

Author: Moses (1526 B.C. – 1406 B.C.)
Dates Written: Between 1446 and 1406 B.C.
Commentary by David A. DeWitt

Outline



Introduction

Exodus is the second book of Moses, in what is traditionally called the Torah (Hebrew for “Law”) or the Pentateuch (Greek for “Five Books”)—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Hebrew title *וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת* (*Weleh Shemot*) *And these are the names* is the same as the first two Hebrew words of the book, a phrase that also occurs in Genesis 46:8. All of the books of the Pentateuch are titled this way (using the first words of the book) and, at least in the case of Exodus, it does not seem that Moses meant them to describe the content or theme of the book. The fact that the book begins with the conjunction *And* emphasizes its connection to Genesis as a continuation of the history developed by the same author.

Author

Although there is always some “scholar” who delights in challenging the clear message of the Bible, there is no reasonable way to deny the Mosaic authorship of Exodus.

- **Joshua 8:31** *just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses...*
- **Exodus 17:14** *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this in a book as a memorial...”*
- **Exodus 24:4** *Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.*
- **Exodus 34:27** *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”*
- **Deuteronomy 31:24** *...Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete.*
- **Deuteronomy 31:25–26** *...that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, “Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD...”*
- **1 Kings 2:3** *Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn.*

- **Nehemiah 8:1** ...they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel...
- **Nehemiah 8:7–8** ...the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.
- **Nehemiah 13:1** On that day they read aloud from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people.
- **Mark 12:26** ...have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him...
- **Luke 24:44** ...all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”
- **Acts 28:23** When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

The phrase *the law of Moses* occurs 22 times in the Bible, the phrase *books of Moses* occurs an additional 5 times.

Internal evidence reveals that the author was a man like Moses. One might ask, “Who else might have written this? What other candidates are a reasonable alternative to Moses?” Consider:

- The author was highly educated in the ways of the Egyptians and the Hebrews.
- The author was proficient in both the Hebrew and Egyptian languages (Acts 7:22).
- The author was a long-time resident of Egypt. For example, he was acquainted with the growth cycle of flax, barley, wheat, and rye in the Golan Delta of lower Egypt (Exodus 9:31–32).
- The author knew details only available to an eye witness (Exodus 15:27).

Why Is Exodus Written in the Third Person?

One question to be addressed in regard to the Mosaic authorship is, “If Moses wrote the book, why did he write in the third person, “Moses did thus and so,” rather than, “I did thus and so”? Here are some suggestions, all of which probably have some merit.

1. Moses was not writing a diary or his memoirs. He was writing history, as God had commanded him.
2. It is reasonable to suppose that Moses dictated the text to a chronicler, who recorded it in the third person. It was apparently common to use an unnamed chronicler to record information (1 Chronicles 29:29; Nehemiah 12:32; Esther 2:23; 6:1; 10:2).
3. Actually, nearly all of the Old Testament is written in the third person. Only Ezekiel, some of the Psalms and parts of the Song of Solomon seem to be in the first person. So writing in the third person was an accepted style, apparently begun by Moses.

Conclusion

It seems that the Old Testament was written by a primary author like, in this case, Moses, in other cases, Joshua, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, and so forth. Prophets like Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29) also supplied information which was organized and written down by a chronicler. Finally, some clarifications were made by Ezra and the Levites in the 400s B.C. (Nehemiah 8:7–8). This gives us the Hebrew Bible, the TNK [Torah (Law)–Nevi’im (Prophets)–Ketuvim (writings/Psalms, etc.)] known to us as the Old Testament.

Significance

The bottom line is that God superintended the process so that what we have in the original languages is the verbally-inspired, inerrant Word of God. Paul wrote, *All Scripture is God-breathed* (2 Timothy 3:16–17), and, referring to the Old Testament, Jesus said, “*until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished*” (Matthew 5:18).

Dating the Exodus

The date for the writing of the book of Exodus hinges on the date of the Exodus itself. Overwhelming evidence supports the Exodus for Egypt occurring around 1446 B.C. during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (1450–1425).

But first we shall look at a common theory that the Exodus was later, around 1290, during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II. Ramses II was born 1303 and died in 1213 at the age of 90. He reigned 1279–1213 (ages 24–90), for 66 years. Ramses II was one of the longest reigning Pharaohs, so it is assumed his influence was great. Since Exodus 1:11 says that the Israelites were forced to build the storage cities of Pithom and Rameses, the assumption is the city of Rameses was named by Rameses II after himself. Since archeological evidence suggests the city was built in the late 1300s to the early 1200s, it is assumed that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, making the date of the Exodus around 1290.

There are two problems with the later date:

1. The first problem, or set of problems, stems from the fact that the city of Rameses was built before Moses was born (Exodus 1:11), and Moses was 80 years old at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 7:7). Rameses II reigned for 66 years. He had to be Pharaoh before Moses’ birth because the city of Rameses was so named in Exodus 1 before Moses’ birth in Exodus 2. Even if Rameses II became Pharaoh the day Moses was born, he would have died 14 years before the Exodus [80-66=14]. Another way to look at it is, if Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, as they claim, since he reigned for 66 years and Moses was 80, the city of Rameses would have to be built and named at least 14 years before Rameses II became Pharaoh.
2. There are other good explanations for the city being named Rameses in Exodus 1:11:
 - (a) The word “Rameses” means “begotten of Ra,” the sun god. Since sun worship was common in Egypt, it is likely the word “Rameses” was also common. It is more likely both the city and the Pharaoh were named after Ra, the sun god of Egypt.
 - (b) It is also possible that the name Rameses was not the original name of the city mentioned in Exodus 1:11, but was a later name of the city, and *Ezra the scribe* (Nehemiah 8:1) being inspired by God to do so, used the later name when he and the Levites were *translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading* (Nehemiah 8:8). For example, this was also done with the city of *Dan* in Genesis 14:14, when the city was not named Dan until the tribe of Dan migrated there many years later.

Some also say that archeological evidence does not show a complex civilization existing in the area Israel conquered, or the destruction of the cities Israel captured as having happened in the 1400s. But there are many explanations for that. Most of these were nomadic people and Bedouins, not those who built substantial cities. They maintained military control over these areas by sending out raiding armies, not by building stout fortresses there. Also, several cities like Lachish, Debir, and Hazor were conquered in Joshua’s time and later at the time of the judges. So archeological evidence does not eliminate the Israelites invading the Transjordan and the land of Canaan earlier, in the 1400s.

Determining the Year of the Exodus

1 Kings 6:1 Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

The fourth year of Solomon's reign was 966 B.C. [known by simply adding up the ages of the kings]. $966 + 480 = 1446$ B.C. **being the year of the Exodus.**

Also, Judges 11:26 says that Israel had been in the land for *three hundred years*. This was at the time of Jephthah (about 1100). Adding the 40 years in the wilderness and if it took 6 years to conquer *Heshbon, Aroer, and the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon*, we would reach the same date [1100 B.C. + $300 + 40 + 6 = 1446$ B.C. **as the time of the Exodus.**]

History Surrounding the Exodus

Between when Joseph came to Egypt in about 1876 ($1446+430$ in Egypt = 1876) and the birth of Moses in 1526 ($1446 + 80$, Moses' age at the Exodus = 1526), Egypt fell into the hands of the Hyksos. The Hyksos were a Semitic-Asiatic people who, with iron chariots and Asiatic bows, dominated Egypt for about 150 years (about 1850–1600). The Hyksos were tolerant of immigrants, including the Hebrews. But around 1600, the prince of Thebes rebelled, and by 1576, Egypt was returned to the Egyptian Pharaohs, under Ahmose I of Thebes. His new empire of power and influence extended the borders beyond the Euphrates River. But, unlike the Hyksos, the new empire was one of nationalism and empire-building, rejecting new immigrants and making slaves of the ones already there, including the Hebrews.

[A personal note: I have done my best to calculate the dates I have given here. As I mentioned, we can easily calculate the date of the Exodus from 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26. That tells us the dates of Joseph at the time when the Israelites entered Egypt, the Exodus, and the dates for the birth and death of Moses. The dates of the pharaohs come from secular sources who do not all agree with the Biblical dates, or each other.]

Who was Hatshepsut (about 1508–1458), and is she the one who took the baby Moses from the Nile?

Ahmose I was succeeded by his son Amenhotep I and Moses was born near the end of his reign. Amenhotep I was succeeded by Thutmose II, who died young. So, for all practical purposes, Amenhotep I was succeeded by his famous daughter, Hatshepsut. Here's the story.

Beginning in 1478, Queen Hatshepsut reigned over Egypt for more than 20 years. She served as queen alongside her husband, Thutmose II, but after his death, claimed the role of pharaoh while acting as regent to her step-son, Thutmose III. She reigned peaceably, building temples and monuments, resulting in the flourishing of Egypt. After her death, Thutmose III erased her inscriptions and tried to eradicate her memory [<https://www.biography.com/people/hatshepsut-9331094>].



During Hatshepsut's brilliant reign [which began at age 30 and lasted 20 years until her death at age 50 (1478–1458)], Egypt experienced prosperity. It is often taught that Hatshepsut was the princess who took Moses from the Nile. But if the traditional dates are correct, Moses was born 18 years before Hatshepsut. So she could not be the one who took baby Moses from the Nile. Moses would have known Hatshepsut, however. Both grew up in Pharaoh's court. She would be 22 when Moses left at age 40, and ruled Egypt during his absence. After her death, Thutmose III ruled Egypt as a dictator, trying to remove all knowledge of, and influence of, Hatshepsut. If the

archeologist's dates are correct, Thutmose III died in 1450, four years before Moses returned in 1446 (Exodus 4:19).

Thutmose III was succeeded by Amenhotep II (reigned 1450–1425, some say until 1400). Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, who forced the Hebrews to make bricks without straw, went through the ten plagues, watched his oldest son die during the Passover and his army drown in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:28; 15:4).

After that, Amenhotep II suffered military defeats, and Egypt was comparatively weak, undoubtedly because much of his army was killed in the Red Sea. In 1525, he was succeeded by his son Thutmose IV, but he was not the oldest son, because his oldest son was killed on the night of the first Passover (Exodus 12:29).

Summary

- **Joseph** came to Egypt in about 1876 B.C.
- **Hyksos** ruled Egypt about 150 years (about 1850–1600), possibly beginning before Joseph died.
- **Ahmose I** of Thebes, after a rebellion, returned Egypt to a rule of Egyptian Pharaohs (in about 1576).
- **Amenhotep I, Thutmose I, and Thutmose II** succeeded Ahmose I.
- **Moses** left Egypt for Midian in 1486 and returned for the Exodus in 1446.
- **Princess Hatshepsut** was the wife of Thutmose II, step-mother of, and co-reigned (about 1478–1458) with, the boy-king Thutmose III.
- **Thutmose III** became a dictator when Hatshepsut died. Both ruled Egypt while Moses was in Midian.
- **Amenhotep II** (1450–1425, some say until 1400) succeeded Thutmose III four years before Moses returned and was the Pharaoh of the Exodus in 1446 B.C.

Leaving: Chapters 1–19

In Egypt: Chapters 1–13

Chapter 1

Verses 1–7

The first seven verses give the same information as listed in Genesis 35:22–26 and 46:27. This links the books together and strongly suggests the same author. The comment in verse 5, *All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number*, refers to the 66 people mentioned in Genesis 46:26 + Jacob + Joseph (*who was already in Egypt*), + Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Of course, the total number including the wives of Jacob's sons, his grandchildren, and their spouses would be much greater.



Verse 7 tells us that *the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them*. The “Ryrie Study Bible” clarifies: “The census at Sinai (Num. 1) showed 603,000 males 20 years and older. If they represented about 1/4 of the total population, then the Israelites numbered some 2,000,000 people.”

Verses 8–10

Most likely, the *new king who arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph*, was Ahmose I, the first pharaoh after the Hyksos were overthrown. The pharaoh's concern was about three connected issues:

- (1) The number of Israelites was increasing rapidly.
- (2) The possibility of them joining their enemies in the case of war.
- (3) The end result, which was the same fear as the pharaoh of the Exodus, that they would *depart from the land*.

It seems that the Egyptian economy had become dependent on the presence of the Israelites.

Verses 11–22

Pharaoh tried three things to limit the numerical growth of the Hebrews.

- (1) Pharaoh gave his people the job of assigning taskmasters to make their lives miserable. But the people continued to multiply.
- (2) Pharaoh himself ordered the midwives to kill the boy babies. Apparently, this was to be done secretly. That didn't work either because the midwives refused to do it.
- (3) Pharaoh openly commanded everyone, saying all Hebrew boy babies were to be drowned in the Nile. And that introduces chapter two.

Did God reward the midwives for lying to Pharaoh?

Shiphrah and Puah were midwives responsible for the delivery of the Hebrew babies. Rather than doing all the deliveries themselves, it is likely they were head midwives in charge of groups of midwives because of the size of the Hebrew nation. Whichever was the case, Pharaoh held them responsible, and they seem to have given a false statement to Pharaoh. Of course, God rewarded them for saving the lives of Hebrew children, not for lying to Pharaoh. But the question remains, why didn't He punish the midwives for lying? Note:

- We should not conclude that life-preserving is always greater than truth-telling because that would not be the case if you, say, lied to a terrorist saying you or your family are not Christians when you are, in order to save your lives.
- We should not conclude that because God did not condemn lying we should not either. God can do many things we cannot do—for example: destroy, get revenge, judge, be jealous, seek His own glory. Not every right thing is right for everybody. It is good for me to discipline my children. That does not mean it is good for my children to discipline me. It is right for governments to judge, punish, and execute capital punishment. None of those things are right for me.
- We should not conclude that lying is right. Truth is an attribute of God, and Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44).
- We should not conclude that this event somehow gives us permission to use deception. Even if deception is morally permissible under certain conditions, say, to preserve a life, it is highly unlikely you will ever encounter such a situation. Say someone breaks into your house and all you have is an unloaded gun and you threaten to shoot the intruder. Even if that's okay, it's never going to happen to hardly any of us. So, it would be highly unlikely that you will ever encounter a situation where deception is appropriate.

Application: God does not reward lying. But God does condemn killing babies. Abortion on demand, killing babies in the womb simply because the mother does not want to be pregnant, is just plain murder.

Chapter 2

Verses 1-4

The father of Moses was Amram, who married his father's sister, his aunt Jochebed (6:18–20). They were descendants of Levi, probably including some ancestors not mentioned in chapter 6. Amram and Jochebed had two other children before Moses, his sister Miriam (15:20) and his brother Aaron (6:20). Aaron was 3 years older than Moses (7:7). Moses was a baby without defects. The Hebrew טוב (*tob*) is the common word for *good*. Jochebed managed to hide him for three months, but then she put him in a basket (the same word for “ark”) out of papyrus reeds, coated with tar and pitch, and set it in the Nile among the reeds, while Miriam watched the basket.



Verses 5-10

Here we see another example of free will and the sovereignty of God. God preserved Moses by having him discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, nurtured by his own mother, while growing up and being educated in courts of Pharaoh for 40 years. And the whole scheme of him being discovered by the princess, and Miriam being there to suggest Moses' own mother as a wet nurse, was seemingly planned by Jochebed.

We are told Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses, but we do not know his original name.

Verses 11-15

The event here took place 40 years after the previous paragraph (Acts 7:22). Moses clearly was very proficient in both the Hebrew and Egyptian languages. When he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he killed the Egyptian and buried his body, but the next day when trying to separate two Hebrews in a similar situation, he realized his killing was known. When Pharaoh heard of it, Moses fled to the land of Midian.

Was Moses guilty of murder? How did God see this event?

Notice:

- There was nothing wrong with Moses' sense of justice.
- There was nothing wrong with protecting the downtrodden.
- There was nothing wrong with taking a stand for his own people against the Egyptians.
- The killing of the Egyptian was never condemned by God.

We do not know if the Hebrew's life was in danger. If so, Moses was taking a life to save a life. Nevertheless, if he allowed the Egyptian to live, surely the matter would get back to Pharaoh.

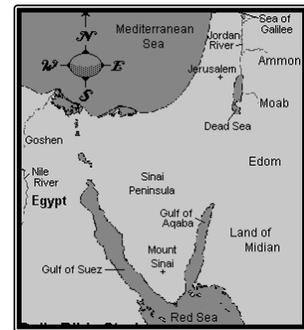
The wrong in Moses' act was:

- (1) He was not the government and did not have the legal right to kill someone.
- (2) Moses acted impetuously, without a directive from God.

But we might also note that God not only did not condemn the act, but He chose Moses, not any of the individuals or elders of the Israelites, to lead His people out. God chose the person who took a stand for what He was doing, long before God called him to do it.

Verses 16–22

Moses fled to Midian, the area east of the Gulf of Aqaba, today's western Saudi Arabia, then inhabited by the descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham by his second wife Keturah (Genesis 25:1–6). The priest of the area was a man named Reuel, also called Jethro (3:1; 18:1). He seems to have believed in the true God (18:10–11). Moses encountered Reuel's seven daughters trying to water their flock but contending with some shepherds who were trying to drive them away. Moses helped the young women as he did the Hebrew in Egypt, except nobody got killed. The daughters told their father Reuel, who not only invited Moses to stay but over time gave him his daughter Zipporah as a wife, who bore Moses two sons, first Gershom and later Eliezer (18:4). It's interesting that we never hear of Moses' family after the Exodus, except that Reuel returns them to Moses.



Pharaoh Thutmose III died in 1450, four years before Moses returned in 1446 (v. 23). Thutmose III was succeeded by Amenhotep II (reigned 1450–1425, some say until 1400). Amenhotep II was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

The statements God *heard...remembered...saw...and took notice*, do not mean God didn't notice before, but that now was His time to move the Israelites out of Egypt.

Application: “Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God” (William Cary). Today, God is building His church through evangelism and discipleship. Look at your gifts, abilities, desires, current role and life situation. Stop waiting for some mystical call of God and take a stand, make a move, do something.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

The location of Horeb/Mount Sinai/ the mountain of God

The significance of the location of Horeb is that it dictates the location of the Exodus.

Although there is still a debate over which particular mountain was Horeb, there is evidence that shows that it was not the traditional site at the bottom



of the Sinai Peninsula but a mountain on the east side of the middle of the Gulf of Aqaba. We shall deal with this more thoroughly in chapter 13, but there are a few facts we should consider here. There is the clear evidence, in Exodus 3:1, that the mountain where *Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian* is in Midian not the Sinai Peninsula:



- *The mountain of God* was on the west side, literally *the back side* of the wilderness, which was the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba. It is unreasonable to suppose Moses would go all the way around the Gulf of Aqaba and take his sheep to a sandy desert area at the tip of the Sinai Peninsula.
- After killing the Egyptian, Exodus 2:15 tells us Moses fled from Egypt to Midian. The Bible has multiple references to Moses being told to *go back to Egypt* (4:19) from Midian. If the traditional site were true, Moses would already be in Egypt.
- The Apostle Paul made the comment, *Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia* (Galatians 4:25). Paul's understanding of Arabia would be consistent with the Old Testament references to Arabia, which is the region east of the Gulf of Aqaba (2 Chronicles 9:14; Isaiah 21:13; Jeremiah 25:24; and Ezekiel 27:21). This was not a barren desert land, as is the Sinai Peninsula but an area from which *all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon* (2 Chronicles 9:14).

Verses 2-6

The angel of the Lord, who appeared in the flame of the burning bush, identified Himself as *the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*. So the angel (literally *messenger*) of the Lord was a theophany (a manifestation of God). Since *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him* (John 1:18), and Jesus called Himself *I am* (John 8:58), we can assume revelations like the burning bush are a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (See 16:7-14; 21:17-21; 22:11-18; 31:11, 13; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8.) Also, the fact that *the angel of the Lord* does not appear after the incarnation of Christ is evidence that these are a pre-incarnate manifestation of the second person of the Godhead, whom we know as Jesus. The voice from the bush was not a created angel because they do not receive worship (Revelation 19:10; 22:8). This voice commanded it (v. 5), as He did with Joshua (Joshua 5:15).

Verses 7-9

As in 2:25, the Lord took notice of *the afflictions of My people who are in Egypt*. He said He was going to bring them to a good land, described as *spacious land* and one *flowing with milk and honey*. These metaphoric expressions are described in Deuteronomy 11:10-12 as

a land flowing with milk and honey...not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. But...a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year.



Verses 10–15

The second thing emphasized in this paragraph is Moses' commission to go to pharaoh. The purpose was clear and simply stated: *so that you may bring my people, the sons of Israel, out of the land of Egypt*. Notice that, although God was going to do it, He also told Moses *you will do it*. This is followed by five objections from Moses, each countered by God.

This paragraph gives us Moses' **first two objections** to his commission:

1. Moses claimed he lacked the ability to lead them out. God's response was, "*Certainly I will be with you.*" It is unclear why God called it a sign, but Moses was given the directive to bring the Israelites to *this mountain*.
2. Moses claimed he lacked the authority to lead them out. Moses wanted to know, when the Israelites asked about God, "*What is His name?*" *what shall I say to them?* God responded with the basic verb יהיה (*hayah*), *to be* or *to come to pass*. The name יהוה (*Yahweh*) for God occurs 6,823 times in the Old Testament and is basically the "to be" verb. It declares God to be self-identified, self-existent, self-sufficient, and eternal, *I am who I am*. There is no better one-word description of God than יהוה (*Yahweh*), *I Am*.

Verses 16–22

God then told Moses to *Go gather the elders of Israel together* and tell them the God of their father *has appeared to me*. This is a strong verification that Moses is speaking to God the Son because He is the one who appeared to their forefathers (John 1:18; 8:58). God predicted the elders of Israel will (literally) *hear your voice*, but Pharaoh would not. Nonetheless, God said pharaoh will let them go *under compulsion* (literally, *by a strong hand*) and the women will voluntarily be given silver and gold and clothing.

Application: Our leading of God should be an application of the Bible, not mystical feelings or coincidental circumstances. There is nothing in the Bible that tells us to look for the leading of God through circumstances or mysticism. For Moses, the personal leading of God was clear, verbal, and miraculous. God did not lead people personally through a circumstantial puzzle of coincidental events they had to figure out. His leading was an obvious, miraculous (contrary-to-nature) event, given in words that could be clearly understood. **Do what Moses did, follow the Word of God.**

Chapter 4

Verses 1–9

The first paragraph of chapter four has Moses' **third objection** to God's commission:

3. *What if they will not believe me...they may say, "the Lord has not appeared to you."* It seems that God had not appeared to anyone for 430 years. So, God gave Moses two miraculous (contrary-to-nature) signs: Moses' staff became a serpent, then a staff again when Moses picked it up, and Moses' hand became leprous and then clean again. God said Moses would

be able to give these signs to the Israelites, plus he added a third, that the water of the Nile would become blood when Moses poured it out on the ground.

Verses 10–12

Here we have Moses' **fourth objection** to God's commission:

4. (Literally) *I am not a man of words...recently or in time past*. He added, (literally) *I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue*. It is not clear what Moses was referring to. As Steven said: *Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds* (Acts 7:22). It may be that Moses did not think he was clever enough to give a response when challenged. It may also be that Moses had a speech impediment such as stuttering.

God's response is revealing. He said, "*Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?*" With no apology or explanation, God claimed direct involvement in making people, *mute or deaf, or seeing or blind*. We can only conclude that whatever physical condition a person is born with, it is God's making. The point for Moses is, "*I will...teach you what to say.*"

Verses 13–17

Then Moses gave his **fifth objection** without stating any reason for it.

5. He said, (literally) "*send please with your hand whom you will send.*" The implication is, "anybody but me." For the first time, we see that *the anger of the Lord burned against Moses*. Since Moses added no reasons for his fifth objection, God's response dealt with Moses' fourth objection. God said Moses' brother Aaron could speak for him because he speaks well (literally *because he speaks to speak*). This would be evidence favoring the theory that Moses had a speech impediment. The arrangement is that Aaron would speak to the people, but God would speak to Moses, who would be *as God* [literally אֱלֹהִים (*elohim*) sovereign] to Aaron.

Verses 18–23

Moses left the burning bush at the foot of Mount Horeb and returned to his father-in-law, who gave him permission to leave and go back to Egypt. Then God gave Moses a summary prophecy of what was going to happen in Egypt:

- Moses would perform the wonders God gave him.
- God would harden Pharaoh's heart, so he would not let the Israelites go.
- God would kill Pharaoh's firstborn son.

Verses 24–26

Because Moses had neglected the command God gave Abraham, *every man child among you shall be circumcised* (Genesis 17:10), God sought to kill Moses. The type of death God threatened is only a matter of speculation, but when Zipporah, seemingly reluctantly, circumcised her son, God let him alone. This was probably when Moses sent his family back to Jethro (18:2–3).

Verses 27–31

Next, we learn that Aaron received a verbal message from God, "*Go meet Moses in the wilderness.*" Presumably, God also told Aaron to meet Moses at the base of Mount Horeb/Sinai, since that's where they met. Then they went back to Goshen in Egypt and presented the message and the signs God gave Moses to the elders and the people believed them.

Application: There is something we need to always keep in mind. We did not determine the manner of our birth. We did not determine our sex, our race, our mental or physical condition, handicaps, the country or century we were born into. All that was decided by God for His own reasons and for His own glory. None of that, including our abilities or handicaps, was an accident.

Chapter 5

Verses 1–21

The official command, *Let My people go* (the word for “let” is an imperative), to Pharaoh was for the Israelites to go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword (v. 3). The idea that God would punish the Israelites with pestilence or with the sword was not, as far as we know, a part of God’s original directive. The communication that the goal was to go three days’ journey and do a sacrifice, seem to imply they would return, although they didn’t say that. Pharaoh knew about many gods, but he did not know יהוה (*Yahweh*). Then he added (literally) *and also I will not send Israel*.



After Moses and Aaron, probably Moses through Aaron, repeated the request, Pharaoh accused them of drawing the people away from their labors. Apparently, to discourage Moses and Aaron from making any more such requests and to set the people against them, Pharaoh demanded the same quantity of bricks, but they had to gather their own straw. It seems that Pharaoh’s idea was that people *are lazy* when they have free time. Also, the easiest way for an autocratic dictator to maintain control is by instilling fear in his people.

There are two other kinds of leaders mentioned here:

- The taskmasters who were Egyptians assigned to administrate the affairs of the Hebrews
 - The foremen who were Israelites assigned to govern the work of their fellow Hebrews (v. 14)
- The latter were the ones beaten when the allotment of bricks was not completed. This served to set the Hebrew foremen against Moses and Aaron (v. 21).

Verses 22–23

Then Moses returned to the Lord, apparently in prayer, with three complaints:

1. *Why have You brought harm to this people?* Notice that, although he recognized that it was Pharaoh who harmed the people, Moses put the responsibility where it truly was—on God.
2. *Why did You ever send me?* Moses is back to the fact that he didn’t want to be there in the first place.
3. *You have not delivered Your people at all.* Moses is focused on the product, where God is also interested in the process.

Application: Understand—with God the process is as important as the product. And that process may cause His people to suffer. And that suffering will only be good for God’s people when His people want what God wants.

Chapter 6

Verses 1–13

Next, God told Moses, “*Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh.*” God would soon force the actions of the world’s most powerful dictator, even when that dictator defiantly opposed God’s direction. The point: nobody successfully opposes the plan of God.

In **verse 2**, we read that אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*) the sovereign God of the universe, said, “*I AM*” (the word implies “I Myself Am”) the LORD [יְהוָה (*Yahweh*)]. This declaration occurs four times (verses 2, 6, 7, and 8).

Verse 3 has a surprising statement. God said, “*I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty* [אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם (*El Shadi*)], *but by My name, LORD* [יְהוָה (*Yahweh, I AM*)], *I did not make Myself known to them.*” But the name יְהוָה (*Yahweh, NASB=LORD, KJV=JEHOVAH*) occurs throughout Genesis, and we are told Abraham called on יְהוָה (*Yahweh*) in Genesis 13:4. Ryrie suggests, “The name Yahweh was known to the patriarchs (Gen. 13:4), but its significance as the One who would redeem Israel from Egyptian bondage was not known until this time” (“Ryrie Study Bible”).

Possibly. But I suggest a more likely answer is that God only *appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty* [אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם (*El Shadi*)]. But he appeared to Moses, at the burning bush, with the name יְהוָה (*Yahweh*), for the first time. Moses then knew God by that name, and after this, all of Israel knew God by that name. So when Moses wrote Genesis, he simply called God by the name which he and Israel knew. Usually, in Genesis, Moses used both names יְהוָה (*Yahweh*) אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), *The LORD God*. This indicated Moses was the first one who knew אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*) by the name יְהוָה (*Yahweh*), thus confirming Moses as the author of Genesis.

In **verse 4**, God reminded Moses, “*I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned.*” Writing for the “New York Times,” April 5, 2016, David Brooks pointed out an interesting distinction between a contract and a covenant:

When we go out and do a deal, we make a contract. When we are situated within something it is because we have made a covenant. A contract protects interests...but a covenant protects relationships. A covenant exists between people who understand they are part of one another. It involves a vow to serve the relationship that is sealed by love: Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people (nytimes.com).

Brooks makes the point that one reason for the chaos in our high-tech world is we begin with contracts with no covenant to build upon. Using Brooks’ terminology, on Mount Sinai, God made a contract with Israel, known as the Mosaic Law. We usually call it a conditional covenant. But with Abraham, God made an unconditional covenant. We tend to make contracts in business, but we have a covenant with our family and fellow believers. Whether or not Brooks’ application is correct, it’s better to begin with a covenant relationship, as God did with Abraham.

In **verses 6–9**, Moses is told to go to *the sons of Israel* with this message, *but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage*. Now, their circumstances dictated their response.

In **verses 10–13**, Moses presented the idea if Israel will not listen, then surely Pharaoh will not listen. After which, Moses fell back on his old argument, *I am unskilled in speech*.

Verses 14–27

Next, Moses inserted a genealogy, most likely for the purpose of showing the lineage of himself and Aaron, thus qualifying them as legitimate representatives of the nation Israel.

Verses 28–30

Here, once again, God told Moses to *speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak to you*. And once again Moses fell back on his old argument, “Behold, I am unskilled in speech.”

Application: God told Moses, “I established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan.” God began His delivery of His people with a message of being faithful to His own covenant. Later, He would build the Law on top of that. God’s relationship with Israel, however, was not based on a legal contract but on a covenant relationship. Similarly, we come to God through a relationship with His Son Jesus Christ, then we obey Him by keeping His laws for us. **Always base your obedience to God on your covenant relationship with God, never reverse that and base your relationship with God on your obedience.**

Chapter 7

Verses 1–7

The plagues begin. In this paragraph God told Moses three things:

1. Moses would be *as God* [אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*), *sovereign*] to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. Aaron would get no revelation about the plagues from God, but he would pass along Moses’ revelation. So, Aaron would function as a prophet, declaring the Word of God.
2. Pharaoh would not listen to Moses because God had *hardened Pharaoh’s heart*.
3. The purpose of all this was not to convince Pharaoh of anything, but that *the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord* [יְהוָה (*Yahweh*)]. And clearly, that all of us throughout all of history would know that He is the Lord. [Chart from “Ryrie Study Bible.”]

THE TEN PLAGUES			
SCRIPTURE	PLAGUE	ISRAEL EXEMPT?	EGYPTIAN GODS INVOLVED
1. 7:14-24	Nile River to Blood	No	Hapi—spirit of the Nile Khnum—guardian of the Nile
2. 7:25-8:15	Frogs	No	Hegt—form of a frog Hapi—spirit of the Nile
3. 8:16-19	Swarms of Lice/Gnats	No	Uncertain: perhaps attack on Egyptian priests
4. 8:20-32	Flies	Yes	Uatchit—a god who manifested himself as a fly
5. 9:1-7	Disease on the Cattle	Yes	Apis bull revered; Sacred bulls and cows Ptah, Mnrvs, Hathor
6. 9:8-12	Boils/Sores on Man and Animal	Yes	Sekhmet—goddess with power to heal. Serapis—healing god
7. 9:13-35	Destruction of Crops and Cattle by Hail	Yes	Seth—protector of crops Nut—sky goddess
8. 10:1-20	Destruction of Crops by Locusts	Yes	Isis—goddess of life Seth—protector of crops
9. 10:21-29	Darkness	Yes	Re—sun god. Atum—god of setting sun.
10. 11:1-12:36	Death of the Firstborn	Yes—If blood properly applied	Osiris—giver of life Pharaoh also was considered deity

The paragraph ends telling us Moses was 80 and Aaron was 83 years-old at the time the plagues began. The plagues seem to have begun at the time the Nile usually flooded in July or August. The 7th plague was in January, the time of year when barley and flax ripen. The plagues ended at the time of the Passover in the spring.

Verses 8–13

What is interesting about this first miracle, Moses' staff becoming a serpent, is that God knew Pharaoh's magicians had a trick where they could do this also, either by sleight-of-hand or demonic powers. This whole procedure was all about hardening Pharaoh's heart. Then Moses' serpent ate up theirs. The word for *serpent* here is not the same as in 4:3. This word can mean *dragon* or *monster*. Ryrie suggests this "may indicate a monstrous snake, or possibly a crocodile."

Verses 14–25

The First Plague—The Nile and its tributaries turning to blood, killing its fish. The Egyptian magicians were able to give small amounts of water the appearance of blood, further hardening Pharaoh's heart. One would think it would be better if they could reverse the plague, rather than add to it. Several gods were seen to be protectors of the Nile and its fish, all of whom were insulted by this plague. This plague also affected the Israelites.



Chapter 7 ends telling us the plague lasted 7 days. This is the only plague where we are told how long it lasted.

Application: Never look to any other supernatural or mystical force (such as fortune cookies, the horoscopes, or your lucky shirt, cap, rabbit's foot or whatever) for anything. Stop all the mystical nonsense. The purpose of the plagues was so the Egyptians would know that יהוה (Yahweh), the God of Israel, is the true God. The gods of the Nile and its fish were useless to stop the plague, because, like all mysticism, they did not really exist.

Chapter 8

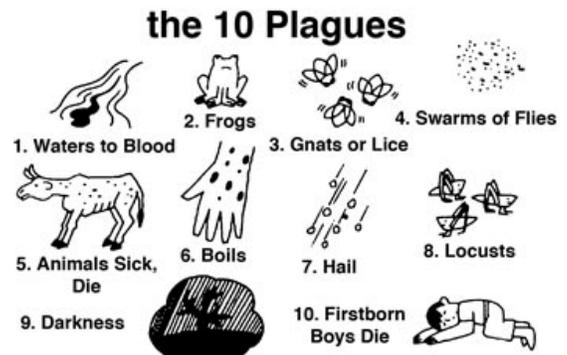
Verses 1–15

The Second Plague—Frogs

Ryrie tells us that frogs "regularly appeared in abundance after the Nile receded in mid-December and were a symbol of fertility." So this plague also mocked the Egyptian mystical understanding of frogs representing fertility. It should be noted that the comments about the Egyptian gods being insulted is only a speculation, not an interpretation, since the text never mentions it. Again, the magicians were of no help, they could only make more frogs appear.

In **verse 9**, Moses gave Pharaoh the option of ending the plague whenever he wanted by agreeing to let Israel go.

In **verse 15**, when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the LORD had said. Have you ever prayed and asked God for relief from a problem, then when relief comes, you forget all about it coming from God? As soon as Pharaoh had relief, he went back to a hard heart. And all of this was just as God predicted. This second plague also impacted the Israelites.



Verses 16–19

The Third Plague—Flying biting insects like lice, gnats, or possibly mosquitoes
The Hebrew word here for insects [*כְּנִיּוֹת* (*kenim*)] occurs only here in the Old Testament. Unlike plagues #1 and #2, this one came without being introduced. This is also true of the 6th and 9th plagues. For the first time, the magicians could not duplicate something like it and told Pharaoh *this is the finger of God*, which is a common reference to the work of God (31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10; Psalm 8:3). In the gospels, the finger of God is compared to the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20). Nonetheless, *Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said*. This plague was the last one that also affected Israel.

Verses 20–32

The Fourth Plague—Literally, *swarms*, probably flies which left a painful bite
Verses 20–24 begin with God repeating His command through Moses, “*Let My people go that they may serve me.*” We also learn for the first time that the land of Goshen, the Nile Delta area where the Israelites lived, was spared. God told Pharaoh it was to *put a division between My people and your people*.

In verses 25–32, Pharaoh offered Moses two compromises. First, that they have their sacrifice within the land of Egypt. Moses rejected this, saying it would offend the Egyptians. This may be because they considered the bull to be a sacred representation of the god Apis and the cow a sacred representation of the god Hathor. Moses accepts Pharaoh’s second compromise that *you shall not go very far away*. But when the swarms of insects went away, Pharaoh *did not let the people go*. We should observe that at no time did God give Moses the authority to accept any compromise. In the end, it did not matter because God was in the process of hardening Pharaoh’s heart, for the Passover.

Application: When you are suffering, remember that God’s people suffer along with the world, but only up to a point. The people of God, believers who have received Christ (John 1:12), suffer from the world’s sins, living among those who insist on accepting LGBT lifestyles, abortion, Christian-hating rhetoric in the media, persecution of its missionaries, evolution and progressivism being taught to their children. But before the judgment of the upcoming tribulation (Matthew 24, Revelation 6–18), God will *put a division between My people and your people* (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

Chapter 9

Verses 1–7

The Fifth Plague—Cattle disease
The fifth plague was introduced to Pharaoh with the description that there would be *pestilence on your livestock which are in the field* (v. 3), but not among the sons of Israel. Then *the Lord set a definite time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land”* (v. 5).

Verses 8–12

The Sixth Plague—Boils and sores on people and animals
This plague, like the 3rd and 9th, was not announced to Pharaoh, but it was in the sight of Pharaoh. Moses, in obedience to God, took dust from a furnace, threw it toward the sky, and it became boils and sores *on man and beast*.



The question is, “How should we explain the presence of beasts here and the livestock in verses 20–21, if *all the livestock of Egypt died* (v. 6)?” Two suggestions are made:

1. Verse 3 describes *pestilence on your livestock which are in the field*. So possibly it did not affect the livestock in the pens or shelters.
2. Possibly a better suggestion is that the Hebrew word *all* [כֹּל (*kol*)] is used hyperbolically, not mathematically. Although *all* [כֹּל (*kol*)] in some contexts can mean every one mathematically, it is also often used as a hyperbolic figure of speech. For example, Psalm 143:5 reads *...I meditate on all your doings*. Well, probably the psalmist did not meditate on every last one of God’s *doings*. Proverbs 14:23, *in all labor there is profit*. The idea is that labor is profitable, not that every single act of labor will always yield a profit. The context determines the meaning.

Verses 13–35

The Seventh Plague—The destruction of crops and cattle by hail

When God told Moses to announce this plague, *a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now* (v. 18), He added a significant statement of purpose. God told Pharaoh why he is still alive: (1) *in order to show you My power and* (2) *in order to proclaim My name through all the earth*. This gives us one reason why God does what He does, to proclaim His power and His name throughout the earth, even to unbelievers.

Apparently, there were some Egyptians who believed in God. *The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses*. Probably they were Egyptians who lived among the Israelites in Goshen (v. 26).

In **verse 27**, when he experienced the force of the hail, Pharaoh said, *“I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one.”* This sounds like a repentance and belief in God, but it wasn’t (9:30; 34–35). Just because someone confesses their sin and fear of God does not make them a believer. Only belief makes one a believer.

Verses 31–32 tell us that the author was acquainted with the details of the growing seasons in Egypt as, of course, Moses was, having grown up there.

Application: Do not teach that God will ultimately fix the world but that God will ultimately proclaim Himself to the people of the world, and not just for their salvation, but that they may be forced to know His power and His name *through all the earth*. That was one of the purposes for Israel, the church, and here His plagues before Pharaoh.

Chapter 10

Verses 1–20

In the first two verses, God told Moses more about His purpose in all of this. God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to *perform these signs of Mine among them*, in order to give the Israelites an opportunity to tell their children and grandchildren how God "*made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the LORD.*" The knowledge of God was not to be had by seeing signs but by hearing testimony about the signs from parents and grandparents. Isn't it interesting that God considered the testimony of witnesses to be a better path to faith than the repetition of miracles?



The Eighth Plague—Destruction of crops by locusts

In **verse 3**, God asked Pharaoh, "*How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?*" That's an interesting question, given the fact that God repeatedly told Moses that He had hardened Pharaoh's heart making it impossible for him to humble himself. Pharaoh had the responsibility to do what God had prevented him from doing. Again, God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are both real and both true.

Verses 4–6 tell us the locust plague devastated what remained of the Egyptian economy. The previous plagues had not destroyed the wheat and spelt (9:32), fruit (10:15), and some of the field vegetation (10:12, 15). The locusts would finish that destruction. Ryrie tells us that locusts are:

One of the most destructive of creatures. A swarm may have an average density of 130,000,000 locusts per square mile. They can denude hundreds of square miles quickly, bringing horror, despair, and terrible economic consequences to the inhabitants.

Verses 7–11 tell us that Pharaoh's servants encouraged him to let the Israelites go, probably meaning everyone knew the cause of the plagues. But Pharaoh came up with another compromise, to let only the men go.

In **verses 12–20**, God responded by unleashing the locusts on Egypt. When Pharaoh saw the destruction, he said for the second time that he had sinned. But as soon as the locusts left, *the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go.*

Verses 21–29

The Ninth Plague—Darkness

Without an announcement to Pharaoh, God instructed Moses, and he *stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days.* Pharaoh tried a final compromise, that the Israelite's flocks and herds remain in Egypt. Moses refused, but the one thing they agreed on was they would never see one another again. They were both wrong. God would soon tell Moses to go to Pharaoh one more time.

Application: We should not teach our children to expect to see God do miraculous signs. We should tell our children about the ones God did long ago, as they are recorded in the Bible. God said, “*I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson*” (10:1–2).

Chapter 11

Verses 1–10

In verses 1–3, we learn *the LORD said to Moses, “One more plague I will bring on Pharaoh and on Egypt.”* Up to this point, Moses did not know how many plagues God would bring upon Egypt. Before the last plague, God told the Israelite women to ask articles of gold and silver from their neighbors. This they received because the Israelites were *greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt*. Some of this gold was later donated for the building of many parts of the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. Of course, it was also used to build the idolatrous golden calf.

The Tenth Plague Announced—Death of the firstborn

In verses 4–8, the final plague is announced to Moses who announced it to Pharaoh. *And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.*

Verses 9–10 are a summary of the situation:

- God declared the reason Pharaoh would not listen is so God’s wonders could be seen in Egypt.
- Moses and Aaron performed wonders before Pharaoh.
- The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart.
- Pharaoh continued to refuse to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

Application: If God’s people are serving Him in a godly manner, they will find favor, even among unbelievers. This, of course, does not mean all unbelievers will like all believers, but if unbelievers, in general, don’t like you, you are probably not living a godly testimony.

Chapter 12

Verses 1–14

The first 14 verses of chapter 12 describe Israel’s most significant feast—the Passover. In verses 1–2, God told Moses that this would be *the first month of the year to you*. The month was Abib (13:4, our March-April). Abib is the Canaanite name for “ear” as in the grain was in the ear. Later it was given the Babylonian name, Nisan (Nehemiah 2:1). The civil year began in the fall at Tishri (our September-October), but the religious year would now begin in the spring with the Passover.

The instructions for the Passover include seven directives:

1. On the tenth of the month of Abib, they were to take a lamb into the house, or one for several households, *according to what each man should eat*. It must be:
 - Unblemished
 - A year old
 - Male
 - A sheep or goat
 - Kept until the 14th day of the month
2. At twilight on the 14th *the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight*.
3. *They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it*.
4. *They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire...not raw or boiled*
5. *They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs*.
6. *Whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire*.
7. *You shall eat it...with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste*.



The Passover is a portrait of the death of Christ. It may be the main reason God brought the plagues to Egypt was to establish the Passover. It was the most significant of all Israel's celebrations, since it foreshadowed the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. Consider:

- Jesus was called our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7).
- Jesus was the lamb of God (John 1:29).
- Jesus was a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19).
- Jesus had to be killed (John 12:27; Hebrews 9:22).
- We need to be sprinkled with His blood, as it was sprinkled on the doorposts (1 Peter 1:20).

Verses 15–20

This paragraph describes the festival that followed the Passover—the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These two are so closely related that they are sometimes called the same festival (Ezekiel 45:21; Luke 22:1, 7ff). Beginning on the evening of the Passover, the next seven days were the Feast of Unleavened Bread. During this time, Israelites were to eat “massot,” unleavened cakes made without yeast. The reason was to celebrate leaving Egypt, *since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves* (v. 39). Yeast was to be removed from each house to indicate that they were to be sinless and pure, in order to begin a sojourn with God.

Verses 21–51

In this paragraph, we read that Moses repeated God's instructions about the Passover to the elders of Israel, who obviously passed them along to the heads of the families. The lamb was to be killed and some blood applied to the doorposts and lintel (the horizontal piece above the door). The instruction included the use of hyssop. Hyssop is a plant with hairy leaves used as a brush, not just here but also for purification from leprosy (Leviticus 14:2–7), purification after the plague (Leviticus 14:49–52), and in sacrificing the red heifer (Numbers 19:2–6).

The *destroyer* of **verse 23** is not identified, but He is an agent of God, not Satan. It may be an angel, but the discussion in Hebrews 11:26–28 may indicate it was the pre-incarnate Christ (as in Genesis 16:9).

In **verses 24–28**, we have the instruction that this is to be a memorial used to instruct the next generations about God’s Passover. It is to be distinguished from the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which was for the covering of the sins of the nation for another year. The Passover ceremony throughout the years was not to re-accomplish the passing over of the destroyer, but to remember that one-time act.

In **verses 29–34**, we read about God carrying out the consequences of not applying the blood of the Passover. Notice that all the firstborn died, whether they knew about God’s prescribed Passover or not. Ignorance of the commands of God did not save anyone. People and animals, who were innocent of Pharaoh’s sins, were killed because of them. For example, people brought up under Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism may be innocent of choosing to believe as they were taught. But that will not keep them from the wrath of God. If they have not applied the blood of Christ, the destroyer will not pass over them (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

Verses 35–36 tell us that the Israelites plundered the Egyptians by requesting and receiving *gold, silver, and clothing*, apparently including shoes, all of which lasted 40 years (Deuteronomy 8:4; Nehemiah 9:21). God used the world’s goods to clothe His people as well as to build His tabernacle.

Verses 37–39 tell us that the Israelites began to move out of Rameses in Goshen. There were 600,000 men. The Israelites plus some Gentiles, either some Egyptians or other slaves, made up a *mixed multitude*, who later caused trouble (Numbers 11:4–6). The actual number of Israelite men was 603,550, twenty years old and upward (Exodus 38:26; Numbers 1:46). The Exodus was probably between two and two-and-one-half million altogether, the greatest mass-migration in all of history (and secular historians ignore it completely).

In **verses 40–42**, we are told, *And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt*. There is much discussion about resolving the number 430 years here and in Galatians 3:17, with the number of years give as 400 years in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6. Most suggest different starting and ending points for the dating. Possibly. More likely the 400 is an approximate number, as the 600,000 men is an approximate number, and the 430 is an exact number.

In **verses 43–51**, we have the final instructions concerning the Passover. Gentiles and slaves were not to eat of it unless they were circumcised first. The meal was to be eaten in the home. There is also an interesting statement about the sacrificed lamb, *nor are you to break any bone of it*. At Jesus’ crucifixion, when the legs of the convicts were broken, but Jesus’ legs were not, John made the observation: *For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken* (John 19:36 KJV). This is further evidence that the Passover was a picture of what Christ would accomplish.

Application: Remember Christ’s death as a Passover, not an atonement. Christ is our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7), and we remember it with Communion (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25). We do not re-crucify Christ as an atonement. We should remember His death, as an act of worship—a Passover that once for all paid for our sin, not an atonement, which is a covering that needs repeating (Hebrews 10:11–14).