

Exodus Introduction -- John Karmelich

1. For those of you who are new to my notes, I write a commentary on a verse-by-verse text of a book of the Bible.
 - i) It is typically 6-9 pages of text, which includes the Bible text of the week.
 - ii) Tonight's lesson is an Introduction to the book.
2. For those who were with me in my Gospel of John study, I'm going to work at a faster pace, once we get past the initial chapters.
3. I love to pass on a lesson I once learned about the "3 things God can not do."
 - a) There are 3 things God can not do and keep his Word at the same time.
 - i) 1. God can not learn.
 - a) If God is perfect, then he can not learn anything.
 - b) "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please." (Isaiah 46:10 NIV)
 - ii) 2. God will not *force* you to love Him.
 - a) If God *forces* people to love him, (by coercion, threats, intimidation, etc), that is not love in the "free-will" sense of the term.
 - b) "Forcing" somebody to love them is not true love. You are not loving them because you want to, but because you *have* to. Therefore, God does not *force* people to love Him.
 - iii) 3. (The one I want to emphasize now). God can not lie.
 - a) God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. (Hebrews 6:18 NIV)
 - b) Tonight begins the study of the Book of Exodus.
 - i) Exodus is all about a God Keeping a Promise.
 - a) If a God can *not* lie, *and* He makes a promise,
 - (1) Then we can count on God to keep that Promise!
 - c) Exodus is all about the fulfillment of a Promise made in Genesis:
 - i) In Genesis 12:2 God tells Abraham:
 - a) "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; (NIV)
 - ii) He also tells his grandson Jacob:
 - iii) "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there." (Gen 46:3 NIV)
 - iv) Exodus is all about the formation and beginning of the Nation of Israel.
 - d) The lesson to us as Christians is you can count on God to keep his promises.
 - i) God took the Israelites out of Egypt in a great and dramatic fashion
 - a) Partially to show the world that
 - b) 1. He, and he alone is God
 - c) 2. We can count on God to keep the promises God made to us.
 - d) Jesus promises us that He would never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)
 - e) As we read and watch the dramatic events take place in Egypt,
 - (1) We can remind ourselves that God
 - (a) In His Timing
 - (b) In His Way
 - (c) Keeps His Promises to Us
 - (2) Not because they, or we deserve them, but simply because he loves us, and wants to go out of his way to demonstrate his love to us.

- ii) Through out the Old Testament God *constantly* reminds the Israelites (though the prophets) that *He* and *He alone* is the one that formed this nation.
 - a) To remind the people that
 - (1) He is God and that
 - (2) the people owe their allegiance to God.
- 4. Exodus is the 2nd Book of the Bible
 - i) It can “roughly” be translated “exiting”
 - ii) It is better translated “a going out”
 - iii) The word “Exodus” is not even found in Exodus...
 - a) It is the Greek word for “going out”
 - b) The opening word (in the original Hebrew) can best be translated “And”
 - i) Meaning the book is written as a continuation of Genesis.
- 5. The Book of Exodus is familiar to those who are even casually aware of the Bible contents.
 - a) It is home of “The 10 Commandments”
 - b) It is home of “Passover” ritual meal that all religious Jewish families annually perform.
 - c) It is home of “The 10 plagues on Egypt”.
 - d) Anybody who has ever seen the movies “The 10 Commandments” or “The Prince of Egypt” is fairly familiar with the contents of Exodus.
- 6. Here’s Exodus “in a nutshell”:
 - a) Seventy people of the family of Jacob went into Egypt. Over the next 400 years the descendants became a multi-million person nation called “The Israelites”. The Israelites were put in bondage as slaves in Egyptians. God appointed a leader, Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt by a set of plagues on the Egyptians. The Israelites were given a set of commands of what God expected of them and how to worship God. The Israelites were lead and protected by God through the wilderness. They built a portable worship structure, called “The Tabernacle” as per the instructions given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai.
 - (1) There’s 40 chapters in one paragraph!
 - b) If we played “word association” and you asked me what’s the first word that pops into my head when I hear the word Exodus.
 - i) I think “redemption”.
 - ii) Exodus is all about Redemption.
 - iii) Exodus is a model of our redemption as Christians.
 - iv) It might be good here is to Webster’s definition of “redeem”:
 - a) 1. To buy back.; 2. To get back. 3. To pay off (a mortgage or a note), 4. To convert paper money into gold, or vice versa
 - b) 5a. To set free by paying a ransom
 - c) 5b. to deliver from sin and its penalties, as by a sacrifice made for the sinner.
 - (1) Definition #5 sounds a lot like the New Testament.
 - (a) Webster was a Christian, for those who didn’t know
 - (2) The essential aspect of the Gospel is Jesus paying the price (a ransom) for our sins. (Re-read definition 5a.)
 - (3) We were redeemed.
- 7. A few comments about the authorship and time of Exodus:
 - a) Moses is considered by all conservative Jewish & Christian scholars to be the author.
 - i) The first five Books of the Bible are all attributed to Moses as the author.
 - ii) Together the five books are usually referred as the Pentatute (Greek origin)
 - iii) Or the “Torah” (Hebrew Origin)
 - a) To a religious Jew, the word “Torah” can refer to either all 5 books of Moses or “The Law” in general.
 - b) The time of Exodus is about 1,500 years before the birth of Christ.

- i) There is some debate among scholars as to the actual time. Most of the conservative scholars give this date as approximate.
- c) There is also one “apologetic” note I should bring up here.
 - i) When you read liberal scholars (i.e. those who don’t take the Bible seriously)
 - ii) Sooner or later, you are going to come across the “J.P.E.L.” theory.
 - a) This is also known as the “Documentary Hypothesis”.
 - b) These “scholars” (I use the term very loosely) will argue:
 - (1) Moses didn’t really write the first five books of the Bible.
 - (2) They will base it on different names for God scattered through the five Books of Moses.
 - (a) The theories have to do with J=Jehovah, P=Prophet, E=Elohim (a Hebrew name for God) and L=Levitucs.
 - (3) If you want I could walk you through all the arguments and rebuke them with detailed textual accuracy,
 - (4) Or I can make it real simple:
 - (a) Jesus quotes from all five books of Moses.
 - (b) Jesus attributes all five books to Moses.
 - (c) Do you believe Jesus is God?
 - (d) Then you believe Moses wrote Exodus.
 - (e) End of discussion.
 - (5) Again, there are detailed books that refute the arguments if one is interested in this topic.

8. Whenever one studies *any* book of the Old Testament, there are a few simple rules to remember.

- a) Jesus says “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,” (John 5:39 NIV)
 - i) The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews also states that the “volume of the book (Old Testament) is written about Jesus (Hebrews 10:7)
- b) When Jesus says “The Scriptures”, he is referring to the Old Testament.
 - i) This means you can find direct and indirect references to Jesus all over the New Testament.
 - ii) As we study Exodus, I am going to point out numerous passages that point to the coming of the Messiah (Jesus)
 - iii) How Jesus’ crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection are all “hinted at” within the Book of Exodus.
 - a) Jesus himself attributes this claim.
 - b) Jesus said “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he (Moses) wrote about me.” (John 5:46 NIV)

9. What is just as important, is that the stories, lessons and history taught in the Book of Exodus has direct bearing on our daily walk as Christians.

- a) When teaching the Bible, I always try to keep in mind the following statement:
 - i) “Who cares what happened in ancient history, what about *my* problems?
 - a) The good news is that the lessons taught in the Bible are applicable to coping, applying solving life’s problems.
 - b) I sometimes think of the Bible as “Life’s Instruction Book”
 - (1) This is why a daily Bible reading plan is so important.
- b) Paul states: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17 NIV)
 - i) All means all, including the Old Testament and Exodus.
- c) There is not going to be a lot of emphasis in this study on details of Egyptian History.

- i) I'll point out some historical insights, and recommend some reading in the appendix for further study, but my emphasis is on application to our lives.
 - d) Exodus is a "narrative" book. Which means it is all stories.
 - i) It is not so important that one becomes an expert in Israel's History or Egypt as one knows *how to apply these lessons to our lives*.
 - ii) The good times and bad times as shown by the Hebrew people are written as examples of for conduct in our lives.
 - iii) One has to remember that for thousands of years, most of God's people did not have a copy of Exodus for study.
 - a) God needed to teach on a "dramatic scale" to teach us lessons about our lives.
 - b) The interesting thing is that God speaks to us the same way.
 - c) Romans 8:28 applies then and now: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,"
 - e) Another set of lessons one learns from reading Exodus is learning about Moses.
 - i) Moses is God's appointed leader and the central character through the book.
 - a) One can learn a lot about leadership, humbleness, and good godly character by studying Moses.
 - (1) A problem we have with studying Moses is that we are "tainted" by the movies.
 - (a) We read Moses and we "think" Charleton Heston.
 - (2) This summer I read Chuck Swindoll's book on "Moses".
 - (a) Chuck preached a profile on Moses for many weeks at his church.
 - (b) One of his church members stated "Chuck, I've been hearing you preach about Moses so long, I no longer see Charleton Heston!"
 - (c) That's one of my goals for this study!
 - (d) For you to read Exodus and not see Charleton Heston, but Moses himself!
10. There is an underlying "pattern" in Exodus that is common in most of the New Testament books. This pattern is as follows:
- i) Here are the wonderful things God has done for you.
 - ii) Here are the things that God *now expects* you to do in response.
 - a) Some of the New Testament books have a large emphasis on the former
 - b) others emphasize on the latter.
 - iii) But this pattern is common in the New Testament.
 - b) This is also the pattern of the Book of Exodus.
 - i) First comes what "God has done for us"
 - ii) This is the Rescuing of the Hebrew people out of Slavery.
 - c) Then comes what "God expects of us"
 - i) This is the 10 commandments
 - ii) This is the building of the tabernacle
 - a) As we will learn, the Tabernacle shows *how* God is to be worshipped.
 - b) There are also wonderful "models" and "typologies" of Jesus hidden in the tabernacle.
11. Speaking of the "tabernacle", I also want to give a quick comment on the last 15 chapters of Exodus, that half to do with the construction of this portable "tabernacle" for the purposes of Worshipping God.
- a) One of my favorite comments on Exodus comes from Bible teacher Chuck Missler. He made a great comment about the movie "The Ten Commandments."

- i) “When Charleton Heston came off the mountain, he was carrying two tablets of stone showing the 10 commandments....
 - ii) ...If the movie was *really* accurate, Charleton Heston should have also had a set of blue-prints under his arm.”
 - b) As cute as that quote is, there is (or should be) some truth in that little story.
 - c) Chapters 25-40 of the Book of Exodus is about God giving Moses *detailed specifications* on building a portable structure for worshiping God, called “The Tabernacle”, and about the Israelites carrying out God’s instructions on its construction.
 - d) My question is why did God dedicate so much written space to the architectural specifications?
 - i) Unless you’re a construction foreman, the details are a little boring on the first read through.
 - ii) Wouldn’t it be much simpler to say “Moses and the Israelites built a portable worship structure (i.e. “the tabernacle”) and saved a lot of ink and paper?
 - iii) One of the great *joys* of studying Exodus is to discover why all the specific details are given.
 - a) Remember the New Testament rule that “The Volume of the Book speaks of Jesus”
 - b) When we get to these sections, we are going to discover how all those detailed specifications all point to Jesus in one fashion or another.
 - c) A lot of the details show how God wants us to worship Him.!
 - (1) Some commentators (who I agree with) show how the tabernacle is a model of our relationship with God.
 - iv) These are some of the great hidden truths studying “The Tabernacle”.
 - a) We’ll get to that as we approach those chapters.
12. As mentioned, Exodus is also the “home of the 10 commandments”. There are also a lot of interesting questions that are common for Christians that we will discuss in Exodus.
- a) Are Christians required to obey the 10 commandments?
 - b) What about the Sabbath? Should Christians keep the Sabbath?
 - c) Did Moses “really” part the Red Sea?
 - d) If Moses was next in-line to become Pharaoh (Chapter 1), why didn’t God just make Moses “Pharaoh” and simply give the command to *release* the Israelites?
 - e) After the Israelites cross the Red Sea and see all of God’s miracles, they disobey God’s commandments. How could they do that after seeing all that God did?
 - i) We’ll get into these answers as the weeks progress.
13. Next week we will cover Chapters 1-2.
- i) For those who want to do some extra reading,
 - a) Also read Book of Acts, Chapter 7, Verses 1-44.
 - b) This is Stephen’s commentary on Exodus and provides a lot of insights.
14. Let’s Pray: Father, we thank you for the wonderful lessons you are about to teach us through the Book of Exodus. Help us to not just see this book as a History Lesson, but as applications to our lives. Show us the things you want us to learn as we study your word. Guide us, and protect us, in Jesus name we pray, Amen.