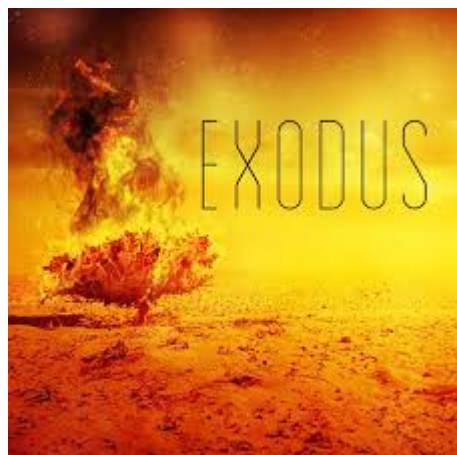


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Introduction to the Book of Exodus from a Messianic Jewish Perspective

*To my Uncle Dale and Aunt Pat Cain who have been a positive example to me my entire life. My Uncle Dale was a meat cutter who volunteered to pastor very small churches, built them up to where they could afford to hire a permanent pastor, and then he moved on to do it again. That was his ministry when he returned home from serving in World War II. My Aunt Pat is **a wife of noble character; her children arise and call her blessed (Proverbs 31)**.*



The Outline of Exodus

I have not organized the book in the traditional way. From **Exodus Ad - Slavery in Egypt** to **Eo - The Sh'khinah Glory Settled on Mount Sinai**, the book is in **chronological** order as you see it in the Bible. However, from **Ep - The Camp of the Twelve Tribes of Isra'el** to **Hh - The Glory of the LORD Filled the Tabernacle**, the book is organized in a **topical** manner (the Tabernacle, then the Levitical Priesthood, and then the Renewal of the Nation of Isra'el) because **Chapters 27 and 38** repeat themselves, and are historically out of order. Therefore, I have taken a different approach to the book so the reader is not jumping around trying to make sense of it all. As a result, the different Parashah (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy, to see link click Af - Parashah**), Haftarah and B'rit Chadashah readings are listed correctly in the **chronological** section, but they are out of order in the **topical** section, so the reader should keep this in mind when reading this commentary.

The Title of Exodus

Hebrew Scriptures name the book of **Exodus** differently than the NIV, the New American Standard, or any other Bible. The Jewish tradition is to call the names of the books by their first or second words. Therefore, the Hebrew name of this particular book is: **And these are the names of**, which are the first two Hebrew words.

Around 250 BC, a group of seventy Jewish scholars in Alexandria, **Egypt** translated the entire Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek, which was the common language of the day. This translation became known as the Septuagint, but they titled the book based upon its content, and named it **Exodus**, which means *to go out*. Thus, the English title comes from the Greek title.

The Author of Exodus

Both Scripture and tradition agree that **Moses** was the human author of **Exodus**. **God**, working through **Moses**, inspired **him** to write the first five books of the Bible, or the Pentateuch (**Exodus 17:14; Leviticus 1:1-2; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 1:1**). This was enough to satisfy most people in the synagogue and the church for centuries. **He** sat down and wrote the books of **Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers** and **Deuteronomy**. **He** was the human originator and source of these books; however, as far as **Genesis** is concerned **he** was a compiler and editor of eleven family documents because **he** was not an eyewitness of the events of **Genesis**. **He** had not been born yet, although **he** was an eyewitness to almost everything in **Exodus**, and all of **Leviticus, Numbers** and **Deuteronomy (Joshua 1:7; Matthew 8:4; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:29; John 7:19; Acts 26:22; Romans 10:19; First Corinthians 9:9; Second Corinthians 3:15)**. Therefore, there is a long list from both testaments declaring that **Moses** is the human author of the Torah, or the first five books of the TaNaKh, of which **Exodus** is a part.

The Theme of Exodus

The establishment of **God's** chosen people of **Isra'el** as a **kingdom of priests and a holy nation (19:6)** is the major theme of **Exodus**. The story is here told of: how **God** fulfilled one of **His** promises to **Abraham** by making **him very fruitful (1:7)**, how **God** freed **Isra'el** from **Egyptian** slavery, how **God** renewed the Abrahamic Covenant with **them** at Mount Sinai, and how **He** provided **them** with rules for life and worship. The story of **Exodus** is the story of how **God** bought back, or redeemed **His** people.¹

Egyptian History

The rulers of the Second Intermediate Period of **Egypt** were the Hyksos. They were a people of mixed Semitic-Asiatic descent and definitely not **Egyptian**. Because of their superior military technology, the Hyksos, using iron chariots and Asiatic bows, dominated **Egypt** for five hundred years. After conquering **Egypt**, the first thing they did was to invite other Semites into **the land of Egypt** to help them subdue **the** Hamitic **Egyptians**. They welcomed these fellow Semites with open arms and even gave them portions within **Egypt** to live. It was no accident that Joseph arose to power when the Semitic Hyksos controlled the country. Therefore, **the Hyksos** king, in keeping with this policy, gave **Joseph's** family the choice area of Goshen in which to live. However, gradually **the Egyptians** gained power and an **Egyptian** named Ahmose led a revolt against the Hyksos and overthrew them, and, in doing so, established the Eighteenth Dynasty. This was one of the most brilliant periods in **Egyptian** history. **Egypt** emerged as an international power and extended her influence beyond the Euphrates River. It was during the Eighteenth Dynasty that the events of **Exodus** took place. This was a time when a new wave of nationalism had supplanted the older Hyksos tolerance of foreigners. **The Egyptians** embarked on empire building as a means of defense, pushing their borders into Palestine. **The Egyptian** Pharaohs used the Hebrews as slave labor for building defense projects and royal palaces.² There were nine kings in the Eighteenth dynasty.

The first king was **Ahmose**. **He** led the revolt that expelled **the Hyksos** out of **Egypt** and was the first of whom came to be known as the Warrior Pharaohs. After **Ahmose** followed **them** into Canaan and destroyed them and their capital, **the Hyksos** faded into history. **He** had a brother named Kamose. Eventually there would also be an **Egyptian** king named Thutmose, so **mose** was the typical name of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

The next **Pharaoh** was **Amenhotep I**. **He** was the son of Ahmose, and made several raids into the land of Canaan, but **he** died childless.

The third **Pharaoh** of this dynasty was **Thutmose I**, who was the son-in-law of Ahmose. **He** was married twice. **He** produced a famous daughter, **Hatshepsut**, by the first marriage and a son, Thutmose II, by the second.

After **his** father died, **Thutmose II** became the fourth **Pharaoh**. **He** gave birth to a son, Thutmose III, who was about nine years old when **his** father, Thutmose II, died.

Technically, **Thutmose III** was the fifth **Pharaoh**. But because **he** was a young boy in the earlier years of **his** reign, the throne was actually controlled by Queen **Hatshepsut**. **He** was

her half-nephew and later would marry **her** daughter, but **he** *hated her with a passion*. **He** did not like the fact that **he** was under **her** control and **she** was the real power behind the throne. After **her** death, **he** liquidated the entire royal court in an attempt to obliterate **her** name from all the monuments in the land. All of **her** statues were smashed to pieces and **her** name was desecrated in such a way that it was as if **she** never existed. *In fact, anyone associated with her after her death was in danger of execution*. After killing those close to **her**, **he** invaded Canaan several times and put them totally under **Egyptian** rule. **He** was called the Napoleon of Ancient **Egypt**. **He** had three successive chief queens in **his** lifetime, and while **he** had a veritable flock of daughters, **he** only had five sons.

After **him** comes the sixth **Pharaoh**, **Amenhotep II**. **He** was the son of Thutmose III and **he** also made raids into Canaan. **He** experienced the ten plagues, including the death of **his** firstborn son and was **the Pharaoh of the Exodus**. **He** was not, however, the firstborn of Thutmose III's five sons, so **he** did not die on the night of the **Egyptian** Passover.

Amenhotep II's son, **Thutmose IV**, was the seventh **Pharaoh**. **He** was the second born son of Amenhotep II, and **his** older brother was killed on the night of **the Egyptian** Passover. Because **he** was not the firstborn son, **he** desperately tried to legitimize **his** position of **Pharaoh** and **his** right to rule over **Egypt** by inventing a story called *the Dream Stella*. **He** said that **the Egyptian** god Harem-akht appeared to **him** one night in a dream and promised that if **he** would uncover the Sphinx that was buried in the sand, **he** would become **Pharaoh**. That **he** did, so by uncovering and restoring the Sphinx, **he** claimed that the gods of **Egypt** gave **him** the right to rule. During the remainder of **his** reign, **Isra'el** was in **her** wilderness wanderings.

The eighth **Pharaoh** was **Amenhotep III**. **He** was a weak king and the son of Thutmose IV. During **his** rule, **Egypt** began to lose control over **the land** of Canaan, which is why **Joshua** begins **his** conquest of **the Promised Land**.

This decline continued under **his** son, **Amenhotep IV**, the ninth pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Later **he** changed **his** name to Akhnaton, meaning *the sun disk*, because **he** tried to change **Egypt's** religion and move to monotheism, the worship of only one god, *the sun disk*. This was met with much resistance and a civil war broke out. The result was that **Egypt** lost control over Canaan altogether. It was during **his** reign that we have the period of **the Judges**. So the Eighteenth Dynasty is crucial for an understanding of what is happening in **Exodus**.

Biblical History

The Book of **Genesis** is the history of the three patriarchs, **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**. **God** said to **them** on several occasions that to **them** and **their** descendants **He** would give **the Promised Land**. Therefore, the children of **Isra'el** were destined to possess Canaan. *The question then becomes:* Why did **God** have **the Jews** spend over four hundred years in **Egypt**? The Bible gives us two reasons.

First, because **the sin of the Amorites** had **not yet reached its full measure** (**Genesis 15:12-16**). YHVH does not punish a nation until its measure of sin is full because: **He is patient with them, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance** (**Second Peter 3:9b**). Secondly, **Isra'el** served **other gods** while **they** were in **Egypt** (**Joshua 24:14; Ezeki'el 20:5-10, 23:2-3, 8, 19, 21, 27**). Being involved in deliberate, active sin separates us from **the LORD** and can delay **His** acting on our behalf.

But **God** had told **the patriarchs** that **He** would bring **them** back again to **the Promised Land**. As **Jacob** prepared to leave the land of Canaan for **Egypt** he stopped at **Beersheba**, which was the southern most point of **the Promised Land**. But **Jacob** was reluctant. **He** had left **the Land** once before without **God's** blessing. Both **Abraham** and **Isaac** were told not to leave **the Land**, but to live in it where **God** would bless **them**. Would **Jacob** be out of **God's** blessing again if he left **the Land**? That night he offered sacrifices to **the God of his father Isaac**. And **God** spoke to **Isra'el** in a vision at night and said: **Jacob! Jacob!** He replied: **Here I am**. Then **God** said: **Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again** (**Genesis 46:1-4**). **ADONAI** promised to bring them back to **the Promised Land**.

As **Joseph** lay on his deathbed, he said: **I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the Land He promised in an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And Joseph made the sons of Isra'el swear an oath and said: God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place** (**Genesis 50:24-25**). Even before **the Egyptians** would make slaves of **them**, **the Jews** viewed **their** stay in **Egypt** as temporary. **Joseph** was so sure of this that he made **his descendants** swear an oath that **they** would carry **his bones** back to **the Promised Land** for his final resting place.

Lastly, the book of **Exodus** shows us the outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant. **God** had said to **Abraham**, **"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will**

curse” (Genesis 12:3a). Consequently, those who bless **Isra’el** are **blessed**, and those who curse **Isra’el** are **cursed**. As we go through the book of **Exodus**, we will find **the Israelites** coming in contact with various Gentile nations or tribes. Those who **bless the Jews** find themselves **blessed**, and those who **curse the Jews** find themselves **cursed**.

The Use of the Hebrew name ADONAI for YHVH

A basic problem in Judaism is that **God’s** personal name is never spoken. When **Moses** saw a bush that burned without being consumed in the wilderness of Midian, **God** revealed **Himself** to **Moshe** and told **him** **His** own personal name. That Hebrew name consists of four letters. It is forbidden to speak the four-letter name of **God**, **YHVH** (Yud-Hay-Vav-Hay), also known as the Tetragrammaton meaning *four-letter writing*. Today, **ADONAI** is a word that is commonly used by many people of the Jewish faith instead of **YHVH**, which simply means, *the Name*.

The Talmud (Pesachim 50a) made it a requirement not to pronounce the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of **God**, and this remains the rule in most modern Jewish settings. In deference to this tradition, which is unnecessary but harmless, I will be using **ADONAI** or **Ha’Shem** where **YHVH** is meant. In ancient times when the scribes were translating the Hebrew Scriptures, they revered the name of **YHVH** so much that they would use a quill to make one stroke of the name and then throw it away. Then they would make another stroke and throw that quill away until the name was completed. **His** name became so sacred to them that they started to substitute the phrase **the Name**, instead of writing or pronouncing **His Name**. Over centuries of doing this, the actual letters and pronunciation of **His Name** was lost. The closest we can come is **YHVH**, with no vowels. The pronunciation has been totally lost. Therefore, the name Yahweh is only a guess of what the original name sounded like. Both **ADONAI** and **Ha’Shem** are substitute names for **YHVH**. **ADONAI** is more of an affectionate name like *daddy*, while **Ha’Shem** is a more formal name like *sir*.

Therefore, God does not have many names, He has only one name - YHVH (Yud Hay Vav Hay). All the other names in the Bible describe His characteristics and His attributes. Hear, O Israel! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is One (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Jewish tradition, then, forbids the pronunciation of **the Divine Name**, and many choose to use **ADONAI** in its place.

The Use of the Hebrew word Torah rather than the Greek word Law

Most English translations use the word Law, from the Greek word *nomos*; however, those translations give the wrong idea for both interpretation and application of the Scriptures because *nomos* is not a correct rendering of the Hebrew word **Torah**. The legalistic element, which might rightly be called the Law, only represents one side of the **Torah**, which never has the perspective of **the Jews** in their history. To **the Jew**, the word **Torah** means a teaching or an instruction of any kind. As such, the true essence of **Torah** in the mind of **the Jew** is nothing more than teaching **the Way (Acts 9:2)**. The Hebrew word **Torah** is derived from the Hebrew root *yarah*, which means *to shoot an arrow or to teach*. **Torah** means teaching or instruction that is true and straight as if the words of **Torah** are shot in a direct path like an arrow, with power and force for living life to the fullest. Therefore, to give the most accurate translation possible, I will be using the Hebrew word **Torah** throughout this devotional commentary.

The Use of the Hebrew term TaNaKh

The Hebrew word **TaNaKh** is an acronym, based on the letters **T** (for “**Torah**”), **N** (for “**Neviim**,” the Prophets), and **K** (for “**Ketuvim**,” the Writings). In the word TaNaKh, both **A’s** are silent, and the **H** at the end is also silent. TaNaKh is simply the Jewish term for the Old Covenant Scriptures. As a result, I will be using the Hebrew acronym **TaNaKh** instead of the phrase, the Old Covenant, throughout this devotional commentary.

The Use of the Hebrew word Messiah and the Greek word Christ

Messianic synagogues, and the Jewish messianic community in general, prefer to use **the Messiah** that means *the Anointed One*. The Greek word **Christ** also means *the Anointed One*. I use both **Messiah** and **Christ** in this devotional commentary.

The Use of the Hebrew word Yeshua and the Greek word Jesus

Messianic synagogues, and the Jewish messianic community in general, prefer to use the Hebrew word **Yeshua** that means *Jesus*. Usually, I will be using both **Yeshua** and **Jesus**.

The Theology of Exodus

1. He is the God who exists. God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you”(3:14). **Exodus** never tries to prove

God's existence. **His** existence is assumed and the book goes on from there, but throughout the book there are constant references that **ADONAI** does exist.

2. He is the God who controls history. **ADONAI** said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go” (4:21). Why does **Pharaoh** act the way **he** acts at times? Why do nations do what they do? It is because **God** controls history. **The king's heart is in the hand of ADONAI; He directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases (Proverbs 21:1).**

3. He is the God who is holy. “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the palace where you are standing is holy ground” (3:5). The holiness of **God** will be brought out clearly in the book of **Exodus**. Even **the Jews** will be punished greatly when **they** violate **God's** holiness, and **His** righteous standards.

4. He is the God who remembers. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob (2:24 also see 3:16-17). **God** made certain promises to **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**, and although four hundred years had passed since those promises had been made, **His** promises are always kept no matter how long it may seem from the human perspective. When **He** fulfills **His** promises, **He** does so completely. We don't need to allegorize **God's** promises away. What **The LORD** has said, **He** will do.

5. He is the God of salvation. Sometimes the salvation is physical, like with the **Exodus** (3:7-9), and sometimes it is spiritual as **He** works in the life of **Moses**.

6. He is the God who speaks. Later, **the LORD** will say that **He** will do nothing until **He** first reveals it to **His** prophets. **YHVH** speaks and has made known to us **His** word. Fortunately for us, **God** has chosen to put what **He** has said in the Bible (3:4-22).

7. He is a God who will act in judgment. So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonder that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go (3:20 also see 4:22-23). **ADONAI** will act in judgment eventually, but **He** will be long suffering. Therefore, everyone who receives the judgment of **God** deserves it. The opportunity of repentance is always available until death.

8. He is a God of law. **YHVH** is not one who is chaotic, but **He** is a **God** of order, and if we love him - we will keep His commandments. As we go through the portions of **the Torah** contained in the book of **Exodus**, we will see that **His** commandments serve as a

blueprint for living, not to attain salvation, but as a rule of life for those who have already been saved by **God's** grace (**Chapters 20 to 23**).

9. He is the God who lives among His people. Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God (29:45). The reason that the Tabernacle needed to be built was within **the Most Holy Place**. **God** would live as the Sh'khinah glory, or the visible manifestation of **God**. Today, **God** has chosen a different way to live among **His** people. Now **He** lives among **His** people by means of the indwelling of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh**; but, **God** has always lived among **His** people.

10. He is a God whose anger may be turned aside. After the sin of the golden calf, **God** was ready to annihilate the entire nation with the exception of **Moses**. **ADONAI** said that for **Moses'** sake **He** would make a completely new nation, but **Moshe** interceded for the nation even to the point of offering **himself** as a substitute for it, and because of the intercession of **Moses**, **God's** anger was turned aside (**32:9-14**).

11. He is a God who transcends. **He** said: **But you cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live (33:20)**. Although **God** has spoken to mankind, (both verbally and in written form), and has become visible in various forms (as a man, an angel, a cloud, as fire, and as thunder), yet no one is able to see **God** in **His** full glory because the sinfulness of man would kill him. So while **the LORD** is as near as our breath, **He** is also very far from us.

The Importance of Exodus

It is also important in five other areas. First, it is important historically because it tells us how **Isra'el** became a nation, and how the **Torah** was given to **Moshe**. Secondly, it is important religiously because it gives us the origin of many **Jewish** practices such as the Passover. Thirdly, it is important from a dispensational standpoint because **Exodus** gives us a transition from the Dispensation of Promise (**Genesis 12:1 to Exodus 18:27**), to the Dispensation of **Torah** (**Exodus 19:1 to Acts 1:26**). Fourthly, it is important as a type, because the Passover Lamb (**Exodus 12:1-28; John 1:29, 1:36 and Revelation 5:6**), the **Manna** (**Exodus 16:1-36; John 6:35, 6:48 and 6:51**), the **Rock** (**Exodus 17:5-7; Matthew 7:24-25; Romans 9:33; First Corinthians 10:4; First Peter 2:8**) and the **Tabernacle** (**Exodus 25:1 to 31:18; 35:1 to 40:38 and John 1:14**) are types of **Christ**. Fifthly, it is important spiritually because while the events happening in **Exodus** are historically true, they contain spiritual lessons for believers today. In **First Corinthians 10:1-13**, Rabbi Sha'ul makes several references to **Israel's** wilderness wanderings in the

book of **Exodus**, but in **verse 6** he says: **Now these things occurred as examples, to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.** Therefore, the story of **Exodus** was not just for **the Jews** of old, but there are spiritual lessons for us today.

Genesis is the book of beginnings; Exodus shows the giving of the Torah and exit from Egypt.