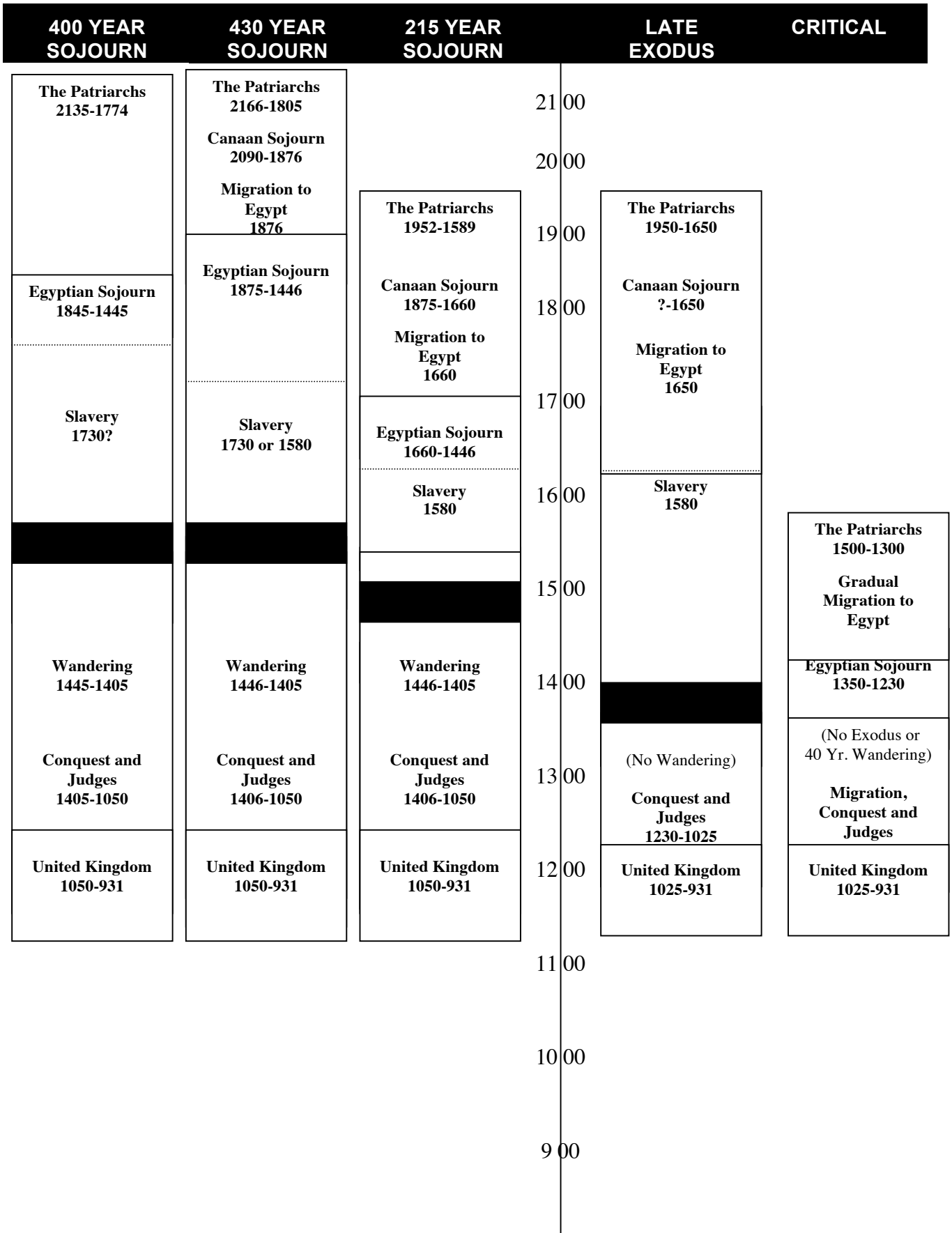
Canaanite towns were violently destroyed. New populations, including the "Sea Peoples," made their presence felt in Anatolia, Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan, and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean.

Correspondence from Canaanite town rulers to the Egyptian court in the time of Akhenaten (c. 1375 B.C.) reveals a weak structure of alliances, with an intermittent Egyptian military presence and an ominous fear of people called "Habiru" ("Apiru").

Exodus 12:31—Deuteronomy 34:12  
(Summary: Numbers 33:1-48)

## Egyptian Sojourn Chronologies Contrasted

Adapted (column 1 added) from John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 99 (cf. OTS, 108a-b)



## Egyptian Sojourn Chronologies Evaluated

Correlate with my adaptation of John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 99 (cf. OTS, 108)

The following views are listed in order from the best to the worst perspective, in my opinion.

View	400 YEAR SOJOURN	430 YEAR SOJOURN	215 YEAR SOJOURN	LATE EXODUS	CRITICAL
Exodus	Early	Early	Early	Late	Gradual Migration
Egyptian Sojourn	400	430	215	420	120
Years of Freedom	Unspecified	295 or 145	80	70	120
Years of Slavery	<400	135 or 285	135	350	none (a myth)
Exod. 12:40 Text	LXX & Samaritan Pentateuch	MT	LXX & Samaritan Pentateuch	MT	Unimportant
Exod. 12:40 Reading	“Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt and Canaan was 430 years”	“Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years”	“Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt and Canaan was 430 years”	“Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years”	Unimportant
Popularity	Few	Most common	Common	Few Evangelicals Many Liberals	Many Liberals
Support:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gen. 15:13 (sojourn 400 yrs.)</li> <li>• Acts 13:19-20 "about 450 years" = 400 + 40 + 7 = 447 yrs.</li> <li>• Exod. 12:40 "children of Israel" points to Gen. 35:10 (1875 BC) to begin 430 years since this is when nation called "Israel"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows MT of Exod. 12:40</li> <li>• Scripture sometimes uses round numbers (See the next few pages for more early date arguments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows MT of Exod. 12:40</li> <li>• The new king of Exod. 1 was a native Egyptian who followed the Hyksos</li> <li>• Their later date for Abr. Cov. (1875 BC) to Jacob entering Egypt (1660 BC) is 215 yrs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeology supports the destruction of some Canaanite cities in the 13th century (See the next few pages for more late date arguments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The city of Rameses (Exod. 1:11) must have been built after Rameses II (1300 BC) since it was named after him</li> </ul>

VIEW	400 YEAR SOJOURN	430 YEAR SOJOURN	215 YEAR SOJOURN	LATE EXODUS	CRITICAL
<b>Problems:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gal. 3:17 notes Abr. Cov. as "established" (not "confirmed")</li> <li>Follows LXX of Exod. 12:40 (not normal practice to hold LXX over MT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>400 is not rounded</li> <li>430 seen as yrs. of slavery, but Gal. 3:17 begins at Abr. Cov.</li> <li>Acts 13:19-20 "about 450 yrs" = 430 + 40 + 7 = 477 yrs. (not close enough)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 215 year slavery conflicts with Gen. 15:13</li> <li>Hyksos rulers are not found in Exod. 1</li> <li>The Abr. Cov. was established in 2060 BC — not 1875 BC (cf. OTS, 87)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Kings 6:1 says the temple completion was 480 years after the Exodus</li> <li>Only Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were destroyed in the 15th century</li> <li>Archaeology better supports a 15th century destruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moses wasn't even born before Exod. 1:11 and yet was 80 years old at the Exodus</li> <li>The view denies that the Exodus ever occurred</li> <li>It ignores the numbers of Jud. 11:26; 1 Kings 6:1</li> </ul>
<b>Advocates:</b>	Hoehner <sup>1</sup> Rea <sup>2</sup> Griffith <sup>3</sup>	Benware <sup>4</sup> Whitcomb <sup>5</sup> Archer <sup>6</sup> Unger <sup>7</sup> Merrill <sup>8</sup>	Beitzel <sup>9</sup> Thiele <sup>10</sup> Anstey <sup>11</sup> English <sup>12</sup> Ozanne <sup>13</sup>	Albright <sup>14</sup> Kitchen <sup>15</sup>	Rowley <sup>16</sup> Bright <sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October-December, 1969): 314.

<sup>2</sup> John Rea, "The Time of the Oppression and the Exodus," *Grace Journal* (Winter, 1961): 5, 80. He also notes that the oppression began just after 1730 BC (p. 8).

<sup>3</sup> See the study entitled "Chronology of the Patriarchs" on pages 85-89 of these notes (timeline on p. 90).

<sup>4</sup> Paul N. Benware, *Survey of the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1993), 44.

<sup>5</sup> John C. Whitcomb, "Chart of Old Testament Patriarchs and Judges" 4th ed. Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1968. (pp. 95-96 of these notes).

<sup>6</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1974), 205, 211-12.

<sup>7</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 106, 150.

<sup>8</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 76.

<sup>9</sup> Barry J. Beitzel, *The Moody Bible Atlas of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 85.

<sup>10</sup> Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago, 1951); S.v. "Chronology," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1:166-67.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, 2 vols. (New York: Marshall Brothers, 1913), 1:162.

<sup>12</sup> English, *New Scofield Reference Bible*, 86, n. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ozanne, *The First 7000 Years*, 221-25.

<sup>14</sup> William Foxwell Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity* (2d ed. with a new introduction; Doubleday Anchor Books; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1957), 13, 223, 255-56.

<sup>15</sup> Kitchen ignores the explicit statement of the text by declaring that enough information about the chronology does not exist to verify the accuracy of 1 Kings 6:1 (Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1966), 72-75, 53-56). His assumption, of course, is that a biblical text without extra-biblical support is unreliable. See also s.v. "Chronology of the Old Testament" by K. A. Kitchen and T. C. Mitchell, 214-16, ed. J. D. Douglas, *The New Bible Dictionary*, Original © by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1962; Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

<sup>16</sup> This kind of biblical inaccuracy is demonstrated by Rowley, who cites a seventy year bondage (c. 1300-1230 BC), followed by a two year wilderness wandering before entering Canaan. See Harold H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1950), 164.

<sup>17</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 112-13.

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 pass, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

Galatians 3:17. Now this I say: "The law which came 430 years afterward does not make void a covenant previously ratified by God' so as to invalidate the promise.

PASSAGE MENTIONING 450 YEARS

Acts 13:17-20. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in Egypt and with a high arm he led them out of it, and for approximately forty years as a nursing father he bore' them in the wilderness. And when he destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan he gave (them') their land as an inheritance for approximately 450 years. And after that' he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.

II. THE PROBLEM STATED

One sees immediately that there are three figures for the length of Israel's sojourn in Egypt. Was it 400, 430, or 450 years? Can these differences be resolved in a way which will satisfy the given data in all these passages?

<sup>1</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch (hereafter designated as SP) as well as the Alexandrian and Lagardiana codices of the LXX add "and their fathers." Since there is no other MS evidence for this additional reading, the Masoretic text (hereafter designated MT) should stand as is.  
<sup>2</sup> The SP has: "in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt." The LXX has the same words but in inverted order. Again because of weak support, the MT should stand as is.  
<sup>3</sup> Some MSS add the words "in Christ." Although the weightiest MSS omit the words, their inclusion or exclusion is of no significance for this study.  
<sup>4</sup> The textual variant "carred for" has about equal weight as the reading used in the above translation. The same two variants are found in the LXX of Deut. 1:31, the passage to which Paul is alluding, but the MT has simply כָּבַד which means "to bear."  
<sup>5</sup> This word is inserted for clarity in English and is included in some MSS.

<sup>6</sup> The Textus Receptus which the AV follows has the phrase "and after that" preceding the words "approximately 450 years." This would mean that there was an approximate 450-year span between Joshua's conquering of the land and Samuel the prophet. Thus the period of the judges was about 450 years. The reading of the Nestle text is better because: (1) it is favored by the more weighty MSS (p74 N A B C 33 81 181 it-ar c vg arm geo), and (2) it fits better with I Kings 6:1 where there is a 480-year period from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon—otherwise if one accepts the Textus Receptus reading, one would have to squeeze into the 480-year period the 450 years of the judges period, the reigns of Joshua, Saul, David, and the first three or four years of Solomon's reign, and forty years of wilderness wanderings. Accepting the reading of the Nestle text, viz., the placing of the approximate 450 years from the commencement of the Egyptian bondage until Joshua's conquest of the land, will be discussed in the text below.

# The Duration of The Egyptian Bondage = 400 years (1845 - 1445 B.C.)

Harold W. Hoehner

When one looks at the various passages of Scripture concerning the length of Israel's bondage in Egypt one immediately discovers that there are apparent disagreements in the biblical record. Various scholars have attempted to resolve the apparent discrepancies. The purpose of this article is to discuss and evaluate the various views and then attempt to present a solution to the problem.

I. THE SCRIPTURES INVOLVED

Before discussing the various theories, a review of the Scripture passages concerning the duration of the bondage is in order. The passages are the author's own translation.

PASSAGES MENTIONING 400 YEARS

Genesis 15:13. And he said to Abram: "Know with certainty that your descendants shall be strangers (sojourners) in a land that is not theirs and they shall serve them' and they shall oppress them for 400 years."

Genesis 15:16. And in the fourth generation they shall come back here again. . . .

Acts 7:6. And God spoke in this manner; that his [Abraham's] descendants shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and that they shall enslave them and maltreat (them) for 400 years.

PASSAGES MENTIONING 430 YEARS

Exodus 12:40-41. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years and it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, on that very day it came to

<sup>1</sup> The LXX adds here "and shall maltreat them." When this verse is quoted in Acts 7:6 this phrase is retained.



# Support for a 400-Year Egyptian Bondage

Harold W. Hoehner, "The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 126 (October-December 1969): 315-16

This view is the one advocated on pages 85-90 of these notes.

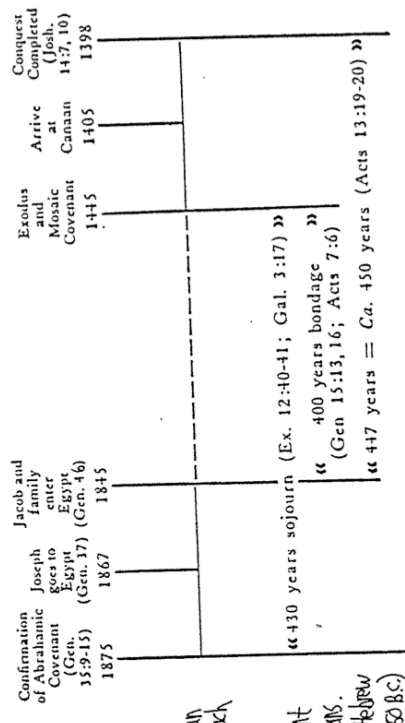
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA October, 1969

cult to explain its inclusion except that there was some sort of early tradition for this reading.

Therefore, it seems that if one will take the 430 years as the period from the last recorded confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant to Israel (Jacob) before going into Egypt (Gen. 35:9-15) until the time of the Exodus, the 400 years would be that period of time when the nation Israel was in Egypt, that is, from the time when Jacob and his family entered Egypt (Gen. 46) until the Exodus. The phrase "about 450 years" (Acts 13:19-20) would consist of the 400 years of bondage plus the 40 years of wilderness wanderings plus the 7 years for conquering the land of Palestine which makes a total of 447 years or "about 450 years."

### IV. THE CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

After considering the two more well-known theories in the attempt to resolve the apparent discrepancies concerning the length of the Egyptian bondage, a third view was presented which takes into account and better explains all the biblical data. Assuming the 1445 B.C. date for the Exodus, it could be charted as follows:



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whereas the AV translates it *who* which refers back to "the children of Israel." Since *wh* is indeclinable and its antecedent may be singular or plural and may be of either gender, it allows for great latitude in translation. However, here it seems best to have "the children of Israel" as its antecedent rather than the word "time." The reasons are twofold. Firstly, the phrase "the children of Israel" would be closer in position to *wh*. Secondly the noun *wh* which comes from *wh* has the primary meaning *to sit, rest, dwell* and hence the noun is translated *dwelling-place, dwelling, dwellers, assembly*, or *seat*. The ASV and RSV translation *time* is a derived and secondary meaning. In fact *wh* which occurs forty-four times in the Old Testament is never so rendered by the ASV and RSV translators in any other place except in Exodus 12:40. Even in Exodus 12:20 they translate it *habitations* and *dwellings* respectively. Thus the AV translation *sojourning* is an acceptable rendering. This would mean that the clause ("who dwell in Egypt") would be nonrestrictive and only gives additional information concerning the sojourners." The commencement of their sojourning would have been the last confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant as given in Genesis 35:9-15, if one notices that from Genesis 35 onwards the children of Israel never remained in one place in Canaan but were always travelling (cf. Gen. 35:16, 21, 27; in 37:1 they dwell in the land of Canaan with no specific location mentioned).

Thirdly, it is interesting to notice that whereas in Exodus 12:40 the MT has "now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwell in Egypt, was 430 years. . . ." the SP and LXX has "now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwell in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt (the LXX has it in inverted order), was 430 years. . . ." This indicates that the sojourning would include Canaan and Egypt. Although the present writer does not put much stock in the SP and the LXX as far as chronological matters, this inclusion may point back to some early tradition in the text. It is somewhat difficult.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 444.  
<sup>35</sup> Cf. Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30. Notice in the first part of this article when translating Exodus 12:40-41, the clause "who dwell in Egypt" is set off by commas. For clarity it could be rendered: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel (who dwell in Egypt) was 430 years. . . ."

Some might Pentateuch Septuagint (Greek LXX) of the Hebrew OT in 250 B.C.

### Date of the Exodus

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 102-3 (1 of 2)

very weak arguments!  
↓

15th-CENTURY EVIDENCE	13th-CENTURY REBUTTAL
I Kings 6:1 designates 480 years from the Exodus to Solomon's dedication of the temple. The dedication was 966. That makes the Exodus 1446.	The 480 years is most likely 12 generations (12x40=480). In actuality, a generation was about 25 years, making the actual figure about 300.
The "Dream Stela" of Thutmose IV on the sphinx gives evidence that Thutmose was not legal heir to the throne. Would be logical that eldest son was killed in the 10th plague.	Only one of many other possibilities. No proof that the biblical plague was involved in the death of the rightful heir.
In Judges 11:26, Jephthah assigns 300 years between his day (c. 1100) and the Conquest. This would seem to indicate a 15th-century Exodus.	This was a generalization or a rough and slightly inaccurate guess by Jephthah who would have had no access to historical records.
To support the biblical chronology of Moses, Pharaoh must have reigned in excess of 40 years. Moses stayed in the wilderness until Pharaoh died. Only possibilities: Thutmose III, Rameses II.	Moses' 40 years with the Midianites is not really a chronological reference.
The Last Level at Hazor, wiped out by Barak and Deborah, contains Mycenaean IIIB Pottery; this requires, at the latest, a date in the late 13th century. This pushes Exodus much earlier.	The judges overlapped enough to accommodate this.
The Merneptah Stela (C. 1220) mentions Israel by name. They must have been there for a long time for the Egyptians to accept them as a nation.	Fifty years would have been sufficient time.
The Amarna Tablets (1400) tell of the upheaval caused by the "Habiru." This could have been the Hebrews, possibly classified under a general category.	The "Habiru" can in no way be identified with the Israelites.
The length of time assigned to the judges period in Scripture, even with overlapping, cannot be squeezed into the century and a half allowed by a 13th-century Exodus.	With overlaps and understanding of the symbolic nature of time spans, it can be fitted in.

**Date of the Exodus**

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 102-3 (2 of 2)

↳ very weak arguments!

13th-CENTURY EVIDENCE	15th-CENTURY REBUTTAL
<p>The civilizations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon were not in existence in the 15th century. Since Israel had contact with them, the Exodus must be later.</p>	<p>Finds at the Timna temple indicate sedentary civilizations in Negev at least in early 14th century. Tribes were wandering earlier than that.</p>
<p>The destruction of Lachish, Debir, and Bethel were in the 13th century, as indicated by the layer of ash.</p>	<p>Lachish, Debir, and Bethel are not said to have been burned at the time of the Conquest. The layer of ash could be due to Egypt's conquests.</p>
<p>In Exodus 1:11, Israelites were said to have been building the city of Rameses. This must be in honor of Rameses II of 13th century.</p>	<p>(1) Name "Rameses" used much earlier than 13th century. (2) City was being built before birth of Moses; thus, before Rameses II, even with late Exodus. (3) This was a store city, not a capital.</p>
<p>The 430 years of Exodus 12:40 cannot fit in with the Hyksos period.</p>	<p>The Hebrews need not be related to the Hyksos. There is much evidence that Jacob went to Egypt almost 150 years before the Hyksos period began.</p>
<p>Thutmose III was not known as a great builder and therefore does not fit into the historical picture.</p>	<p>Though not known as a great builder, Thutmose III is known to have had some building projects in the delta region.</p>
<p>Scripture does not mention the Palestinian invasions of Seti I or Rameses II. Therefore, Exodus must have been in 13th century and Israel was not yet in Palestine.</p>	<p>It is very likely that the periods of "rest" during the Judges were the periods of tighter Egyptian control. The Egyptian invasions were against the Canaanites.</p>
<p>Pushing the Exodus back means pushing the patriarchs back, and the Patriarchs cannot go back any farther.</p>	<p>There is just as much evidence for putting the patriarchs in Middle Bronze I as there is for putting them in Middle Bronze II.</p>

## Hebrew Calendar and Selected Events

*The Bible Visual Resource Book, 21; NIV Study Bible note on Exodus 12:2 (lower right)*

21

Exodus

### Hebrew Calendar and Selected Events

NUMBER of MONTH	HEBREW NAME	MODERN EQUIVALENT	BIBLICAL REFERENCES	AGRICULTURE	FEASTS
1	Abib; Nisan	MARCH—APRIL	Ex 12:2; 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1; Ne 2:1; Est 3:7	Spring (later) rains; barley and flax harvest begins	Passover; Unleavened Bread; Firstfruits
2	Ziv (Iyyar)*	APRIL—MAY	1 Ki 6:1, 37	Barley harvest; dry season begins	
3	Sivan	MAY—JUNE	Est 8:9	Wheat harvest	Pentecost (Weeks)
4	(Tammuz)*	JUNE—JULY	☀   ☀	Tending vines	
5	(Ab)*	JULY—AUGUST		Ripening of grapes, figs and olives	
6	Elul	AUGUST—SEPTEMBER	Ne 6:15	Processing grapes, figs and olives	
7	Ethanim (Tishri)*	SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER	1 Ki 8:2	Autumn (early) rains begin; plowing	Trumpets; Alonement; Tabernacles (Booths)
8	Bul (Marcheshvan)*	OCTOBER—NOVEMBER	1 Ki 6:38	Sowing of wheat and barley	
9	Kislev	NOVEMBER—DECEMBER	Ne 1:1; Zec 7:1	Winter rains begin (snow in some areas)	Hanukkah ("Dedication")
10	Tebeth	DECEMBER—JANUARY	Est 2:16		
11	Shebat	JANUARY—FEBRUARY	Zec 1:7		
12	Adar	FEBRUARY—MARCH	Ezr 6:15; Est 3:7, 13; 8:12; 9:1, 15, 17, 19, 21	Almond trees bloom; citrus fruit harvest	Purim

12:2 *This month is ... the first month. The inauguration of the religious calendar in Israel (see chart on "Hebrew Calendar," p. 101). In the ancient Near East, new year festivals normally coincided with the new season of life in nature. The designation of this month as Israel's religious New Year reminded Israel that her life as the people of God was grounded in God's redemptive act in the exodus. The Canaanite name for this month was Abib (see 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1), which means "young head of grain." Later the Babylonian name Nisan was used (see Ne 2:1; Est 3:7). Israel's agricultural calendar began in the fall (see note on 23:16), and during the monarchy it dominated the nation's civil calendar. Both calendars (civil and religious) existed side by side until after the exile. Judaism today uses only the calendar that begins in the fall.*

} This intercalary month was added about every three years so the lunar calendar would correspond to the solar year.

\* Names in parentheses are not in the Bible

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## The Location of Mount Sinai

Where is Mount Sinai? Interpreters have differed on this question through the centuries, but this study discusses two major locations—in the southern Sinai and in northwestern Saudi Arabia.<sup>2</sup>

### I. Southern Sinai Peninsula (Traditional View)

#### A. Support

##### 1. Historical

- a) Nearly all Bible atlases place Mt. Sinai at the traditional location known as Jebel al-Musa ("Mountain of Moses") in the southern Sinai Peninsula.<sup>3</sup>
- b) This site has been known since the fourth century AD by Saint Helena, the Emperor Constantine's mother, who built a chapel and tower at the foot of the altar to commemorate the place. Later St. Catherine's monastery was built to identify it in an even more permanent manner. Thus "the major strand of Christian tradition has been woven around J. Musa..."<sup>4</sup>

##### 2. Biblical

- a) Assuming that the Egyptians chased the Israelites the next morning after the exodus, there would not have been enough time for Israel to cross the entire Sinai Peninsula within a day (Exod. 13:17-22). The alternate view must assume they traveled this far in a day unless more time is allowed to travel farther across the Sinai to be poised for entrance into Arabia by crossing the Gulf of Aqaba.
- b) Biblical atlases note that the Desert of Sin lies in the southern portion of the Sinai Peninsula on the way to Mount Sinai (Exod. 16:1).

#### B. Problems

1. No archaeologists have found the ancient sites that Israel visited between Egypt and the southern Sinai (e.g., the bitter springs of Marah, the springs at Elim).
2. Egyptians could have easily gone around the Great Bitter Lake or Small Bitter Lake if Israel was hemmed between them and the sea.
3. Exodus 12 does not say that Pharaoh chased Israel the day after the Exodus. Perhaps it occurred days after his grieving for the dead firstborn sons of Egypt. If this is true, enough time could have elapsed for the people to reach the Gulf of Aqaba.

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<sup>2</sup> Barry J. Beitzel, *Moody Atlas of Bible Lands* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 90-93 has an extensive treatment of the issue, including interaction with a third location in the northern Sinai. He holds to the southern Sinai view. It would not have taken Elijah 40 days to travel from Beersheba to a northern location (1 Kings 19:8) but the 250 miles to southern Sinai fits well. Also, other texts indicate a large distance from Kadesh Barnea to Sinai (Num. 33:16-36; Deut. 1:2).

<sup>3</sup> Atlases arguing for the traditional site include R. K. Harrison, "The Exodus and Conquest of Canaan," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Atlas*, E. M. Blaiklock, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969, 1972), 65; Joseph L. Gardner, ed., *Reader's Digest Atlas of the Bible* (Pleasantville, NY: Reader's Digest, 1987), 66-68; Beitzel, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Beitzel, 92.

## II. Saudi Arabia (Alternate View)

### A. Support

#### 1. Scripture

- a) Paul locates the mountain in his mention of "Mount Sinai in Arabia" (Gal. 4:25). Jebel al-Lawz is the tallest peak in Arabia and thus the likely spot, though others have been proposed.
- b) The path from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh Barnea follows the Mount Seir road (Deut. 1:2). Given the eastern location of Mount Seir, if the road was on the eastern side of the Jordan rift, then it would lead south into Arabia rather than into the Sinai.
- c) That the Israelites "fled" rather than simply "left" (Exod. 5:14) may indicate that their initial permission was only to worship the Lord for three days. Their fleeing may indicate that they continued on past what Pharaoh had granted.

#### 2. Logic

- a) It is likely that Moses brought Israel back to the area of Midian where he had lived for 40 years. Midian lies on the eastern side of the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>5</sup> Since Moses lived in Midian (Exod. 2:15) and the burning bush incident took place on Mount Sinai (Exod. 3:1), then Mount Sinai must have been in Midian since the text does not say that he left Midian to go to Mount Sinai. (The assumption is that the "far side of the desert" is still in Midian unless the text says it is not.)
- b) The Saudi government has outlawed visits to this alternate site known as Jebel al-Lawz. They also outlaw visits to the Caves of Moses en route to Jebel al-Lawz.
- c) Mount Sinai had much volcanic or earthquake activity (Exod. 19:18; 24:17; etc.), and Saudi Arabia has more volcanoes than the Sinai. This was noted as far back as the third century BC by the Jewish historian Demetrius, who lived in Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

#### 3. Archaeology has been used to support the Saudi Arabia viewpoint.<sup>7</sup>

- a) A submerged land bridge extends from the SE Sinai to the Arabian side. By miraculously pushing away the water on either side, it would have allowed the Israelites to travel across the sea with no need to descend hundreds of feet downward to the bottom of the sea. Such a steep climb would have made it nearly impossible to climb up the other (eastern) side with their carts, women, children, and animals.

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<sup>5</sup> Harvard professor Frank Moore Cross does not specifically identify Jebel al-Lawz as the Mount Sinai site but he does note that Midian is the land of Mount Sinai and that Midian is in northwestern Saudi Arabia (*BAR* July/August 1999, p. 54).

<sup>6</sup> See Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, translated by John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 435; cited by Beitzel, 90, n. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Most of these archaeological arguments come from a 1988 visit to Saudi Arabia chronicled in Bob Carnuke and Larry Williams, "The Search for the Real Mount Sinai," 46 minute video tape (Monument, CO: Reel Productions, 1998 and P.O. Box 1798, Colorado Springs, CO 80901-1798: Biblical Archaeology, Search and Exploration Institute, 1998; Tel. 1-800-680-3300), \$24.95). See also Larry Williams, *The Mountain of Moses* (140 Marine View, Office 204, Solana Beach, CA 92075: CTI Publishing, 1999; Tel. 1-800-748-5843) or Larry Williams, *The Mountain of Moses: The Discovery of Mount Sinai* (Wynwood Press, New York, 1990); Howard Blum, *The Gold of Exodus: The Discovery of the True Mount Sinai* (NY: Simon & Shuster, 1998), \$25.00 hb, 364 pp.; Ron Wyatt also has a sensationalistic video ("Presentation of Discoveries" \$30.00) as well as a web page (including many pictures) claiming a Saudi location (<http://www.ronwyatt.org/exodus/index.html>); Even Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, says, "...all identifications of Mount Sinai are highly speculative. A good case has been made that it is somewhere in northwest Saudi Arabia, and Jebel al-Lawz is the highest point in this area" (*BAR*, Nov/Dec '99, p. 67). Brad Sparks documents the many errors in Williams' book at <http://www.ldolphin.org/sinai.html>.

- b) Columns claiming to have been erected by Solomon exist on both sides of the land bridge to identify where the Israelites began and ended their crossing.
- c) Bitter springs exist 33 kilometers from the crossing point (a three day journey) that are where one would expect the bitter springs of Marah (Exod. 15:22-26).
- d) Other springs follow on the route to Jebel al-Lawz that could be the 12 springs and 70 palms of Elim (Exod. 15:27). At this location are the "Caves of Moses." Bedouin attribute the petroglyphs (rock carvings) within the caves to Moses and their tradition identifies this site as the home of Jethro.
- e) The mountain of Jebel al-Lawz shows evidence of a major encampment.
  - (1) The Split Rock of Horeb is nearby. It is a large rock 47 feet tall with a 19 inch crack down the middle that has evidence of a large flow of water over the granite stone that empties into a lake area large enough to enable the two million Israelites to drink for a year (Exod. 17:1-7).
  - (2) The area of the mountain has two evidences of burning on it.
    - (a) The entire top of Jebel al-Lawz is blackened (Exod. 19:18).
    - (b) One small burn mark is close by which is potentially where God appeared next to the Split Rock of Horeb. It has melted stone!
  - (3) A two-mile semicircle of boundary stones encircles the mountain at 400-foot intervals (Exod. 19:12).
  - (4) The mountain has a cave which could be the one Elijah visited (1 Kings 19:8-9). No such cave has ever been found on Jebel al-Musa.
  - (5) The base of the mountain has a 60 x 60 foot altar of uncut stone with ashes.
  - (6) Another altar with petroglyphs lies in front of the mountain with huge cut stones rising 30 feet, which is like one would expect at the golden calf incident (Exod. 32). This is unlike any altar in the area, especially since the animals depicted are Egyptian cows.
  - (7) An area near Mount Sinai is large enough for the battle between Israel and the Amalekites at Rephidim (Exod. 17:8-16).

## B. Problems

### 1. Scripture

- a) The reference to "Mount Sinai in Arabia" in Galatians 4:25 is unconvincing. It must first be established that "Arabia" in Paul's day referred *only* to the *east* side of the Gulf of Aqaba.
  - (1) In Paul's time, "Arabia" covered a wide area that "included the Sinai Peninsula" as well as what we now call Saudi Arabia, according to Cambridge scholar Graham Davies.<sup>8</sup>
  - (2) Midian and Mount Sinai were in separate places since Moses sent his Midianite father-in-law "back to his own country," referring to Midian (Exod. 18:27; cf. Num. 10:29-31).
- b) The Mount Seir road may derive its name only from the road *ending* up at Mount Seir rather than the entire road extending only on the eastern Jordan Rift. It may have extended into the Sinai Peninsula as well.
- c) The "fleeing" of the Israelites (Exod. 5:14) more naturally refers to their initial flight from Egypt rather than to a hastened pace after the third day. While earlier in the account they requested a three-day trip from Pharaoh, it argues from silence to say the king granted them only a three-day journey after the tenth plague.

### 2. Logic

- a) While Moses did live in Midian 40 years, Mount Sinai was on the "far side of the desert" (Exod. 3:1). Let's assume that the Midianites lived on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba. If so, the natural reading of the "far side of the desert" would be the opposite side of the Gulf of Aqaba, or the western side (southern Sinai Peninsula), especially since Jethro's traditional home and Jebel al-Lawz would be in close proximity. Also, Midianites were a nomadic people who resided in many places: Moab (Gen. 36:35; 1 Chron. 1:46), the Mishor region of the Transjordan (Num. 25:6-7; Josh. 23:21), the wilderness east of Moab and Ammon (Jud. 7:25; 8:18-19), the northern Sinai (1 Kings 11:18), and even within Canaan itself (Jud. 6:1-6; 7:1). Thus, the location of Midian cannot help to determine the location of Mount Sinai with any certainty.
- b) The prohibitions of the Saudi government from people visiting Jebel al-Lawz could be due to their military establishment there as much as preventing archaeological exploration. Numerous sites in Saudi Arabia are off-limits to visitors, so Jebel al-Lawz is not at all unusual.
- c) The higher volcanic activity of the Saudi Peninsula over the Sinai Peninsula is not convincing in the case of the Exodus generation. The Bible does not speak in terms of

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<sup>8</sup> Brad Sparks provides a convincing case against a Saudi location (<http://www.ldolphin.org/sinai.html>). Sparks cites evidence for "Arabia" including the Sinai Peninsula on his note 27 quoting Graham I. Davies, *The Way of the Wilderness* (Cambridge Univ. Press, London, 1979): "Davies, *Wilderness* (1979) pp. 30, 99 n. 1, emphasis added. In Herodotus ca. 450 BC, not only was the Sinai Peninsula considered PART OF ARABIA but, surprisingly, so was all of the eastern desert half of what WE now call EGYPT on the continent of AFRICA. In Greek and Roman Empire days, the bulk of the Sinai Peninsula was left to the Nabateans as "Arabia Petrea," until their conquest by the Romans in 106 AD The southern and central Sinai were then merged into the new Province of Arabia. Even in modern times, Wilhelm Gesenius listed both MT. SINAI and the Sinai Peninsula as PART OF "ARABIA," in his famous 1834 Hebrew Lexicon. (Herodotus II:8, 11, 158; Michael Avi-Yonah, "Sinai," *Encycl. Judaica*, vol. 14, p. 1595; Eckenstein, *Hist. Sinai*, p. 91; Davies, *Wilderness*, p. 30; Avraham Negev (ed.), *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land [AEHL]* (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tenn., 1986 rev.) pp. 65, 221-223, 276, 292, 351; Samuel P. Tregelles (trans.), *Gesenius...Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Baker, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1979 reprint [London, 1847, 1857]) p. 584 (Strong's no. 5514)."



general characteristics of the land but rather of a single instance. Besides, the Sinai Peninsula experienced a quake exceeding 6.0 on the Richter scale in 1982 that was centered in Nuweiba though felt on J. Musa.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Archaeology

- a) Since no one knows where Israel crossed *Yam Suf* (Red Sea or Sea of Reeds), no one also knows that a submerged land bridge would be necessary as the depth of the sea would also be unknown. Since God could miraculously part the waters, we should assume that He could also help them across—no matter the incline!
  - b) Columns claiming to have been erected by Solomon only show at best that nearly five centuries after Moses that this was the spot. Such a long time period between the crossing and the commemorative columns leaves much room for doubt as to whether these are the correct locations.
  - c) It is unlikely that Israel crossed the salt-water Gulf of Aqaba since *Yam Suf* can mean Sea of Reeds and reeds grow only in fresh water.
  - d) Signs of an encampment need not refer only to the encampment by Israel.
    - (1) The water from the rock incident was at the town of Rephidim (Exod. 17) rather than in front of Mount Horeb. Also, one need not find the water source since this was a miraculous yet probably temporary water supply that was only for Israel. The rock need not be an imposing stone either.
    - (2) The blackened top of Jebel al-Lawz is due to manganese rock. Actually, many mountains in this region are dark for this reason. Besides, Scripture does not say that God blackened Mount Sinai. Also, the claim to have melted stone does not sound convincing. Jebel al-Lawz is in a volcanic zone, so melted stone here is not unusual.
    - (3) One must prove that rock piles at 400-foot intervals are indeed boundary stones before claiming that they are such markers.
    - (4) The lack of a cave at Jebel al-Musa now does not mean it lacked a cave in Elijah's time. An earthquake or shifting rocks could easily cover it after nearly 30 centuries.
    - (5) The altar at the base of Jebel al-Lawz is not of Israelite origin. God told Moses to make an altar of earth—not stone—on Mount Sinai (Exod. 20:24; 24:4), for burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.
    - (6) The discovery of petroglyphs (rock carvings) at Jebel al-Lawz only proves that someone wrote there—not that it was Moses.<sup>10</sup> The surrounding area is filled with numerous rock carvings over the ages. (And does an Egyptian cow drawing look significantly different from a non-Egyptian one?)
    - (7) Existence of an area large enough to fight the Amalekites does not prove that such a battle took place near Jebel al-Lawz. The area near Jebel al-Musa also has areas large enough for battles.
4. Perhaps the clearest argument favoring the traditional view is that the Desert of Sin (which included Mount Sinai) is located on all Bible atlases in the southern Sinai Peninsula. Since this desert is not in Arabia, the Mount Sinai within the desert would not be in Arabia either (cf. Gal. 4:25).

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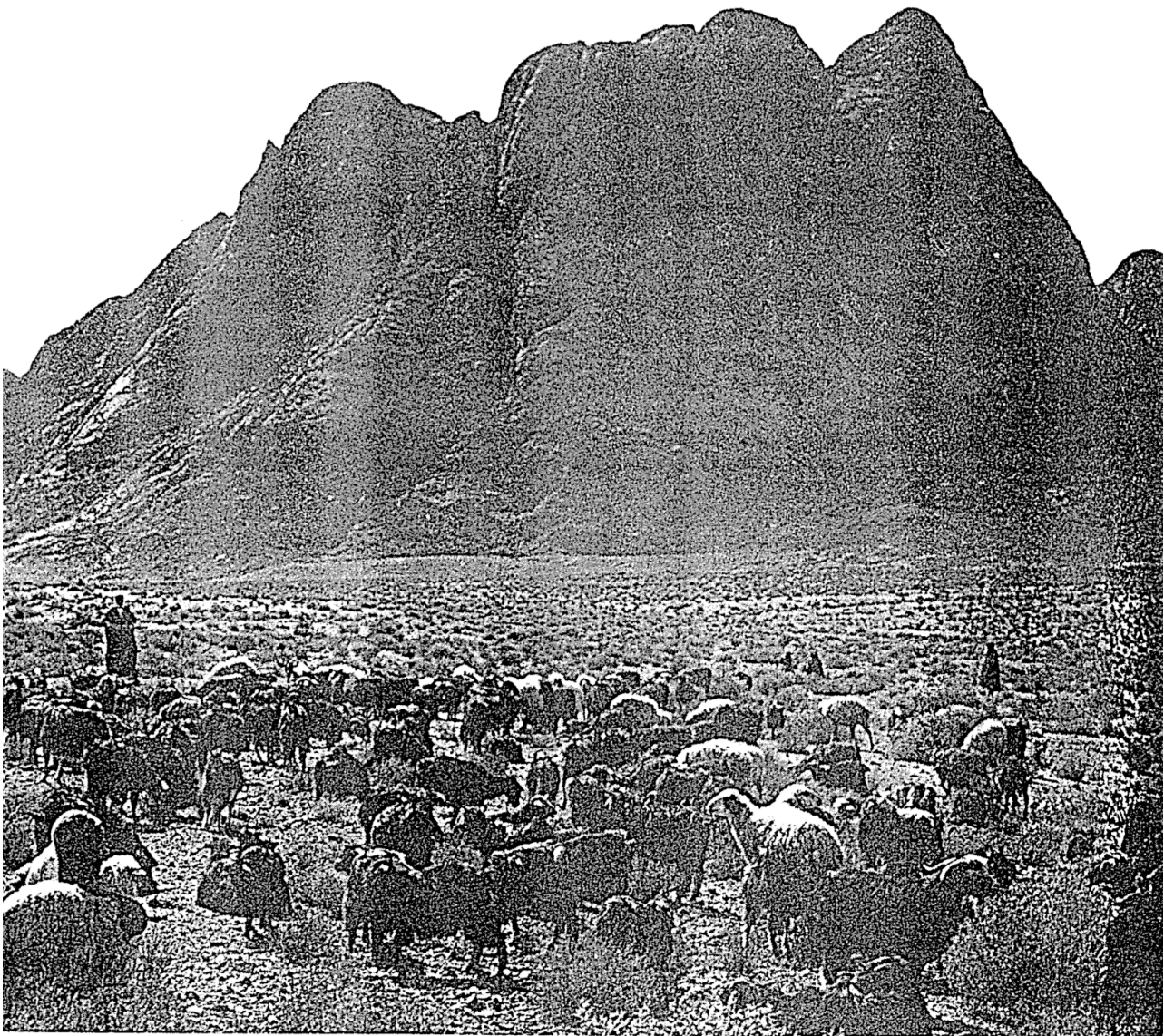
<sup>9</sup> Noted by Beitzel, 91. This is not as convincing as it may sound, however, since Nuweiba lies on the Gulf of Aqaba closer to J. Lawz than to J. Musa.

<sup>10</sup> See Ronald S. Hendel's review of Blum's book noted above and particularly of the video by Carnuke and Williams (*BAR* July/August 1999, p. 56).

## Conclusion

The debate continues whether Mount Sinai is located in the traditional location in the southern Sinai Peninsula (Jebel al-Musa) or east of this in northwestern Saudi Arabia (Jebel al-Lawz). While both views have supporting arguments and problems, the alternate view deserves a closer look. At present I have no explanation for the two springs in Saudi Arabia that lend support to the eastern view. At least tentative support from Frank Moore Cross and Hershel Shanks also adds support to the view.

On the other hand, until the Desert of Sin can be proven to be in [Saudi] Arabia, the traditional view should not be abandoned. The location of the Desert of Sin has been a long-standing problem that seemingly will not be answered decisively until more evidence is forthcoming.<sup>11</sup>



When Moses worked for Jethro, he tended sheep in the plains still used for pastureland near the traditional Mount Sinai (above).

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<sup>11</sup> For further support of the traditional view, see Gordon Franz's newsletter for members of Associates for Biblical Research entitled "The Bible and Spade" (<http://www.ChristianAnswers.net/abr/abrhome.html>).

## Interpreting and Preaching Legal Literature

### A. A quick quiz to get you thinking...

1. T or F Christians should keep parts of the OT law which are not repeated in the NT.
2. T or F There are actually two laws: the moral (Ten Commandments) and ceremonial/civil.
3. T or F The Sabbath should still be obeyed by Christians.
4. T or F Believers today are obligated to keep all of the Ten Commandments.
5. T or F Tithing should be practiced by all followers of Christ.
6. T or F Christians today are prohibited from eating blood (e.g., yong tau foo, blood pudding, pig or duck blood at Chinese New Year).
7. T or F Believers must not charge other Christians interest based upon the Law (Deut. 23:19; Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:36-37; Ezek. 18:8, 13, 17; 22:12; Prov. 15:5; 28:8).

### B. Defining the Meaning of Law (adapted from Fee/Stuart, 135-36)

1. Sometimes "Law" refers to the Pentateuch as a *single* book (e.g., Josh. 1:8).
2. Sometimes Christians refer to the "Law" as the *five* books of the Pentateuch, even though Genesis has no legal codes.
3. NT usage of the term "Law" sometimes refers to the Pentateuch and sometimes the entire OT (e.g., Luke 16:17).
4. Oftentimes "Law" refers to only the legal formation from Exodus 20–Deuteronomy 33. (It always refers to *at least* this portion of Scripture.)

### C. The Christian's Relationship to the Law (adapted from Fee/Stuart, 136-39; these issues are addressed in detail in my ThD dissertation in the SBC library under Richard James Griffith, "The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath," Dallas Seminary, 1990, esp. pp. 144-56).

1. The OT law is a covenant between *Israel* and God—not between the *church* and God. The church and Israel must be kept distinct.
2. Our loyalty to God is shown in different ways than was Israel's. In other words, God expected Israel to be loyal and He expects the same of us, but Israel's loyalty was shown through observing the sacrificial system whereas our loyalty is shown by our obeying NT commands. (However, *faith* is what pleased God then and now—Heb. 11:6.)
3. Most OT stipulations are *not* repeated in the NT—especially the civil (penalties for crimes) and ritual (worship, especially sacrificial regulations) laws. Therefore, most of the OT does not directly apply to believers.
4. Some OT stipulations *are* repeated in the NT—including nine of the Ten Commandments, the exception being the Sabbath.
5. All of the OT law is still the *Word* of God for us even though it is not still the *command* of God for us. As such it is still useful for teaching and preaching, though applications must be made based upon the principles under girding the laws.
6. Only that which the NT explicitly *renews* from the OT law can be considered part of the NT "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). [Note: Fee/Stuart put *all* of the Ten Commandments in this category, which makes modern believers guilty of Sabbath breaking. I disagree that the Sabbath is binding in the present age. I worship corporately on Sunday, not Saturday!]

D. The Purposes of the Law (adapted from J. Dwight Pentecost, *BibSac* 128 [July 1971]: 227-33)

Paul's letter to the Galatians teaches sanctification not by the Law but by faith in Christ alone. This finds support in that Abraham was justified by faith centuries before the Law even came (Gal. 3:17). After that, the Law and the Promise (Gen. 12:1-3) co-existed for years, so there is no basic conflict between the Law and the Promise. This led Paul to ask, "What, then, was the purpose of the law?" (Gal. 3:19). Actually, there were at least ten purposes for the Law:

1. It revealed or exposed the *sinfulness of man* (Gal. 3:19).
2. It revealed the *holiness of God* (1 Pet. 1:15).
3. It revealed the standard of *holiness for people* in fellowship with God (Ps. 24:3-5).
4. It *supervised* the physical, mental, and spiritual development of the redeemed Israelite until he could come to maturity in Christ (Gal. 3:24).
5. It *unified* the people to establish the nation in voluntary submission to God's decrees (Exod. 19:5-8; Deut. 5:27-28).
6. It *separated* Israel among the nations as a kingdom of priests to mediate God's truth to these nations (Exod. 31:13).
7. It provided *forgiveness* of sins for individual Israelites to restore their fellowship with God, even though they already functioned as a redeemed people (Lev. 1-7).
8. It made provision for Israel to *worship* God as a redeemed people (Lev. 23).
9. It *tested* if one was in the kingdom or the theocracy over which God ruled (Deut. 28). Faith led to obedience and blessing; lack of faith led to disobedience and judgment.
10. It *revealed Jesus Christ* (typology in the sacrificial system; Luke 24:27).

Pentecost suggests that the *revelatory* aspect of the Law is permanent as it still reveals the holiness of God today (1 Tim. 1:8), but the *regulatory* aspect is temporary as it regulated the life and worship of the Israelite (Gal. 4:8-10; Col. 2:16-17). However, this view does not seem correct, as the entire Law has been abolished (see the next two pages, i.e., pp. 114-115). I feel that a better approach is the one below...

E. A Suggested Strategy for Expounding Old Testament Law

1. Interpretation: Study the *intent behind* the legal command, asking the question, "Why was this command given in Israel?" It is especially helpful to answer this question by showing how the law reveals the character of God. For example:

*"God told Israel in Leviticus 19:9-10 not to harvest the corners of the fields because He had compassion on the poor who could glean there for their food."*

2. Principlizing: State the intent of the law in the form of a *general principle*.

*"God wants his people to give the underprivileged the chance to earn a living."*

3. Application: Show how this principle relates to a contemporary parallel situation.

*"As an employer you should provide opportunities for the poor to support themselves."*

You probably can tell by now that I think the answer to each question on the previous page's quiz is false.

## The Ten Commandments

#	Old Testament Commands	New Testament Repetitions
1	And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:1-3).	"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God..." (Acts 14:15; mentioned at least 50 times).
2	"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below... for I... am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation ... but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me..." (Exod. 20:4-6).	"Dear children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21; cf. 1 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 2:14, 20; 9:20; mentioned in the NT 12 times = 12x).  * This chart is adapted and expanded from one by Lewis Sperry Chafer, <i>Systematic Theology</i> , 4:209-10
3	"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (Exod. 20:7).	"Above all...do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your 'Yes' be yes, and your 'No,' no, or you will be condemned" (James 5:12; 4x).
4	"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth... but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exod. 20:8-11).	No NT text requires this of Christians.  However, one passage clearly <i>prohibits</i> the practice as required for believers: "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Col. 2:16-17; 0x).
5	"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you" (Exod. 20:12).	"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Eph. 6:1-3; cf. Matt. 15:4-6; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; 6x).
6	"You shall not murder" (Exod. 20:13).	"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him" (1 John 3:15; cf. Matt. 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9; James 2:11; 6x).
7	"You shall not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14).	"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Heb. 13:4; cf. Mark 10:19; 12x).
8	"You shall not steal" (Exod. 20:15).	"He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands..." (Eph. 4:28; cf. Matt. 27:64; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Rom. 13:9; Titus 2:10; 6x).
9	"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" (Exod. 20:16).	"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices" (Col. 3:9; cf. Eph. 4:25; 4x).
10	"You shall not covet your neighbor's house... wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Exod. 20:17).	"Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions'" (Luke 12:15; Rom. 7:7; 13:9; Eph. 5:3; James 4:2; 2 Pet. 2:3, 14; 9x).

## Does the Law of Moses Apply to Me?

### Does the Law of Moses Apply to Me?

*Summarizing the Five Main Views on the Law and the Christian\**

Should you as a Christian tithe? work on Saturday? charge interest to Jews? eat meat and drink milk in the same meal? The Pentateuch addresses these, but believers today debate whether the law applies to believers today. This chart summarizes five views on this crucial issue.

	Theonomic Greg Bahnsen	Reformed Willem VanGemeren	Weightier Issues Walter C. Kaiser	Modified Lutheran Douglas J. Moo	Dispensational Wayne G. Strickland
What is the Law?	Same definition as the views 3-5	God's oral or written instructions since creation	The whole Mosaic law given in the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) but also amplified in the rest of the Old Testament		
Who is the Law for?	The Elect (Israel = Church)	All mankind (Israel = Church)	Believers (Israel and Church)	Believers (Israel and Church)	Israel only (Israel ≠ Church)
Which parts of the Law apply today?	All moral laws apply to people of God only in every age; therefore, all elect persons since creation should observe either the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday, before Christ) or "Christian Sabbath," (Sunday, after Christ)	All moral laws apply to believers and unbelievers of every age (e.g., all persons—including unbelieving Gentiles since creation—should observe the Sabbath or "Christian Sabbath," being Sunday)	All moral laws that stem from God's character: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Commandments</li> <li>• Leviticus 18-19 (sex) (i.e., Sabbath is required since Israel's nationhood and prohibited sexual practices still apply)</li> </ul>	As with dispensationalists, the Mosaic law is abolished in its entirety; however, its moral content provides good guidelines for Christian living, though Christ holds the final say through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in believers today; Sabbath obedience is not consistently applied (?)	God's "moral law" before Moses is now called the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) and governs believers through the Spirit's new covenant indwelling; The Law does not easily divide into "parts" and is done away with in its entirety (Rom. 7:1-6; 1 Cor. 9:19-21; Heb. 8:13), including the Sabbath (Col. 2:16-17)
• Civil laws? (i.e., judicial law)	All apply (e.g., laws today should require death for adultery)	Some apply (e.g., still tithe and don't charge believers interest)	Judicial principles (not laws) apply since moral laws underlie all judicial and ceremonial laws	Only principles apply now as the Mosaic law was given only to Israel	None apply as these regulated Israel alone (but principles such as love and compassion still apply)
• Ceremonial laws? What is the relationship of the Abrahamic Covenant to Mosaic Covenant?	All five views agree that ceremonial aspects such as the AC; MC was added to the AC; Both are God's "covenant of grace." They consist of the same substance of God's saving relationship which makes the MC still apply today	MC was added to the AC; both still apply though they are similar in substance but different in form and purpose	MC was given specifically to Israel but its moral principles are still relevant to all believers under the AC	Like dispensationalists, MC was conditional but AC was not; MC as a temporary framework prescribed terms of obedience for Israel in Law period	MC regulated Israel's life so she could experience the blessings of the AC, but MC is no longer operative as it is fulfilled in Christ

\* This chart summarizes Stanley N. Gundry, ed. *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), where each author presents his view and responds to the other four views. Generally speaking, views 1-2 are similar as both are Reformed (stressing continuity between the NT and OT) and these stand against views 3-5 which are alike in stressing discontinuity. In my opinion, the dispensational view has the most to commend it as law in the NT is never broken into component parts and this view clearly distinguishes Israel from the church. Further, it is inconsistent to change the Sabbath (Saturday) to Sunday but not apply the OT penalties for Sabbath-breaking today (i.e., death by stoning; cf. Exod. 31:14-15; 35:2).

Does the Law of Moses Apply to Me (2 of 2)?

Does the Law of Moses Apply to Me? (2 of 2)

Evaluating the Five Main Views on the Law and the Christian

	<b>Theonomic</b> Greg Bahnsen	<b>Reformed</b> Willem VanGemeren	<b>Weightier Issues</b> Walter C. Kaiser	<b>Modified Lutheran</b> Douglas J. Moo	<b>Dispensational</b> Wayne G. Strickland
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity between the OT and NT upheld</li> <li>Desires ethics to relate to all of life</li> <li>Sees positive aspects of the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity between the OT and NT upheld</li> <li>Notes Mosaic law's foreshadowing of Christ</li> <li>Sees a convicting role of the law today for unbelievers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biblical support for some law aspects (i.e., moral) being weightier than others (Matt. 23:23)</li> <li>Holiness Code of Leviticus 18-19 stem from nature of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accounts for new covenant emphases under the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2)</li> <li>Says OT laws repeated in the NT are applicable</li> <li>Applies law principles today</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biblical in that Mosaic law began at Sinai and ended with Christ's death as a temporary custodian or tutor (Gal. 3:19, 24-25)</li> <li>Clearly distinguishes between Israel and church</li> <li>Advocates continued guidance in law of Christ</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dividing law as moral, civil &amp; ceremonial not biblically supported</li> <li>Misguided to apply godly commands to unregenerate man</li> <li>All "law" need not be Mosaic (natural law and law of Christ also exist)</li> <li>The NT never applies the OT to civil matters</li> <li>Law condemned man (2 Cor. 3:9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dividing law as moral, civil &amp; ceremonial not biblically supported</li> <li>Use of "law" in differing ways inconsistent &amp; confusing</li> <li>Requiring Sabbath for today contradicts NT (Col. 2:16-17)</li> <li>Unclear if moral law became law of Christ</li> <li>Merges Israel and church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dividing law as moral, civil &amp; ceremonial not biblically supported</li> <li>Arbitrary to pick and choose which parts of the law are required</li> <li>Choice of Decalogue and Lev. 18-19 too narrow for moral law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks to teach the indivisibility of the law while upholding its moral content</li> <li>Too extreme to claim that the law has absolutely no purpose today</li> <li>Fails to see the gospel in the OT by demarcating Law and Gospel into distinct, discontinuous eras</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguishing law's revelatory aspects (eternal, revealing God's nature) from regulatory (temporary, ruled Israel) makes distinctions within an inseparable code—if the OT law is essentially a unity, then why divide it into two parts?</li> <li>The law is not nullified but actually upheld by faith (Rom. 3:31)</li> </ul>

Spectrum on Degree of Applicability\*

Law as fully applicable in every sense

Theonomic Reformed Weightier Issues Modified Lutheran Dispensational  
 Law as fully applicable in every sense Law as fully abolished in every sense

\* Adapted from Lee Hwee Chin, "The Applicability of the Law Today," unpublished research paper for the course "Old Testament Survey," Singapore Bible College, 2001), 1.

## Should Christians Follow the Ten Commandments?

Adapted from my 1990 dissertation, "The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath," Dallas Seminary, 148-53

Despite the popularity of the belief that the Law is presently valid for believers, the New Testament treats the entire law as abrogated.<sup>12</sup> This is a major tenant of the Book of Galatians, written in response to the error of supposing that some of the law was still in effect. Paul's readers were falsely led into believing that *most* of the law was abrogated (e.g., the sacrificial system, dietary laws, etc.) but *certain* laws remained, circumcision in particular. Paul forcefully took issue with such teaching:

Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law (Gal. 5:2-3).

The issue to be emphasized here is Paul's view of the law as a whole. His point is that if one is required to keep *any* part of it, he is obligated to keep *all* of it. Conversely stated, if the believer is free from the law, he is free from *all* of it. This applies whether the part referred to is circumcision, the Sabbath, or any other part.<sup>13</sup>

The Pauline epistles uphold the abolishment of the *entire* law, not only part of it. Paul affirmed emphatically that believers are dead to the law (Rom. 7:1-6) and not under its rule (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 3:19, 23-29; 4:25, 31; 5:18). This is because Christ is the fulfillment (cf. Matt. 5:17-18) and termination or end of the law (Rom. 10:4) since his death abolished the law (Eph. 2:15). Further, Paul taught that the Mosaic Covenant has passed away (2 Cor. 3:6-11) and that the Abrahamic Covenant both preceded and followed the period of the law since the law served only temporarily (Gal. 3:14-25). The result is that "now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (Gal. 3:25). Also, "the fact that God has (manifestly) accepted Gentiles as sons demonstrates that the period of the law is at an end; the custodian has finished his task and the son has become an heir (4:1-6)."<sup>14</sup> Finally, in 1 Corinthians 9:20 Paul very clearly declares himself free from the law:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

Paul could not have stated more clearly that he was not under the law. He makes the same claim for his Roman readers as well: "you are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). The preceding verses represent only a select group of passages that indicate that the law has been abolished and thus has no jurisdiction over the believer. Indeed, when comparing the Mosaic dispensation with "the dispensation in Christ, Paul found the former, glorious as it had been, to be worthless."<sup>15</sup>

### Paul and the Decalogue

While many passages have been cited above to show the end of the law, those most pertinent to the present study are two texts specifically pointing to the end of the Ten Commandments in the present age. The first text is Romans 7. Here Paul emphatically states that the believer has died to the law by being joined to Christ (v. 4) with the result that he is released from the law (v. 6). His following illustration specifies this "law" as the Decalogue by referring to the tenth commandment which prohibits coveting (vv. 7f.). The purpose of this prohibition was to reveal Israel's inability to obey the law of God. Specifically, Paul claims freedom from the law because it has already fulfilled its purpose in revealing sin. Further, since the Decalogue is an essential unity, the abolition of one of its commandments (coveting) shows the abolition of them all.<sup>16</sup> In other words, since his

<sup>12</sup>Douglas J. Moo, "Jesus and the Authority of the Mosaic Law," *JSNT* 20 (February 1984): 3-49; Roy L. Aldrich, "Causes for Confusion of Law and Grace," *BS* 116 (July-September 1959): 221-29; id., "Has the Mosaic Law Been Abolished?" 322-35; id., "The Mosaic Ten Commandments Compared to Their Restatements in the New Testament," *BS* 118 (July-September 1961): 251-58.

<sup>13</sup>One may object to this reasoning based upon that fact that Paul used circumcision (in the so-called ceremonial law) rather than the Sabbath (in the so-called moral law), but Paul's teaching on the present applicability of the Ten Commandments is noted later in this discussion.

<sup>14</sup>Douglas R. de Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation.*, ed. D. A. Carson, 159-95 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 166.

<sup>15</sup>E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 144.

<sup>16</sup>This is certainly not to say that believers are now free to covet, for this is prohibited elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g., James 4:2). What Paul means is that the prohibition of coveting in the Decalogue revealed man's inability to follow God's commands.



illustration denotes that believers are free from *one* of the Ten Commandments, and the Decalogue is a unity, it follows that believers are also free from *all* of the commandments, which includes the Sabbath.

Second Corinthians 3 is a second passage that even more clearly shows the believer's freedom from the Ten Commandments. In this chapter Paul contrasts his apostolic authority as a minister of the New Covenant with that of his opponents at Corinth who, by implication, were ministers of the Old Covenant (cf. 2:17; 3:14). One reason the New Covenant is more glorious than the Old is because this New Covenant is internal, written on men's hearts through the Person or activity of the Spirit (3:3b).<sup>17</sup> Conversely, the Old Covenant was engraved upon tablets of stone (3:3, 7). The crucial issue here is *what* was written on stone in the Old Testament. Was it the entire law? No, only the Ten Commandments were engraved upon the tablets at Sinai (Deut. 4:13; 5:22).<sup>18</sup> In other words, Paul equates the Old Covenant with the Decalogue.<sup>19</sup> This law had a fading glory (i.e., lacked permanent validity)<sup>20</sup> "because only in Christ it is taken away" (v. 14b). Therefore, since Paul contrasts his continuing ministry of blessing with the ministry of cursing in the Ten Commandments, he in effect teaches the abolishment of the Decalogue as a system by which one should live, including the Sabbath.<sup>21</sup> That the Sabbath is included within this abolished Decalogue also finds support in that the death penalty for disobeying the Ten Commandments is never enforced in the New Testament.<sup>22</sup> It is inconsistent to argue for the continuance of the Sabbath requirement in the present age without a continued penalty for neglecting it.

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<sup>17</sup>Bernardin Schneider, "The Meaning of St. Paul's Antithesis 'The Letter and the Spirit,'" *CBQ* 15 (1953): 193-207.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, GCS, 428. See also Exodus 24:12; 31:18; 32:15-16 for other verses mentioning the tablets. Many argue that Paul's reference to "tablets of stone" serves as a figurative designation for the entire law or Old Covenant (e.g., Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB, 200; Bultmann, 73-75; Frederick W. Danker, *II Corinthians*, ACNT, 54; Colin Kruse, *The Second Epistle of the Paul to the Corinthians*, TNTC, 91-93; Knofel Staton, *Second Corinthians*, SBS, 56-57). However, the passage compares in graphic terms the actual writing (content) on the cold, external tablets with that "written" on the warm, internal heart; thus, the comparison drawn is between the Decalogue and that which replaces it—the work of the Spirit in the inner man. However, even if the tablets represent the *entire* law (the Old Covenant is the implied contrast in verse 6 and specifically mentioned in verse 14), this still argues for the abolition of the Sabbath as part of that law.

<sup>19</sup>De Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," 167.

<sup>20</sup>Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians*, Interp., 31.

<sup>21</sup>Even Paul's statement that circumcision is nothing but rather what matters is "keeping the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:19) is inadequate proof that believers are to keep the Ten Commandments. There is no evidence that *ἐντολῶν θεοῦ* ("commandments of God") refers exclusively or even primarily to the Decalogue (C. K. Barrett, *I Corinthians*, 169; de Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," 176). Objection to the preceding presentation of Paul's view of the Decalogue may also be based upon his appeal to the fifth commandment in Ephesians 6:1-3. However, here the primary motive for children obeying their parents is not the Decalogue, but because this is part of one's calling in Christ (4:1) and is right (v. 1b). The appeal to the Ten Commandments is at best a third motivation (*ibid.*, 176).

<sup>22</sup>For an evaluation of the penalties for each of the Ten Commandments, see Aldrich, "The Mosaic Ten Commandments Compared to Their Restatements in the New Testament," 251-58. He shows how the believer is not under the Decalogue, but instead "he is under the eternal moral law of God which demands far more than the Ten Commandments. It calls for nothing less than conformity to the character of God" (p. 257).

## Contrasting the Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants

Distinguishing these covenants provides a foundation for interpreting the OT and NT, especially the prophets as they look back on covenants with both Abraham (e.g., Ezek. 36–37, p. 508) and Moses (e.g., Lam. 1:3, p. 496). Knowing the conditional and temporal nature of the Law prevents misapplying obsolete commands to the Church today (e.g., Sabbath, charging interest to believers, tithing). Also, God's faithfulness to sinners becomes clear due to Abraham.

	Abrahamic Covenant	Mosaic Covenant
<i>Recipient (Date &amp; Place)</i>	Abraham as mediator for all nations 2060 BC, Ur of the Chaldees	Moses as mediator for Israel 1445 BC, Mount Sinai
<i>Scripture</i>	Genesis 12:1-3 (but formalized into a covenant in Genesis 15)	Exodus 20–31 is the heart of the covenant
<i>Between God &amp; Scope</i>	A person (for a future nation)	A nation
<i>Character &amp; Significance</i>	Universal ("all peoples will be blessed through you")	Only Israel received the Law (Deut. 4:8; Ps. 147:20)
<i>Promises</i>	Grace (promises) –primary (what God will do)	Works (laws) –secondary (how God will do it)
<i>Conditions</i>	Land, seed, and blessing (without indication of time of fulfillment)	Blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience (Lev. 26; Deut. 28)
<i>Participation</i>	Unconditional: "I will..."	Conditional: "If you will...then I will..."
<i>Analogy</i>	Abraham asleep (Gen. 15:17)	Israel agreed to obey (Exod. 19:8)
<i>Purpose</i>	Father to son (royal grant)	Suzerain (superior king) to vassal (servant nation)
<i>Form</i>	Clarified Israel's blessings in general terms to motivate the nation towards righteousness by faith in God's provision of a wonderful future (Gen. 12:1; 15:1, 6)	Clarified how Israel could be blessed in the Abrahamic Covenant as soon and full as possible; didn't restate or expand the Abrahamic Covenant but revealed sin (Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19, 24)
<i>Emphasis</i>	Oral (no written stipulations)	Written on tablets of stone & Pentateuch
<i>Christology</i>	Blessing over discipline/judgment (five "blessings" in Gen. 12:1-3)	Judgment/discipline over blessing (contrast Deut. 28:1-14 & vv. 15-68)
<i>Sign</i>	Ultimate seed (Gen. 12:3)	Typified in tabernacle (Heb. 8–10)
<i>End</i>	Circumcision (Gen. 17:11)	Sabbath (Exod. 31:13, 17)
	Never ended (Gal. 3:15-18) as an eternal covenant (Gen. 17:8)	Ended at Christ's death (Rom. 7:6; 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:7-11; Gal. 5:1; Heb. 7:11-12)

While most of the above is original, some is based on Thomas L. Constable, "A Theology of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," in *A Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 100-101. For a more complete evangelical picture of the relevance of the OT law to the Christian, see *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Zondervan), including modified Lutheran (Douglas J. Moo), Dispensational (Wayne G. Strickland), "weightier issues" apply (Walter C. Kaiser), Non-theonomic Reformed (Willem VanGemeren), and Theonomic Reformed (Greg Bahnsen).

## Israel & the Church: Continuity & Discontinuity

One issue over which a lot of scholarly ink flows is the extent to which Israel relates to the Church. Some (especially amillennialists, postmillennialists, and covenant premillennialists) argue that the Church is the “new Israel” with complete continuity between the two entities. Thus, the Church is seen to have simply replaced Israel and assumed her promises and covenants.

The other side of the spectrum of views is classical and revised dispensationalism which advocates the discontinuity model. In this scheme there are two separate peoples of God: Israel and the Church. The only overlap is that the believers today participate in some of the aspects of the Abrahamic and New Covenants (see p. 116 and supplements to the Jeremiah notes).

I have held both views, but now hold to a third model similar to progressive dispensationalism. This newer system (since 1987) emphasizes both continuity and discontinuity yet still maintains the dispensational distinctive that the Church is *not* the “new Israel.” Rather, it is a continuation of God’s covenant plan begun with Israel and continuing with a believing remnant of Israel today, along with Gentile believers who have been grafted into the Abrahamic Covenant (see Romans 9–11; Galatians 3). Here are some points of difference and contact between these two entities:

### Discontinuity

	Israel	Church
<i>Identity</i>	Physical seed of Abraham (Gal. 6:12-16)	Spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 29)
<i>Land Covenant</i>	Still outstanding (Deut. 30:1-10) but partly fulfilled since 1948 (Ezek. 37:1-7)	No land promise (Land Covenant) can be claimed by present believers
<i>Law</i>	Required to obey the law (Exod. 19–20)	Freedom from the law (Rom. 7; Gal. 3)
<i>Duration</i>	Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) to eternity (Jer. 31:35-37)	Pentecost (Acts 2) to Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18) or even later (?)
<i>Wrath</i>	Experienced in Tribulation (Jer. 30:7)	Free from wrath (1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10)
<i>Faith</i>	Shown in offering sacrifices	Shown in trusting Christ’s sacrifice
<i>Priesthood</i>	<i>Has</i> one: a special class by heredity	<i>Is</i> one: all are priests (1 Pet. 2:5)
<i>Activity</i>	Set aside between 69th & 70th “Weeks” (Dan. 9:24-27)—a part of the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24)	Between 69th & 70th “Weeks” the church is a mystery unforeseen in the OT (Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:26)
<i>Qualification</i>	Ethnic—descendants of Abraham or Gentile proselytes who became Jews through circumcision as blessing is through Israel (1 Kings 8:41-43; Isa. 2:2-3; 19:19-25; 49:6; 51:4; 56:6-8; Zech. 14:16-19)	Not ethnic—“Neither Jew nor Gentile” (Gal. 3:28) means a combination of Jews and Gentiles without need to become Jewish proselytes (Acts 15; Eph. 3:3, 6)

## Continuity

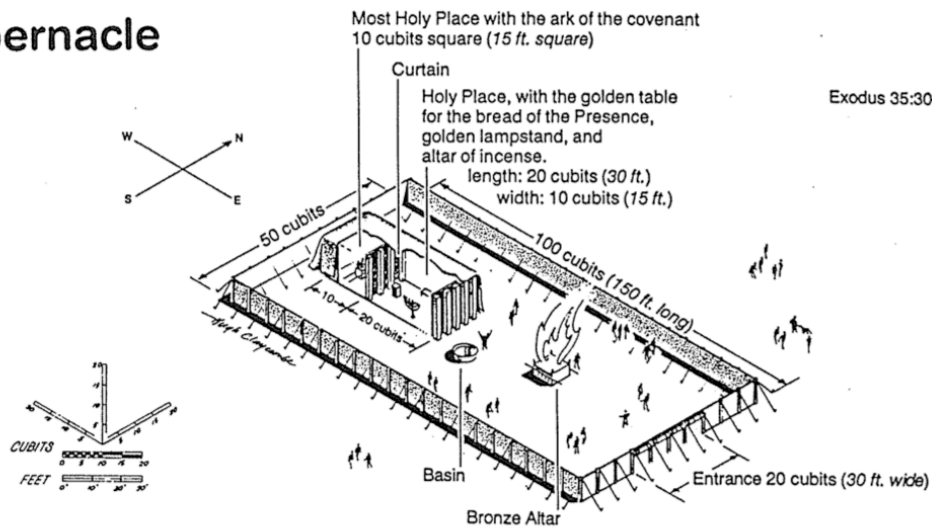
	Israel	Church
<i>Abrahamic Covenant</i>	Origin in Abraham as the father of the nation (Gen. 12:1-3)	Believers today are grafted into this same covenant (Rom. 11:17-21; cf. Gal. 3:29)
<i>Davidic Covenant</i>	Promise of a literal temple (2 Sam. 7:13) fulfilled by Solomon (1 Kings)	Functions now as a spiritual temple (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-10)
<i>New Covenant</i>	Promised forgiveness of sins, indwelling Spirit, new heart, reunification of Israel and Judah, and knowledge of God throughout the earth (Jer. 31:31-34)	The first three aspects (forgiveness of sins, indwelling Spirit, new heart) true today in a progressive fulfillment of the covenant (Luke 22:20)
<i>Law</i>	Required to obey the Mosaic law (Exod. 19-20)	Required to obey the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) or "law that gives freedom" (James 1:25; 2:12)
<i>Salvation by</i>	God's grace through faith (Gen. 15:6)	God's grace through faith (Rom. 4:3)
<i>Basis of Salvation</i>	Sacrificial lamb	Sacrificial Lamb
<i>Spirit</i>	Filling on leaders	Indwelling of all believers (Rom. 8:9)
<i>Prophets</i>	Provided revelation of God's word	Foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20)
<i>Election</i>	Based on grace (Mal. 1:2)	Based on grace (Eph. 1:4-6, 11)
<i>Disobedience</i>	Lead to God's discipline	Leads to God's discipline (1 Cor. 11:30)
<i>Leadership</i>	Elders (Exod. 3:16, 18; 4:29, 31; 12:21; Num. 11:16-17; Josh. 24:31; 1 Sam. 15:30; 2 Sam. 17:4, 15; 1 Kings 21:8, 11 and many other texts)	Elders (Acts 11:30; 14:23-24; 15:1-6; 16:4; 20:17-38; 21:17-26; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:14; 5:17-25; Tit. 1:5-9; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; Heb. 13:17)
<i>God's Presence</i>	In a cloud at day and a pillar of fire at night (Exod. 40:34-38)	In the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)
<i>Witness</i>	"light for the Gentiles" (Isa. 49:3-6) "kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6) "holy nation" (Exod. 19:6)	"light of the world" (Matt. 5:14-16) "holy...royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) "holy nation" (1 Pet. 5:9)

# The Tabernacle and Furnishings

The Bible Visual Resource Book, 25

Exodus

## The Tabernacle



Exodus 35:30-36:38; 39:9-40:38

The new religious observances taught by Moses in the desert centered on rituals connected with the tabernacle, and amplified Israel's sense of separateness, purity and oneness under the Lordship of Yahweh.

A few desert shrines have been found in Sinai, notably at Serabit el-Khadem and at Timnah in the Negev, and show marked Egyptian influence.

Specific cultural antecedents to portable shrines carried on poles and covered with thin sheets of gold can be found in

ancient Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom (2800-2250 B.C.), but were especially prominent in the 18th and 19th dynasties (1570-1180). The best examples come from the fabulous tomb of Tutankhamun, c. 1350.

Comparisons of construction details in the text of Ex 25-40 with the frames, shrines, poles, sheathing, draped fabric covers, gilt rosettes, and winged protective figures from the shrine of Tutankhamun are instructive. The period, the Late Bronze Age, is equivalent in all dating systems to the era of Moses and the exodus.

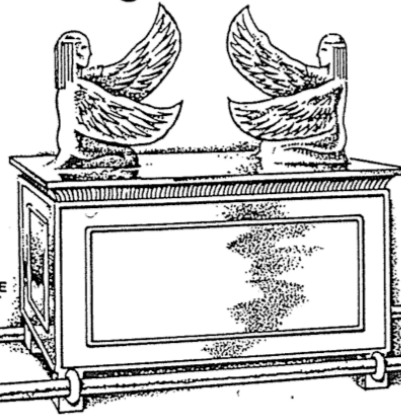
© Hugh Claycombe 1981

## The Tabernacle Furnishings

Exodus 37-38:8

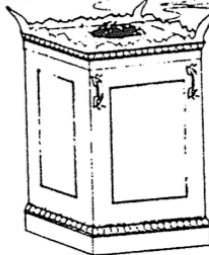
The symbolism of God's redemptive covenant was preserved in the tabernacle, making each element an object lesson for the worshiper. The Levitical priests, including some with Egyptian names and perhaps Egyptian training, gave meticulous attention to facts about the shrine. Reconstruction of the furnishings is possible because of extremely detailed descriptions and precise measurements recorded in Ex 25-40.

ARK OF THE COVENANT



The ark of the Testimony compares with the roughly contemporary shrine and funerary furniture of King Tutankhamun (c. 1350 B.C.), which, along with the Nimrud and Samaria ivories from a later period, have been used to guide the graphic interpretation of the text. Both sources show the conventional way of depicting extreme reverence, with facing winged guardians shielding a sacred place.

### The Altar of Incense



- Source Unknown

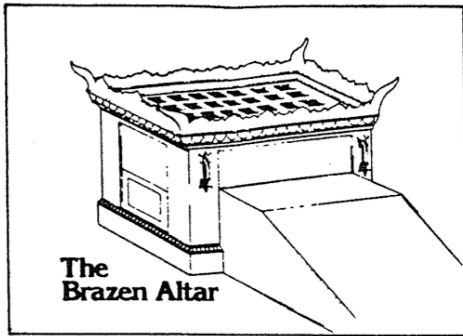
Exodus 30: 1-10 Read the description and purpose of the altar of incense.

The altar of incense was 1½ feet square and 3 feet high. Made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, it had rings on the corners in which to place long staves for carrying. The priests burned incense on the altar twice daily as an act of worship to the Lord (vv. 7-8). Elsewhere in Scripture, incense speaks of the worship of the saints (Rev. 5: 8; 8: 3-4).

- Source Unknown

## The Tabernacle Furnishings

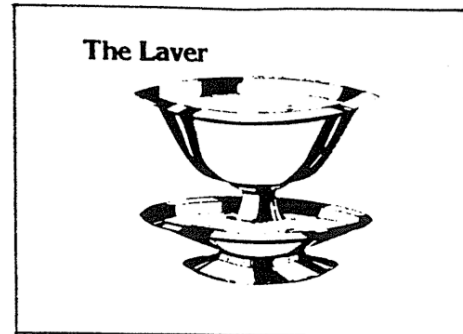
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Exodus 27: 1-8. the dimensions (7½ feet square and 4½ feet high)

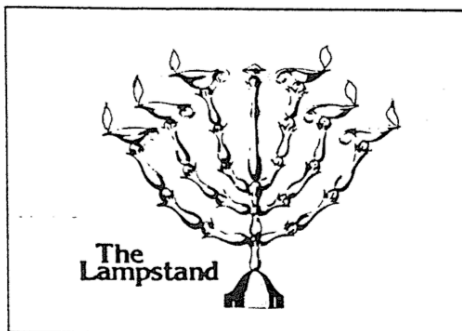
Note that it stood just inside the main gate of the court. Teach that the word altar means "slaughter place," and it was to this altar that the Israelites were directed to bring their animal sacrifices.

Note that when an Israelite presented a sacrifice he first placed his hands on the head of the animal and confessed his sins. He was thereafter identified with that animal. He then had to kill the animal, thereby indicating that the penalty of sin is death. The priest then took blood from the sacrifice and applied it in the proper place. At this point the animal was put on the altar. The altar pictures the cross where Jesus Christ poured out His blood as an atoning sacrifice for all mankind.



(Exod. 38: 8). the word *laver* literally means "lavatory," or a "place for washing."

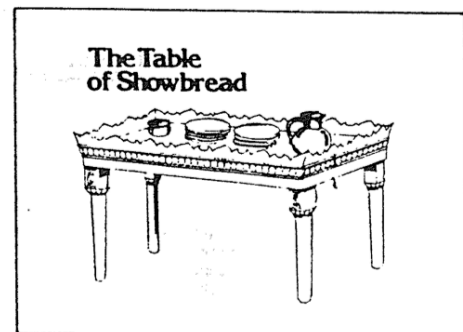
Before entering the tent, the priests washed their hands and feet at the laver. Although no dimensions are given in Scripture, the laver was certainly large enough to accommodate them. The laver represents our being cleansed from sin before entering into fellowship with God. For the Christian it means applying 1 John 1: 9, that is, confessing our sin and claiming the forgiveness and cleansing that God promises through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.



we are moving through the door and into the Holy Place. The next article is the golden lampstand, located against the south wall.

Exodus 25: 31-40. Note the ornate craftsmanship that went into its construction.

The purpose of the lampstand was to give the light needed by the priests as they went about their duties and worship in the Holy Place. Again, no dimensions are given, but we know it was formed of pure gold. The lampstand suggests the church, the body of Christ. Although Christ is the source of spiritual light (John 8: 12), He said we are the light of the world (Matt. 5: 14). As we allow His light to shine through us, we become His candlesticks. Placed by Him in sin's dark places, we reflect His glorious light (John 12: 36). The oil needed for fuel is representative of the Holy Spirit who provides means and power for the Christian today.



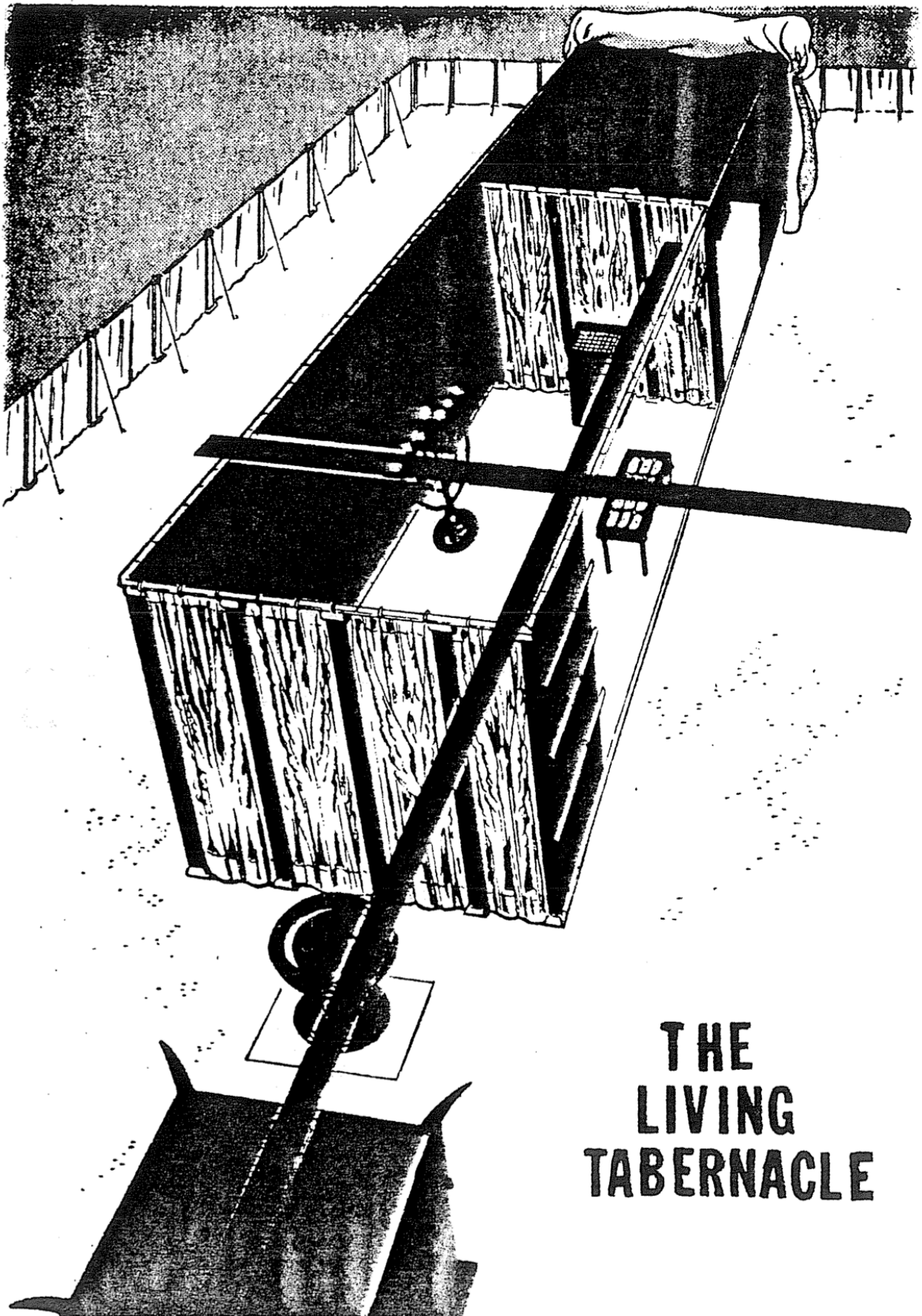
Exodus 25: 23-30.

The table of showbread was constructed from acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It was rather low (only 2½ feet high) and its outside dimensions were one foot by three feet. On it were placed twelve small cakes of bread and the utensils, which were made of pure gold.

The bread, after it had been displayed, served as food for the priests. Actually, the consumption itself was an act of worship.

The application for the Christian is two-fold. First, Christ is the Bread of Life (John 6: 35), that is, He is our portion, our eternal provision. Second, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4: 4). We are to partake daily of our spiritual food, the Bible God's Word.

# The Living Tabernacle



**THE  
LIVING  
TABERNACLE**

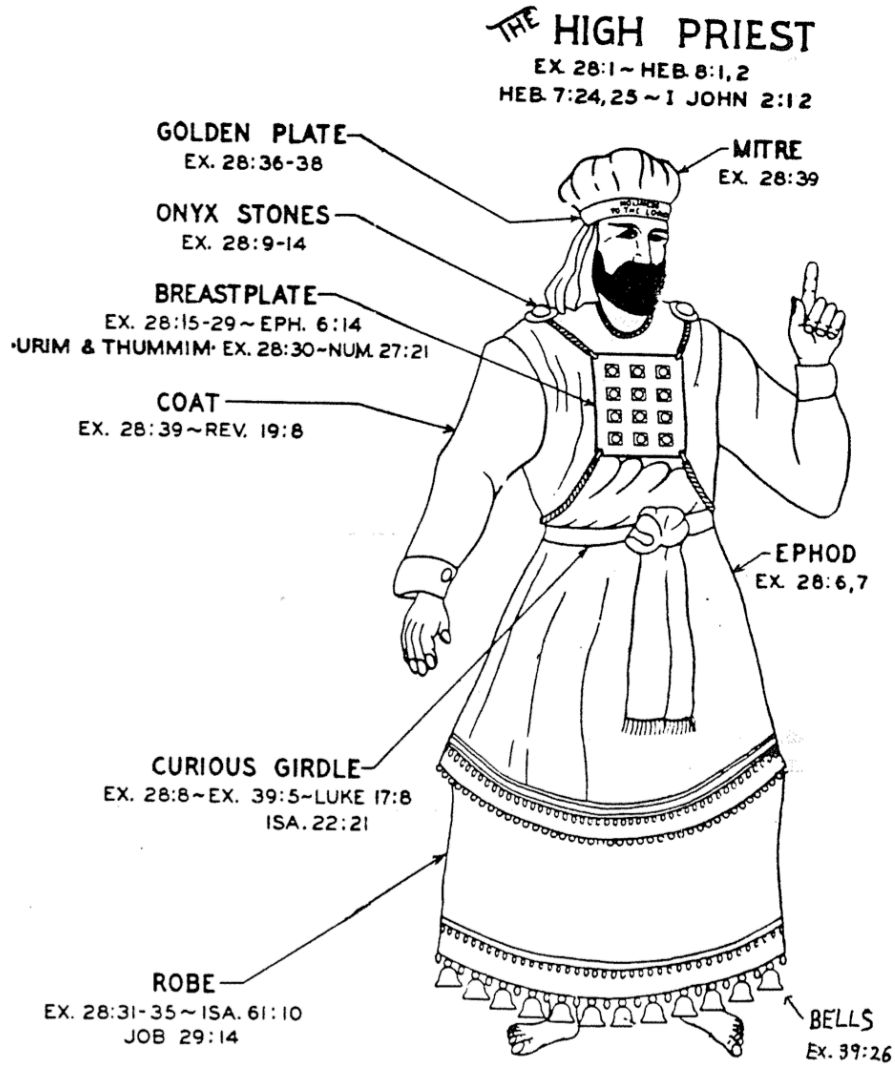
### The High Priest

## ▶ THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS ▶

A FIGURE      A SHADOW  
HEB. 9: 8,9 & 24      HEB. 10:1

Source Unknown

EXAMPLES ~ PATTERN  
HEB. 8:5  
I COR. 10:11





## The Tabernacle & Creation

The typological significance of the tabernacle has been widely taught, for truly the tabernacle looked *forward* to the finished work of Christ (see previous pages). However, a little-discussed topic is how the tabernacle looked *back*—specifically to the creation event.

John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992): 298-300 shows many interesting parallels between these two events:

	<b>Creation</b>	<b>Tabernacle</b>
<b>Text</b>	Genesis 1-2	Exodus 25-31
<b>Content</b>	Creation of the heavens and earth	Building of the tabernacle
<b>Significance</b>	Arena in which God would have fellowship with humans	Means of restoring man's lost fellowship with God
<b>Structure</b>	Seven acts marked by divine speech: "And God said" (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26; cf. vv. 11, 28, 29)	Seven acts marked by divine speech: "And the LORD said" (Exod. 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12)
<b>Contents</b>	Pure gold (Gen. 2:12a) and precious jewels (Gen. 2:12b)	Pure gold (Exod. 25:3) and precious jewels (Exod. 25:7)
<b>Final Inspection &amp; Blessing</b>	"And God saw all he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31); God blessed man (Gen. 1:28)	"And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it just as the LORD had commanded" (Exod. 39:43a) and Moses blessed them (Exod. 39:43b)
<b>Closing</b>	Reminder that God rested on the sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3)	Reminder to observe the sabbath (Exod. 31:12-18)
<b>Patterns</b>	Man and woman made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27)	Tabernacle made based on the pattern God showed Moses (Exod. 25:9)
<b>Sequel</b>	Fall of man into the sin of eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3)	Fall of Israel into the worship of the golden calf (Exod. 32)

What, then, is the significance of these parallels?

1. The tabernacle was intended as a *model of God's heavenly abode* in that God's presence would dwell with his people.
2. As the tabernacle followed the "pattern" of something in heaven, it had a *symbolic as well as practical purpose*. The physical forms also had spiritual meaning or sense to them (typology).

However, the text gives no hints as to their typology, leaving their meanings a mystery. We have to wait until we get to the NT to see it as a picture of the work of Christ (John 2:19-21; Heb. 8:2; 9:11-12), the individual believer (1 Cor. 6:19), and the church (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; 10:21).



## Salvation in the Old Testament

How were people saved during Old Testament times? Were only Jews saved? How? Was it through the tabernacle and temple sacrifices? Did killing these animals actually forgive sin? These questions will naturally arise in a thinking person's mind when encountering the OT.

First, salvation has always been by faith and not by works of the Law. This is Paul's key point in Galatians and Romans and it applies to all times. Paul gives Genesis 15:6 as support: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:3; cf. vv. 11, 16-24; Heb. 11). Salvation in all ages is based in God's grace, not our works (Eph. 2:8-9). The ways He has shown his grace has changed over the ages, but his method of salvation by grace through faith is constant.

OT believers expressed their faith in many ways: worshipping God, offering sacrifices, or doing good deeds, but it was their *faith* that saved—not their sacrifices or worship or deeds. Their faith was placed in God's provision of a coming Saviour (1 Pet. 1:10-12), though they did not realize that this Redeemer specifically was Jesus Christ. Further, there is no hint that their salvation could be lost.

One may ask, "But doesn't the OT say sacrifices forgave people?" Leviticus promises Israelites that they "will be forgiven" by sin offerings and guilt offerings (4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; 19:22; cf. Heb. 9:13). However, these refer to any *specific* sin rather than forgiveness from *all* sin for salvation; also, ritual without repentant faith was useless (Ps. 40:6-8; Isa. 1:11-20; Jer. 7:21-26).

This parallels our experience some. We are saved from the penalty of sin by faith, just like Jews (and Gentiles identifying with Israel) in the OT—but we show faith by trusting Christ as our past sacrifice rather look forward to a future sacrifice. We still sin, but 1 John 1:9 promises, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." We have *positional* forgiveness for all sins (past, present, and future) and a secure relationship with God. However, confession helps us experience *practical* forgiveness and restoration of our fellowship with Him. In like manner, Job sacrificed for cleansing and restored fellowship while saved (Job 42:7-9).

But why can't the "blood of bulls and goats...take away sins" (Heb. 10:4)? Sacrifices forgave and cleansed only from external ceremonial impurity (Heb. 9:13), but Christ *removed* all sin and cleansed *internally*. A clear treatment of OT sacrifices is John S. Feinberg, "Salvation in the Old Testament," *Tradition and Testament*, eds. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 39-77 (adapted below into chart form). Issues 1-3 are the same for OT and NT but 4-5 are different:

	<b>OT Times (Moses to Christ's Death)</b>	<b>NT Times (Christ's Death to Today)</b>
<b>Basis of Salvation</b>	God's gracious provision of the death of Christ since "it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Lev. 17:11b)	God's gracious provision of the death of Christ ("without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" Heb. 9:22)
<b>Requirement of Salvation</b>	Faith in the provision that God has revealed—as a gift (Ps. 51:16-17)	Faith in the provision that God has revealed—as a gift (Gal. 2:16)
<b>Ultimate Content of Salvation</b>	Object of faith is God Himself—prophets exhorted repentance, not sacrifices (Jer. 3:12; Joel 2:12)	Object of faith is God Himself—heroes of faith are cited to exhort faith in God (Heb. 11)
<b>Specific Revealed Content of Salvation</b>	Cumulative content of faith involved sacrifices & promises: animals (Gen. 3:21); Abel's sacrifice (Gen. 4:4); Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15), etc.	New content of faith is the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-21) which removes sin while OT sacrifices merely covered sin
<b>Believer's Expression of Salvation</b>	Obey moral law, offer animal sacrifices, obey Mosaic law (civil and ceremonial aspects)	Obey moral law, observe Lord's Supper and baptism, etc. through the Spirit's enabling (Rom. 8:9)

## Israel versus Pagan Culture

Summarized and expanded from Homer Heater, Jr., "Ancient Middle Eastern Culture and the Bible"  
(Professor's unpublished paper in doctoral seminar, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989, page 1 of 2)

When comparing Scripture with the many archaeological finds present today, two dangers must be avoided. First, one must not assume that Israel took all of its beliefs from the nations surrounding it so that the nation had nothing different about it. Many unique elements do exist in the Old Testament.

The second danger is at the opposite extreme: to assume that since Israel's religion had a divine origin, *none* of the elements find parallels in the Ancient Near East. God's institution of Israel at Mount Sinai had several points of contact with other religions of that time.

In summary, Israel's relationship with pagan cultures had both similarities and differences:

Similarities	Differences (Unique Elements)
<p><u>Mesopotamian Filial Adoption</u>: A childless couple could adopt an adult outside the family to take care of them in their old age and perform religious rites in exchange for an inheritance (Gen. 15:2-4; cf. Kenneth Kitchen, <i>The Bible and Its World</i>, 70).</p>	<p><u>Monotheism</u>: Whereas all Ancient Near East cultures worshipped more than one god (polytheism), Israel worshiped Yahweh alone (monotheism). While many scholars advocate that monotheism began with Moses, the Bible <i>begins</i> with one Creator God (Gen. 1:1).</p>
<p><u>Mesopotamian Birthright</u>: The oldest (or principal) son received a double share of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15ff.).</p>	<p><u>Unconditional Covenants</u>: God called Abraham and made a unique covenant with him in that Abraham need not fulfill any requirements (Gen. 12:1-3). This is seen in particular in the Mesopotamian ceremony in which Abraham did not accompany God between the animal halves (Gen. 15:17).</p>
<p><u>Law-Code Form</u>: The Bible uses the suzerain-vassal treaty form common during the 15th century (Book of Deut.). This included many of the same elements due to common institutions (marriage, government, private ownership) and common problems (death, murder, theft, slavery, etc.).</p>	<p><u>Law-Code Basis</u>: Israel was commanded not to sin because the LORD so willed it, which is a moral-ethical element lacking in all other law codes of antiquity.</p> <p>Also, whereas other codes were based upon a civil government, Israel's was divinely instituted under a theocratic government.</p>
<p><u>Canaanite Language</u>: The Canaanites (northwest Semitic people of western Syria and Palestine before 12th century BC) shared a similar Semitic language as Israel, making borrowing possible, as seen in the Psalms. However, Canaanites had two alphabetic writing systems: at Ugarit and one also influencing later Phoenician. In this respect they surpassed Israel linguistically.</p>	<p><u>Canaanite Technology</u>: Canaanites were also more technologically advanced than Israel, especially in working with metals. Thus their iron chariots controlled the western plains and Valley of Jezreel in Palestine. The Phoenicians were the same people as the Canaanites, but after the 12th century. Forced out of Palestine in the 13-12 centuries, they became the greatest mariners and traders of all times. They spread the Canaanite culture, religion, language, and alphabet all over the Mediterranean area.</p>

## Israel versus Pagan Culture

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Similarities	Differences (Unique Elements)
<p><u>Animal Sacrifice</u> was part of all ancient religious systems. Conservative scholars assume that God instituted sacrifice to Adam and his descendants (Gen. 3:21), but after Noah it was perverted.</p>	<p><u>Demoralizing Canaanite Cultic Practices</u> held them back from being a truly great culture. These practices were the worst in the entire near east, including human sacrifice, sacred prostitution, eunuch priests, serpent worship, and brutal mythology with gods against gods. Canaanite sexual religion with its high god El, wife Asherah, and offspring in Baal and Dagon are related to the pagan "Queen of Heaven" (Jer. 7:18; 44:17), Roman sexual deities (Venus, Diana, Aphrodite) and Catholic Mariology. All these were part of the virgin cult that originated from earliest times in Babylonian mystery religion.</p>
<p><u>The Tabernacle</u> instituted and built at Mt. Sinai had many similarities with those of pagan religions: portability, inner and outer courts, use of gold, sacrificial altars, priesthood, etc. (cf. p. 119 of these notes).</p>	<p><u>The Tabernacle</u> of Judaism was also unique in some respects. For one, God himself designed its specifics (Exod. 25-27) though men built it (Exod. 36:8-40:33). Also, it had God's very presence in the form of a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud at daytime (Exod. 40:34-38).</p>
<p><u>Prophets</u>: Men who delivered "messages" from Dagon or other deities to pagan kings such as to the king at Mari appear in societies other than Israel.</p>	<p><u>Prophecy</u>: Pagan prophets gave briefer messages that were always in the king's political or military interests and sometimes with promise or threat, depending upon the king's response (Kitchen, 54-55). In contrast, Israel's prophets such as Nathan, Amos, Hosea, or Isaiah reprovved and admonished even kings on issues of personal morality, social justice, or obedience to God. For a contrast between pagan and Israelite prophets, consult 1 Kings 22.</p>

