

The book of Exodus is part of the law or “Torah” and is most known for the same-named event. There is much about Israel and about Moses in the book, but Exodus is primarily about God, which is evident from the summary in Nehemiah 9:5-26. Certain truths about the book of Exodus are important to understand in order to get the most we can out of the book, and hence, a better understanding about God and what He wants for us.

I. *We need to know that Exodus is part of a greater whole.*

1. There is ample evidence that Exodus is not a stand-alone book:
 - a. Like other historical books it begins with “and” indicating the author’s awareness of a continuing historical record.
 - b. Exodus begins with numerous allusions to Genesis. (Cf. 1:15 with Genesis 46:8-27; 1:6 with Genesis 50:26; 1:7 with Genesis 1:28; 13:16; 15:5; 17:2, 6; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14.)
 - c. Exodus assumes knowledge of what had happened in Genesis, e.g. 1:8.
 - d. The intent of God in Exodus 3:8 to bring them into the promised land requires reading beyond Exodus.
2. It is therefore necessary to look beyond the book of Exodus to understand the significance of the book. An important clue is found in 2:24, that God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Genesis 15 reports a significant event and promises with regard to the people being in Egypt and their deliverance out of Egypt.
 - a. God promised Abram that he would have a vast number of descendants. Cf. Exodus 1:7.
 - b. God warned that Abram’s descendants will be strangers in a country not their own.
 - c. God warned that they would be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.
 - d. God promised to punish the nation they served as slaves, i.e., in the plagues against Egypt.
 - e. God promised that they would come out with great possessions. Cf. Exodus 12:32-38.
 - f. God promised to give them the land of Canaan. See Exodus 6:4-8 for this and other fulfillments.
3. The book of Exodus reveals the LORD as a faithful God who keeps His promises, going back to the account of the Fall (cf. Gen 3:15) and continuing through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It anticipates the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless the nations through Abraham’s seed, that is, through Jesus Christ.

II. *We need to know that law and ritual, as given in Exodus, were never intended as a solution for the sin problem.*

1. We must look beyond Exodus to enrich our understanding of the purpose of law and ritual, a large portion of the book.
2. Deuteronomy 30 reveals that God knew and had planned for the failure of Israel to keep the law and the inadequacy of ritual to help. Verse 6 reveals His solution, that He would circumcise their hearts.
3. The new covenant which was anticipated in Deuteronomy 30 is foretold in Jeremiah 31:31ff. God must change the heart. The way of salvation had not changed between Abraham and Moses, nor between Moses and Paul. Salvation has always been by grace through faith. Cf. Genesis 15:6.

III. *We need to know that types and figures, which run throughout Exodus, are part of God’s sovereign plan to reveal truth.*

Although accepting types and figures as part of God’s scheme of revelation may be challenging to some and abused by others, it is never-the-less presented as such in the Bible.

1. There are various examples from Exodus and the Pentateuch which affirm this, such as Moses picturing a future Prophet, the Passover lamb picturing Christ, the firstfruits, etc.
2. We should rightly exercise caution on how we see types and figures in Exodus and other parts of the Old Testament. It is not a denial of historicity. Our temporal and cultural distance makes it challenging. But even narratives may have a greater sense than just the historic event.
3. Although a challenge, this should reveal to us that God is sovereign, all-knowing and all-powerful.

He not only directs events but uses it to foreshadow His future actions. He prescribed rituals for their needs and to benefit future generations. The reference to Old Testament events and practices were no accident or merely convenient illustration, but divinely intended analogies.

God is sovereign, and we need to see that beyond the surface events in Exodus. We need to constantly ask what this book is revealing about God.

Exodus reveals God as holy, transcendent, unapproachable by man, and a jealous God. But it also reveals Him as compassionate and faithful, revealing Himself to man, and choosing to dwell among His people. Exodus, carefully understood, will give us a bigger and better understanding of God.