



Reading of the book of Exodus

DID YOU KNOW ?

- 1- The book of Exodus is a perfect illustration of the selective nature of the biblical accounts. For instance, the first chapter does not mention the name of Pharaoh. However, it identifies the two Jewish midwives by name (Ex. 1:15).
- 2- After summarizing three and a half centuries in a few verses (Ex. 1-2), the book of Exodus devotes chapters 3 to 40 to the events happening in a single year. While Genesis recounts the life of several characters, Exodus focuses on one: Moses.
- 3- Pharaoh ruled Egypt at its golden age, using slaves to build great monuments while imposing his laws through an army of powerful men of war. The Egyptian writing represents the word “foreigner” by a slave with a bleeding wound on her head: this is the image of the oppression that the Israelites had experienced (Ex. 1:6-14; 6:9).
- 4- Moses seriously doubted his leadership qualities to the point of resisting God. Being a man staggering at the beginning (Ex. 3:11, 13; 4:10, 13), Moses' personality developed later to the point of becoming one of the most charismatic leaders in history.
- 5- The expression “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob” or “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Ex.3:6) recalls the promise that God had made to these three individuals (Ge. 12:1-3, 7; Ge. 25:3-6; Ge. 28:3-4, 13-14).
- 6- The first time God revealed his name, “Yawehh,” it was to Moses (Ex. 3:15, 6:2,6).
- 7- God had used the ten plagues as a means of exercising His judgment against the gods of the Egyptians (Ex. 12:12). Many scholars think that each plague corresponds to an attack against an Egyptian idol. Thus, they believe that the plague of the Nile water turning to blood was an attack against the god of water, the plague of flies against the worship of the sacred fly, the plague of darkness against the sun god, Ra, and the plague of livestock pestilence against the sacred bull.
- 8- God had commanded Israel to offer only the firstborn male offspring of animals for sacrifice (Ex. 3:2). It was a symbol of Jesus, the firstborn of Mary, who was offered as a sacrifice for the sin of mankind.
- 9- In Exodus 15, Moses celebrates in his hymn the event after which this book was named: the “Exodus” from Egypt, during which a large number of slaves had escaped from the most powerful civilization on earth. The psalmists celebrated this event continuously with hymns (Ps. 78:105), and even the prophets later referred to the Exodus to awaken the consciousness of their nation.

- 10- Moses was 80 years old and his brother Aaron, 83 years old, when God used them to deliver the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex. 7:7).
- 11- The word “manna” literally means “what is it?”, an expression reminiscent of the first reaction of the Israelites when they discovered it (Ex. 16:15).
- 12- The 10 commandments mentioned in this chapter and in Deuteronomy 5 form the very foundation of morality and stand out from the other laws of the day. The New Testament will take up all these commandments except the fourth one: Remember the day of rest to keep it holy (Ex. 20:8).
- 13- The ten (10) plagues that God had sent on Egypt are the following: Water turning into blood (Ex.7:14-25); Frogs (Ex.7:26-8:11); Lice (Ex.8:12-15); Poisonous flies (Ex.8:16-28); Mortality of Egyptian animals (Ex.9:1-7); Boils on both human beings and animals (Ex.9:8-12); Hail in the fields (Ex.9:13-35); Locusts (Ex.10:1-20); Darkness over Egypt (Ex.10:21-29); The death of the firstborn human and animal (Ex.11:1-10).
- 14- Pharaoh’s heart was hardened mainly so that the glory of God could be manifested in the midst of the Egyptians and His name could be known throughout the whole earth (Ex.10:2). Thus, his heart remained hardened during the first nine (9) plagues on Egypt (Ex. 7:22, 8:11, 15:28; 9:7, 12, 35; 10:20, 27).
- 15- Pharaoh wanted to let the people of Israel go to the Ninth Plague, but without their cattle. Moses categorically rejected this proposal, because, according to him, the people had to leave with everything that belonged to them (Ex. 10:24-27).
- 16- The Passover sacrifice consisted of a lamb or a young goat of one year old without defect, unleavened bread and herbs that the people were to eat for 7 days. And the people were to celebrate this feast in honor of the Lord who had spared them from the plague of the death of the firstborn “Egyptians” (Ex. 12: 5-27).
- 17- When the Israelites left the land of Egypt, there were non-Israelites who also went up with them (Ex.12:38).
- 18- Only circumcised people could eat the Passover meal. The Non-Israelites who wanted to participate had to be circumcised first (Ex.12: 43-49).
- 19- Moses took with him the bones of Joseph who was buried in the land of Egypt as Joseph had asked his brothers before his death (Ex. 13:19).
- 20- And when the children of Israel came to Marah, they were thirsty; but the water of Marah was bitter. God commanded Moses to cast a wood into the water to make it sweet so that the people could drink (Ex. 15:23-25).
- 21- The LORD is my banner (Yahweh-Nissi) means that God is the banner of his people. He is the one with whom victory is possible (Ex. 17:15).

- 22- The first four (4) of the ten (10) commandments describe the responsibility of the Israelites towards God; while the last six (6) define the moral responsibility of the Israelites among themselves.
- 23- When the children of Israel or Jacob arrived in Egypt, they were a group of nomads. But a stay of 400 years in an advanced civilization enabled them to master the arts and crafts of that civilization. Later, when God asked them to make sacred objects (Ex. 25:8-9), they were able to make use of all the techniques they had learned, although God also endowed some skilled workers with special abilities to do certain jobs.
- 24- God Himself gave Moses the plan for building His tabernacle. He insisted on the fact that Moses had to build it like the pattern He would show him (Ex.25:9). Moreover, He had filled certain individuals with His Spirit so that they could invent, work with silver and bronze to carry out all kinds of works related to the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex. 31:1-6).
- 25- For the construction of the Tabernacle, God asked the children of Israel to bring a voluntary offering (Ex. 25:1-7; 35:5, 21). However, the children of Israel reacted with such enthusiasm that Moses was obliged to prevent them from bringing more (Ex. 36:5-6).
- 26- According to some commentators, the description of the Tabernacle is the greatest subject in the Bible in terms of the number of chapters (Ex. 25 to 40). The Israelites united around a common goal: the construction of the Tabernacle of God.
- 27- Orthodox Jews continue to faithfully observe the Day of Atonement as described in Exodus 30:10. It is known as “Yom Kippur”. But the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament gives a new interpretation to this period. It was a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ (He. 8:5; 10:3; Col. 2:17).
- 28- The Tabernacle was for the Jews not a mere symbol, but the very reality of God's presence in their midst. It was the only place of worship for 300 years until the Temple was built. Later, the New Testament took up this image by stating that believers were “the tabernacle” or the temple of God (1 Co. 3:16-17).