

Life Lessons
Introducing Exodus

Introduction

What does it mean when you see an "exit" sign over the door? It means "Here is a way out of the building." Today we're starting to study the second book of the Bible--the Book of Exodus. Can anyone guess what the name "Exodus" means? It means "going out." It sounds a little like the word "exit" doesn't it?

The book of Exodus is about the children of Israel and how they "went out" of Egypt.

Things to Know About Exodus

God wrote the book of Exodus, of course, but he used a man named Moses to write down the words. Moses also wrote Genesis and several other books that we will be learning about. Moses is one of the main characters in the book of Exodus. He was right there when most of the things he wrote about happened. And plenty of exciting things happen in the book of Exodus!

There are three main parts to the book. The first part is *the exodus*, telling about the journey from Egypt to the promised land. The second part is the *ordinances, or laws*. In this part God gives the Israelites (and us too) rules to live by. The most famous set of rules in the world is in this part of Exodus. Can anyone tell me what they are? The Ten Commandments. The third part of the book is about *the tabernacle*, or tent-church God had the Israelites build. Each part of it was to teach the Israelites (and us) about Jesus, the Messiah God promised would come.

The Story

Do you remember what happened at the end of the book of Genesis? There was a great famine in the land, and Jacob, his sons, and their families went to live in Egypt. Joseph took care of them there and fed them with the grain he had stored up in the seven prosperous years before

the great famine. They were treated with respect because they were related to Joseph, the second- most important man in all of Egypt.

Years passed, and Jacob died. So did Joseph and his brothers. Their children and grandchildren lived on there in Egypt. They spent about 400 years in Egypt. The Lord blessed them, and they grew to be, not just a family, but a nation. They became known as "The Children of Israel" or the "Israelites." Sometimes they are called "Hebrews."

After a while, people forgot about Joseph. A new Pharaoh, or king, came to power. He didn't know Joseph, and he was worried about all the Israelites in his kingdom.

"Soon there will be more of them than there are of us," he said. "If one of our enemies attacked us, and the Israelites sided with them, we'd be sunk."

So the Egyptians tried to get rid of the Israelites. They made them slaves and gave them very hard tasks to do. They were given the job of making bricks and building treasure cities for Pharaoh. The taskmasters treated them roughly, beating them when they didn't work hard or fast enough.

God was taking care of His people, though. In spite of their harsh treatment, the Israelites prospered.

Pharaoh decided stronger measures were needed.

"Every time one of the Israelite women have a baby," he told his people, "Throw it in the river and let it drown. Girls are okay, they can live. But all the boy babies must die."

What a horrible, cruel, command! The people were miserable working at their hard tasks, and heart-broken over the death of their babies. They cried to God to have mercy and deliver them from their troubles.

God heard, and He planned a very special way to free His people from the bondage of the

Egyptians. That's what we'll be learning about in our lesson about Exodus.

The Life Lesson

Sometimes it seems that things are hard for us, too. Sad things happen and bad things happen. Remember that God saw how badly the Israelites were treated. He was there to help them. He hasn't forgotten you, either!

Review Questions

1. What is the second book of the Bible?

Exodus

2. What does the word *Exodus* mean?

Exit, or Going Out

3. Where did God's people live at the beginning of Exodus?

In Egypt.

4. What are the three parts of the book of Exodus?

The Exodus, the law, and the tabernacle.

5. What famous set of rules is in the book of Exodus?

The Ten Commandments.

6. Who wrote down the book of Exodus?

Moses.

7. What are some names for the nation that grew from Jacob's family?

The Children of Israel, Israelites, Hebrews, Jews

8. Why were the Israelites living in Egypt?

Because Jacob's family moved there during the great famine in order to have food.

9. How long were the Israelites in Egypt?

About 400 years.

10. Why did the Egyptians decide they didn't want the Israelites there?

Because they had become so big, the Egyptians were afraid they would take over the land.

11. How did the Pharaoh try to get the Israelites under control?

He made them slaves.

12. What horrible command did Pharaoh make to stop the Israelite people from getting larger?

He ordered all the baby boys to be thrown in the river.