

Theology of the Book of Exodus

Now that we have studied the book of Exodus in-depth, it is time to summarize its theology. "Theology" properly means the study of "God" (*theos* in Greek), but broadly speaking "theology" is often used to refer to anything the Bible teaches.

First, we emphatically declare that we are able to discuss a "theology" of Exodus. See the chapter on "Theology of the Book of Genesis." Here, we simply continue our consideration of Exodus as we did Genesis.

Second, we acknowledge that the major divisions of "theology" came along much later than Moses, as well as the people whose lives are recorded in Exodus: theology, anthropology, hamartiology, etc. Surely Moses did not think in these terms, but if we combine all the verses which mention the Holy Spirit ("pneumatology"), then we'll know all that Exodus has to say on that subject.

Finally, once we put all 66 books of the Bible together, we learn that the theme of the entire Bible is "The salvation of man through Jesus Christ to the glory of God." Below is how Exodus contributes to that broad theme.

Theology:

Exodus is about God. The English word "God" is found 147 times in the book. The plural form of the Hebrew word for God (*elohim*) is found 139 times. "Jehovah" is found 408 times in Exodus. God's name is important to His person, His nature, and His works: 3:14; see also 33:19; 34:5-7. Besides these two dominant names for God, there are a few others:

"God of Israel" (5:1; 24:10; 32:27; 34:23)

"God of the Hebrews" (3:18; 5:3; 7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3)

"Master" (which is often translated "LORD" or "Jehovah"; 4:10, 13; 5:22; 15:17; 34:9)

"God Almighty" (6:3; the only use of "Almighty" in Exodus)

"Strength" (15:2)

"Song" (15:2)

"Salvation" (15:2)

"My God" (15:2)

"My father's God" (15:2)

"Jealous" (34:14)

Consider the attributes of God which are revealed in Exodus.

God is "good" (1:20; 33:19). He cannot do anything that is wrong or evil. It is outside of His nature.

Where God is, is "holy," because *He* is holy (3:5; 15:11, 13, 17; 19:12-13). This means that God is distinct from human beings *ontologically*. That is, God is *morally* distinct from humans; He is pure and holy. Humans are impure and unholy. Also, God is *physically* distinct from humans; He is inherent spirit. Humans are physical with a spiritual nature.

God is "awesome" (15:11), a word related to "fear" so that it denotes *inspiring* fear. Man responds to God with fear, as we will note below under "worship." God must be honored by man: 14:4, 17-18. The verb "to honor" can also mean "to harden," by which it is used in reference to Pharaoh: 8:15, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1 (see below under "Hamartiology"). The same verb is used relative to parents: 20:12. Israel is forbidden to curse God: 22:28. Because God is to be honored, He deserves the first fruits of the harvest as well as the firstborn: 22:29-30; 23:19. The expression "glory of the Lord" is found 6 times in Exodus: 16:7, 10; 24:16-17; 40:34-35.

God expresses "loving kindness" (15:13) which we translate as "loving loyalty." The word is used four times in Exodus: 20:6; 34:6-7. Related to that "loving kindness" is God's willingness to "forgive:" 34:7. Pharaoh believes he can receive forgiveness from the God of the Hebrews: 10:17. But the justice of God (see further, below) does not require Him to forgive: 23:21. The work of the priests will "take away" ("forgive") the iniquity of Israel: 28:38. See below under "Community." Moses asks God to "forgive" Israel's idolatry: 32:32. Related to God's "loving kindness" is His jealousy, for He desires the affections of the humans He created

in His image to live in His presence: 20:5; 34:14. The former verse is among the Ten Commandments in the context of idol worship. God deserves to be loved in return: 20:6.

God created both humans (4:11) and the world. God also communicates extensively with His people. He or His angel is the subject of the verb “to say” or “to speak” 98 times.

As a part of this creation by divine word, God also actively performs powerful works. He is the subject of action verbs numerous times. For example, God “delivers” (3:8; 5:23). In contrast to the book of Genesis, Exodus is full of miracles. “Miracle” is found in 3:20; 34:10 but there are many miracles performed by the God of heaven, often but not exclusively through Moses with his staff: 4:17, 20 (the phrase “staff of God” is only used twice); 4:2, 4, 17, 20; 7:9-10, 12, 15, 17, 19-20; 8:5, 16-17; 9:23; 10:13; 14:16; 17:5, 9. God’s power is closely associated with His name: 9:16. Sixteen times in Exodus, Jehovah states “I am the Lord.” Miracles are also identified as “signs” (3:12; 4:8-9, 17, 28; 7:3; 8:23; 10:1-2) and “wonders” (4:21; 7:3, 9; 11:9-10).

A list of miracles in Exodus is the following:

The burning bush: 3:2.

The staff turns into a snake: 4:1-5.

Moses’ hand becomes leprous: 4:6-7.

Moses performs these miracles in front of Israel: 4:28-31.

Aaron’s staff consumes the staffs of the Egyptian magicians: 7:8-13.

Water is turned to blood: 7:14-25.

Frogs cover the land: 8:1-15.

The gnats: 8:16-19.

The insects: 8:20-32.

The pestilence on the cattle: 9:1-7.

The boils: 9:8-17.

The hail: 9:18-35.

The locusts: 10:1-20.

Darkness: 10:21-29.

The death of the firstborn: 11:1-10; 12:29-39.

Crossing the Red Sea: 14:21-25.

Turning water sweet: 15:22-25.

Mann from heaven: 16:4-7, 14-21, 31-36.

Quail: 16:13.

Water from the rock: 17:1-7.

God’s presence on Mount Sinai: 19:16-20.

Moses’ face shines: 34:29-35.

God’s glorious presence fills the tabernacle: 40:34-38.

God has the power of life and death in His hands (4:23). Only Jehovah God has the authority to command the penalty of death, taking the life of another, because only He has created life. The “death penalty” is given for a number of sins against God / crimes against humanity:

Murder: 21:12.

Abuse of parents: 21:15.

Kidnapping: 21:16.

Cursing parents: 21:17.

Ox owner who does not control his animal: 21:29.

The sorceress is to be killed: 22:18.

One who engages in bestiality: 22:19.

Those who sacrifice to idols are to be killed: 22:20.

One who abuses widows and orphans: 22:22-24.

God will implement His own death penalty on those who do not respect the parameters of His presence: 19:12 or who do not properly observe the Sabbath: 31:14-15; 35:2 or who do not observe the restrictions on unleavened bread: 12:15, 19; 34:18. If a priest does not wear the proper garments with the bells, God will put him to death: 28:35. The priests who do not

wear undergarments when they sacrifice will be put to death: 28:42-43. The priests who do not properly wash themselves before they enter the temple will be put to death: 30:20-21. One who does not respect God's recipe for the anointing oil (30:33) or His recipe for the fragrant incense (30:38) would be put to death. In 31:14, the phrase "cut off from among his people" is a synonymous expression with "put to death."

Jehovah God "commands:" 4:28; 6:13; 7:2, 6, 10, 20; 12:28, 50; 16:16, 24, 32, 34; 17:1; 18:23; 19:7; 23:15; 25:22; 27:20; 29:35; 31:6, 11; 32:8; 34:4, 11, 18, 32, 34; 35:1, 4, 10, 29; 36:1, 5; 38:22; 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31-32, 42-43; 40:16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32. Out of the 54 occurrences of the Hebrew verb "command," it is used of Pharaoh twice and Jehovah God 52 times.

God also has emotions, as He wishes the best for His creation. In an illustration of God's willingness to condescend to man and respond to his needs, in 32:14, God "changes His mind." The verb "to bless" is found 6 times in Exodus. Pharaoh asks Moses and Jehovah to bless him (12:32). God blesses in 20:24; 23:25. Moses blesses in place of Jehovah God: 39:43. God keeps His promises: 12:40-41; 17:16. In 17:16, English translations state that Jehovah "has sworn." While the Hebrew is more colloquial, the meaning is the same. God can be trusted to perform or fulfill what His word says. In fact, the whole book of Exodus is one long account of God's faithfulness to His covenant to the patriarchs.

God's compassion is seen in 9:18-21 when He warned Pharaoh and Egypt of the consequences of their rebellion against His word. God describes Himself as "compassionate" in 33:19 and 34:6. His specific affection for the sons of Israel is illustrated in His "redemption" of their sons when He took the life of the firstborn of Egypt: 13:1, 12-13; 15:13. One Hebrew verb "to redeem" is used at 13:13, 15; 21:8; 34:20. Another verb, related to the noun "redeemer" (*goel*) is used at 6:6; 15:13. This latter verb is the one used by Jacob in Genesis 48:16. God also "delivers" His people: 3:8; 6:6; 12:27; 18:4, 8-10. This verb is also translated "plunder," which Israel did to Egypt: 3:22; 11:2; 12:36. Jehovah is also said to have "saved" Israel: 14:30. This is the only use of this word with this connotation in Exodus (the word is also used at 2:17). The noun "salvation" in reference to God's deliverance of Israel is found twice: 14:13; 15:2. God "bore" Israel out of Egypt on the wings of eagles (19:4).

We see God's heart illustrated in 2:24-25 when Moses records that in response to Israel's cry under the cruel bondage of Egyptian slavery, Jehovah: 1) heard; 2) remembered; 3) saw; 4) took notice. In 13:17-18, He sent Israel out of Egypt in a specific direction because He did not want Israel discouraged.

God "guides" (15:13) and God "reigns" (15:18) as Moses portrays God as the King of the Universe. In the same poem, God is identified as a "warrior" (15:3). He fights on behalf of His people: 14:14, 25. He "drives out" the Canaanites on behalf of His people: 23:28-31; 33:2; 34:11, 24.

We get a picture of the wrath or anger of God, an outworking of the holiness of God, in 4:14; 15:7; 32:10-12. The text says "He" sought to kill Moses (or Gershom?) in 4:24. Also, Israel was afraid that God's wrath would "fall" on them, if they did not leave Egypt to worship Him as He commanded (5:3). He will punish those who trust others (whether living or non-living) in place of Him: 20:5. In 32:10 and 33:3, the text says God intended to "destroy" Israel due to their idolatry. His anger is also seen in His designation of Israel, to Moses, as "your people" (32:7; 33:1; 34:10). However, God states that He is "slow to anger" (34:6).

The grace, or favor, of God appears frequently in the story of the exodus (3:21; 11:3; 12:36; 22:27; 33:12-13, 16-17, 19; 34:6, 9). The verb related to the word "grace," translated "give or act graciously" is used of God at 33:19. God wished to give His people rest: 33:14.

The justice of God, that He believes the scales of justice should be balanced, appears in such texts as: 3:7, 9 and 11:6; 12:30. This goes beyond just Egypt's treatment of Israel, but also applies to an Israelite's treatment of his fellow Israelite: 22:23. God "executes judgment" against the gods (idols) of Egypt: 12:12. "Judgments" is used in 6:6 and 7:4 as a synonym for God's miraculous plagues on Egypt, which shows that these were intended to be punitive. God's justice in sending the plagues is said in 10:2 as having made a mockery of Egypt and its

gods. When Israel “saw” God in 24:10, the text states that He did not kill them. The implication is that His glory naturally would have consumed human flesh if God had not altered that glory. The clothing of the priests was decorated to honor God, “for glory and for beauty” (28:2, 40; 33:18, 22). A ransom was to be taken from the sons of Israel so that God will not “plague” them (30:12). Once more, the justice of God is seen when He states that He will “blot out” the memory of the Amalekites: 17:14. After Israel’s idolatry with the golden calf, Moses asks God to “blot out” his name from Jehovah’s “book of life,” which Jehovah refuses to do: 32:32-33.

Pharaoh came to acknowledge God as being “righteous” (9:27), which means He acted consistent with what was right.

There are indications which illustrate God exists above and beyond man’s world. This is seen when God “comes down” (3:8; 19:11, 18, 20; 29:42-43; 34:5) or “looks down” (14:24). God “appeared” in 3:16; 4:5. In 19:17, Moses and the elders of Israel are said to go to “meet” God. The anthropomorphisms used of God in Exodus (a figure of speech which portrays God in human terms) is a reflection of God’s condescension. That is, Moses is trying to convey certain ideas about God, normally His power, wisdom, or presence, through this figure of speech. God’s presence, or the presence of the Angel of the Lord (see “Angelology” below), was made evident numerous times in the “pillar of cloud” or the “pillar of fire”: 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24; 16:10; 19:9; 20:21; 24:15-16; 33:9-10; 34:5; 40:34-38. This latter passage relates that God’s presence, in the cloud, signaled Israel to remain in their camp or to leave their camp. God promises that He can and will dwell among Israel, if they fulfill His obligatory requirements for a tabernacle (a word related to the verb “to dwell”): 29:45-46. He promises in 29:45 to be Israel’s God.

God’s “hand” is referenced numerous times: 3:19-20; 6:1, 8; 7:4-5; 9:3, 15; 13:3, 14, 16; 14:31; 15:17; 16:3; 17:16; 24:11; 32:11; 33:22-23 (although a different word is used here in Hebrew). The “arm” of the Lord is mentioned twice (6:6; 15:16) while the “finger” of the Lord is found twice (8:19; 31:18). “Soothing aroma” to Jehovah (29:18, 25, 41) reflects the idea that God “smells,” which is a figure of speech to denote that God takes pleasure in man’s obedience to Him. The “feet” of Jehovah is mentioned once (24:10) and the face of Jehovah - signifying His “presence” - is mentioned in 33:11, 14-15, 20, 23. In fact, the “bread of the Presence” (25:30; 35:13; 39:36) is literally “the bread of the Face.” When the text reads that Israel “saw the God of Israel” (24:10), it is said that they only saw His “feet.” However, in the later text (33:20), we read that mankind cannot look at God and live. The “back” of Jehovah is found only once: 33:23. The fact that Jehovah God would do “according to the word of Moses” (8:13, 24, 31; 9:5-6) suggests the condescending nature of Jehovah God, to respond to the prayer of His servant.

Exodus is intensely monotheistic. “Gods” in the sense of idols will be covered under “Hamartiology.” Here, we note the texts which state there is no god like Jehovah God: 8:10; 15:11; 18:11. The names of false gods are not even to be mentioned: 23:13. Israel was not to worship false gods: 20:3, 23; 23:24 nor worship them (20:4-6). In fact, Israel was to destroy the idols once they took possession of the Promised Land: 34:13. They were not to make a “covenant” (see below under “Community”) with the pagan nations (34:12, 15) nor were they to intermarry with the pagans (34:16). Israel was not to make “molten” gods: 34:17. The prohibition not to boil a baby goat in the milk of its mother is understood to be forbidding a pagan practice: 23:19; 34:26.

Pneumatology:

There is another being Who can be designated “God:” the Spirit inspired the design and erection of the tabernacle (31:3; 35:31). The expression “Spirit of God” is only found in these two passages. The “spirit of wisdom” is found in 28:3, relative to the men who constructed the tabernacle, but in light of 31:3, it is likely that this “spirit” refers to the Holy Spirit who gives wisdom.

Anthropology:

The marriage relationship is found several times in Exodus. Amram and Jochebed were the parents of Aaron and Moses (2:1; 6:20). We also see the familial relationship in Pharaoh's life: 2:5ff and in 2:16ff, we have reference to Moses' father-in-law's family, who also appears extensively in chapter 18. Moses himself marries Zipporah in 2:21 and the two have two sons (2:22; 4:24-26; 18:4).

God intends for His people to share His message with the next generation, the "sons and grandsons" (10:2; 12:24-27, 42; 13:8-9, 14-15). The "heart" of man serves a prominent role in the book of Exodus, both relative to Pharaoh's "hard heart" and Israel giving from their hearts (25:2; 28:29-30; 31:6; 35:5, 21-22, 26, 29, 34; 36:2). The word "heart" is used 47 times in the 40 chapters of Exodus. See especially those passages which use "heart" after the sin of worshipping the golden calf: 35:5, 10, 21-22, 25-26, 29, 34-35; 36:1-2, 8. Pharaoh acknowledges that God has the power to "remove death" from him (10:17).

Children are viewed as "beautiful" in 2:2. God expected man to work, but also to rest on the "day of rest" or the "Sabbath:" 20:10. He also expected man to respect, that is honor, his father and mother (20:12) and if one abuses his parents (21:15) or curses his parents (21:17), he was to be put to death.

Israel is to use its skills to construct the tabernacle for the presence of the holy God. The word "skillful" is used 27 times in Exodus: 26:1, 31; 28:3, 6, 8, 15, 27-28; 29:5; 31:6; 35:10, 25-26, 35; 36:1-2, 4, 8, 35; 38:23; 39:3, 5, 8.

Cosmology:

God created the heaven and the earth in six days (20:11; 31:17). Moses affirms in 9:29 that the earth is the Lord's. The Hebrew word there could be translated "land" to refer to the land of Goshen and / or Egypt, or it could be translated "earth."

God manipulated the elements of the earth in order to use them for His judicial purposes in each of the plagues on Egypt, including the "signs" He gave to Moses in chapter 4. God could divide the waters, to allow Israel to walk on dry ground (14:21-25). He could turn bitter water into sweet water (15:25) and cause manna to rain from heaven (16:13-21) as well as cause the wind to blow quail into the camp. God could even cause potable water to pour from a rock (17:6). Even the cosmological signs which accompanied His appearance on Mount Sinai illustrated His control over the world and its elements (19:18-20).

Satanology:

Neither Satan nor demons (evil spirits / evil angels) are found in the book of Exodus. However, see the topic of "sin" (Hamartiology) which follows.

Hamartiology:

We first get a glimpse of sinful behavior in Pharaoh's treatment of Israel in 1:11, 13-14. God acknowledges the "affliction" by the Egyptians of Israel (3:7, 17; 4:31). Israel cried to God because of their "bondage" and "despondency" (2:23; 5:9, 11; 6:6, 9). They also "cried for help" from their slavery (2:24; 3:7, 9; 6:5). Pharaoh made Israel's life even harder (5:6-9, 10-14) when they asked to leave for three days in order to worship God. The Egyptians' behavior is also described as "burdens" in 6:6-7. The Egyptians "dealt proudly" against Israel (18:11). The period of affliction is described as a "house of slavery" three times in Exodus: 13:3, 14; 20:2.

Pharaoh even tried to murder innocent babies (1:16). But sin is not reserved just for non-Hebrews. While the text does not assign moral blame to Moses, he kills the slave driver in 2:12 while Pharaoh tries to kill him (2:15). Even the Hebrew slaves themselves fight among themselves (2:13).

The text of Exodus is famous for the frequent statements about Pharaoh's heart hardening and God hardening Pharaoh's heart. In 4:21, God tells Moses that He will harden Pharaoh's heart. This same verb is used in 7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:35. The Lord "hardened" Pharaoh's heart in 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10. Prior to crossing the Red Sea, God states that He will harden Pharaoh's heart yet again: 14:4, 8. He also hardened the hearts of the Egyptians (14:17) to

motivate them to cross into the Red Sea behind Israel. See the text at 4:21 for our comments on God hardening Pharaoh's heart without violating Pharaoh's will.

A second verb, translated "harden," is also used twice. In 7:3 God states that He will harden Pharaoh's heart and in 13:15, the text reads that Pharaoh's heart was hardened relative to allowing Israel to go free. These are the only two times this verb is used. A third verb, related to the verb "to glorify" or "to honor" (as it is translated in 20:12) is also used of Pharaoh's heart and translated "to harden." This verb is found in 8:15, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1. The verb is used with the connotation "to honor" in 14:4, 17-18. The idea is that since Pharaoh "hardened" his heart and refused to obey, Jehovah will be "honored" by him in his judicious death. In 9:34, the verb "to harden" is used synonymously with the verb "to sin." In continuing to change his mind ("harden his heart") Moses states that Pharaoh was "dealing deceitfully" (8:29). He was "exalting Himself" (9:17). The freedom Pharaoh had to submit to God is seen in 10:27 where he was "not willing" to let Israel go free. In fact, in 14:5, Pharaoh and his people changed their hearts.

Pharaoh began his confrontation with Jehovah God by refusing to believe or to obey Jehovah's commands (5:2). To refuse to believe is synonymous with refusing to obey. Pharaoh often refuses to listen (7:4, 16, 22; 8:15, 19; 9:12; 11:9). The Egyptians accuse Moses and Aaron of speaking "false words" (5:9). "False witness" is also prohibited under the Law in 20:16. God repeats that prohibition in 23:7.

It is because of Pharaoh's sins that the plagues are referred to as "judgments," even "great judgments" in 6:6; 7:4; 12:12. This latter passage is specifically directed at the gods of the Egyptians.

The Egyptian magicians are guilty of practicing "secret arts:" 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18. They eventually get what's coming to them for their deceptive practices (9:11).

In a few temporary moments of humility, Pharaoh acknowledged that he had sinned: 9:27; 10:16. The verb "to sin" is used at 5:16; 9:34; 10:16; 20:20; 23:33; 32:30-31, 33. In this latter passage, God affirms a biblical principle that "whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."

Those who commit sin by violating God's stipulations for worship will be "cut off" from the people (12:15, 19). This action is synonymous with being "put to death" in 31:14. We do not know if it carries that connotation in every usage. Once Israel crosses the Red Sea, the focus turns from Pharaoh and Egypt to Israel. And we see that Israel is no more better morally than Egypt had been. They grumbled against Moses and Jehovah: 15:24; 16:2, 7-9, 12; 17:3.

Just as Pharaoh had refused to "listen," so Israel also refuses to "listen:" 6:9, 12; 16:20. The Hebrew verb "to listen" can carry the connotation of "to obey." Israel "quarreled" with Moses (17:2, 7). Israel also "tested" the Lord: 17:2, 7.

The verb "to sin" has been mentioned earlier. It denotes "missing the mark" or failing to meet God's righteous expectations. The noun is used at 32:21, 30-31, all of which refer to Israel making and worshipping the golden calf, and in 34:7. The word "iniquity" connotes the idea of "perversion" or changing the right ways of God. This word is used in 20:5 (where God will punish the iniquities from the father which are repeated in the next generation; see also 34:7, 9; 28:38, 43). The word "transgression" connotes going beyond what God has authorized; it is found at 23:21; 34:7. "Evil" is used four times, but only once with spiritual or moral connotations: 32:22. Sin is also described as "wickedness" (9:27; 23:1, 7) and not "fearing" Jehovah God (9:30).

While Exodus is intensely monotheistic, when Israel creates their golden calf, God punishes that sin severely. The sin is recorded extensively in chapter 32 (see 32:2, 4) with God threatening to withhold His presence in chapter 33 and He implements punishment on Israel in chapter 34. Israel offered to the golden calf a feast (32:5) and burnt offerings (to show fellowship) as well as peace offerings (to show relationship; 32:6). Reflecting the concept of "fellowship" with God, Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel "ate and drank" in God's presence in 24:11. When they have made and worshipped the golden calf, God states that they had "corrupted" themselves (32:7). This is the same verb describing the impact of the flies on the land of Egypt in 8:24. Israel had also "turned aside" (32:8) from the right ways of Jehovah.

This verb described the action of the chariot wheels in the middle of the Red Sea (14:25). Israel worshipped and sacrificed to the golden calf (32:8; 34:9). Israel is also described as being “out of control” (32:25).

We have emphasized the role of the “heart” in Exodus (see “Anthropology” above). Israel, after it made the golden calf, is described as “obstinate:” 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9, or literally “stiff necked” or “hard hearted.”

The verb “to play a harlot” or “to be a prostitute” is used in a metaphorical sense in Exodus, in 34:15-16 in describing the worship of idols. Since God is “jealous” (see above under “Theology”), then God’s love for His people is viewed as that between a husband and wife. Consequently, when someone gives their love to someone or something else, it is portrayed as spiritual prostitution. God warns Israel yet again not to worship idols: 34:14.

Christology:

The third member of the Godhead, the Redeemer, is not mentioned in Exodus. There are no overt prophecies of the coming Messiah. However, there are a number of “pictures” of the Messiah in Exodus.

The Passover lamb is the most well-known of the “pictures” or “types” of the Messiah pictured in Exodus. It was a “lamb” (12:3) that was “male” (12:5), whose “blood” was sprinkled on the Israelites’ doorframes (12:7). This blood would save Israel from death (12:13) by the destroyer (12:23). Not a bone of this lamb was to be broken (12:46). God is the “healer” (15:26), which anticipates the Great Physician. The blood of the sacrifice was also sprinkled on the altar to purify it for service to God (24:6). In that context, we have reference to the “blood of the covenant” (24:7-8). This expression is found only here in the OT, but in the NT, it is found in Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Hebrews 9:20; 10:29.

See the commentary on the appropriate texts, but the whole sacrificial system anticipates the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ. The tabernacle, where the Presence of God was experienced, anticipates the Presence of the Godhead in Jesus Christ. The Ark of the Covenant anticipates the Covenant of God consummated in the Messiah. The atonement cover anticipates the atonement available in the Messiah. The lamp stand anticipates the light available in the Messiah. The altar of burnt offering anticipates the final and complete sacrifice of the Messiah. The altar of incense anticipates the perfect obedience of the Messiah to the Father. And the priesthood anticipates the final High Priest who would offer Himself for mankind. In that sense, the whole book of Exodus anticipates the coming Messiah. The command to “wash” (29:4) anticipates the washing by the blood of the Messiah under the New Covenant and the “anointing” of the priest (29:7) foreshadows the anointing of the Messiah by the Holy Spirit. When Israel worships the calf, Moses offers himself as a replacement in God’s book of life, on behalf of Israel. God rejects this idea because the soul that sins shall die (Exo. 32:31-34). This pictures the need for a Messiah who would not be guilty of His own sins.

Angelology:

There is no biblical reason to believe that “cherubim” are members of the angelic race of created beings. We cover them here, however, for lack of a better place. Their images are designed into the atonement cover: 25:18-20, 22; 37:7-9 as well as in the curtains of the tabernacle: 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35.

The word “angel” or “messenger” is found only 6 times in Exodus. The first occasion is 3:2. This angel is identified as the “angel of the Lord” only here in Exodus. In that text, the “angel” is identified with “Jehovah” and “God” (3:4), suggesting the high level of authority with which this angel operated. The “angel of God” (14:19) moved with Israel toward the Red Sea and freedom. This is the only use of that expression in Exodus. God will send His angel with Israel as they leave Mount Sinai; otherwise, His presence will destroy them (23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2). God’s angel will drive out the Canaanites from the Promised Land. Israel was to obey the voice of the angel of God: 23:21-22.

These angels are clearly powerful and operate with the full authority of Jehovah God.

Worship:

While Exodus is about “God,” it is secondarily about worship. God sent Moses into Egypt with the message for Pharaoh: “Let My People go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness” (5:1). The verb “to celebrate a feast” is used at 5:1; 12:14 (relative to the “Passover” - see below); 23:14 (relative to assembling three times a year). The noun “feast,” related to the verb “to celebrate a feast” is used at 10:9; 12:14; 13:6; 23:15-16, 18; 32:5; 34:18, 22, 25.

Once He assembled them around Mount Sinai, He commanded them to build a tent of worship, or a “tabernacle,” so that God might “dwell” among them (25:8) so they could worship Him. The verb “to dwell” is related to the noun “tabernacle,” the latter location is the place where the former action happens. When Israel saw the miracles Moses performed, they believed his message and they “worshipped.” This verb is used 11 times in Exodus: 4:31; 11:8; 12:27; 18:7; 20:5; 23:24; 24:1; 32:8; 33:10; 34:8, 14. On some occasions (11:8; 18:7), it connotes simply the idea of kneeling. In nearly half the uses of the word, “worship” is forbidden to false gods.

Another word is also translated worship, which denotes “service,” or worship seen as acts of worship. This verb is used 31 times in Exodus. For passages where this action is used relative to Israel’s response to God, see: 3:12; 4:23; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 7-8, 11, 24, 26; 12:31; 13:5; 20:5; 23:25.

A significant aspect of “worship” in Exodus and subsequently under the Law of Moses is “sacrifice” of animals (3:18). This verb is used 18 times in Exodus: 3:18; 5:3, 8, 17; 8:8, 25-29; 13:15; 20:24; 22:20; 23:18; 24:5; 32:8; 34:15. The noun is only used 9 times: 10:25; 12:27; 18:12; 23:18; 24:5; 29:28; 34:15, 25.

Related to the concept of “worship” is the heart’s motivation that leads to worship. In 1:17, 21 the Hebrew midwives “feared” Jehovah God. Eventually, some of the Egyptians will “fear” Him as well (9:20). “Fear” of God was a perquisite for leaders among the men of Israel (18:21). Moses feared God (3:6). While this “fear” has the connotation of reverence, there is a “fear” which God’s people are not supposed to feel, the fear that hinders trust (14:13; 20:20). Israel “feared” Jehovah once they crossed the Red Sea (14:31) and at Mount Sinai (20:19-20).

“Worship” must be engaged in the context of trust. Consequently “to believe” is used in Exodus. Israel “believed” Moses’ message about God’s deliverance, after seeing his miracles, and they trusted that message (4:1). God gave several signs through Moses by which Israel could trust his message was from God; see 4:5, 8-9, 31. After crossing the Red Sea on dry land, Israel’s trust was strengthened (14:31). Finally, at Mount Sinai, God created astrological signs so that Israel would “believe in Him indefinitely” (19:9).

We see the role of “priests” taking form in the book of Exodus as God begins an organized structure of worship. Moses’ father-in-law had been a priest in Midian (2:16; 3:1; 18:1). “Priests” among Israel are first seen at 19:22, 24; yet the family of Aaron has not yet been named as priests so scholars wonder if this particular occasion refers to other leaders or perhaps elders of the tribes, until priests could be more formally appointed. God intended the whole nation of Israel to be a “kingdom of priests” (19:6), mediating God’s will to nations around them. Aaronic priests are mentioned, especially relative to their clothes and appointment to their service, at: 29:30; 31:10; 35:19; 38:21; 39:41. Levites, from the family of Aaron, would assist the priests. They take a central role in implementing God’s justice on the idolatrous Israelites in 32:26-28.

God has to speak to mankind in order for man to know what God expects. To this purpose, God called certain individuals, giving them the Spirit and making them “prophets” (or “prophetesses” in the case of women). God told Moses in 4:12 that He would be with Moses’ mouth and teach him what to say. This is the definition of a prophet. It is illustrated further when God chooses Aaron, Moses’ brother, to speak on his behalf: 4:15-16; 7:1-2 (7:1 is the only use of the noun “prophet” in Exodus). Aaron fulfilled this role, at least at the initial meeting with Israel in Egypt: 4:28-30. The fact that Aaron was from the tribe of Levi is, perhaps, a

foreshadowing of the role the Levites would serve in the worship of Jehovah God. See above under the discussion of “priests.” As God’s prophet, Moses (and Aaron) were to speak exactly and only what God told them to say: 6:29; 7:6, 10; 33:11; 34:29-35.

Related to the responsibility of the prophet is the writing of God’s will; in this way Israel would know certainly what God had said and what He expected. Moses wrote the Covenant (17:14; 24:4) or some part of it; God also wrote some part of the Covenant if only the Ten Commandments: 24:12; 31:18; 32:15-16, 32; 34:1, 27-28. God’s law was written “for Israel’s instruction” (24:12). The noun “instruction” in this verse is from the verb “to instruct,” which also is related to the word for “law” (*torah*). To properly construct a tent in which the Holy God could be present, Israel needed to follow the “pattern” God would give Moses (25:9, 40; 26:30).

“Prophecy” is God talking to man; “prayer” is man talking to God. “To entreat God” is an act of worship; Pharaoh asked Moses to “entreat” Jehovah on his behalf (8:8), which Moses does (8:9, 12; Verse 12 uses the verb “to cry” as a synonym for “entreat”). Pharaoh asks Moses to “entreat” Jehovah, or intercede on his behalf, a second time, in 8:28-30. On a third occasion, Pharaoh asks Moses to “entreat” Jehovah for him (9:28). In response, Moses “spreads out his hands to the Lord” (9:29, 33), a synonymous behavior to “entreating.” On yet a fourth occasion, Pharaoh will ask Moses to make entreaty for him to Jehovah, which Moses does: 10:17-18. A separate verb is used for “entreat,” and only used once, at 32:11. Moses “returned” to the Lord in 32:31, which is a synonym for “entreat.” In fact, on behalf of Israel’s sin with the golden calf, Moses went to the Lord again at 33:12, 15, and 18. An interjection, often translated as “please,” can also connote “prayer;” see 33:13, 18; 34:9.

There were to be three annual feasts held at a central location for all Israel (23:14-17). Those feasts are: Passover, the Feast of Harvest (called “Pentecost” by NT times), and the Feast of Ingathering. Certain stipulations were required of Israel relative to their worship and sacrifices: they could not mix blood and leaven (23:18; 34:25) nor boil a kid in its mother’s milk (23:19). See also 34:22.

Among the sacrifices mentioned in Exodus, which will not be detailed until Leviticus, are: burnt offerings which were completely consumed on the altar, denoting complete dedication to Jehovah God. “Burnt offering” is mentioned 17 times in Exodus: 10:25; 18:12; 20:24; 24:5; 29:18, 25, 42; 30:9, 28; 31:9; 32:6; 35:16; 38:1; 40:6, 10, 29. “Peace offerings” denote a relationship of agreement, or peace, between Israel and God; this sacrifice is mentioned four times: 20:24; 24:5; 29:28; 32:6. “Meal offerings” are mentioned in 29:41; 30:9; 40:29 while “drink offerings” are found in 29:40-41; 30:9. The Hebrew word “altar” is used 61 times in Exodus.

As a response to Israel’s faithful obedience and trustful worship, God would bless them: 23:26-31. Moses blesses in place of Jehovah God: 39:43.

Giving to Jehovah could take other forms besides animals for sacrifices. God called on Israel to make a “contribution” for the tabernacle and all its supplies: 25:2-3. This contribution refers to a separate type of offering in 29:27-28. In 30:13-15, each male Israelite above twenty years old was to give a half shekel to the tabernacle as a “contribution.” After the sin of worshipping the golden calf, God renewed the call to bring a “contribution” (35:5) which Israel did (35:21, 24) to the extent they gave too much and had to be restrained (36:3, 6). Israel gave gold (38:24), silver (38:25), and bronze (38:29). “Freewill offerings” refers to their contribution on two occasions: 35:29; 36:3. Related to the “contribution,” God required the “first fruits” of Israel’s harvest: 34:26.

The pieces of furniture for the tabernacle, both inside the tent and outside in the courtyard, are given extensive treatment in the book of Exodus:

The Ark of the Testimony is commanded in 25:10-16 and constructed in 37:1-9.

The Mercy Seat is commanded in 25:17-22 and constructed in 37:1-9.

The Table of the Bread of the Presence is commanded in 25:23-30 and constructed in 37:10-16.

The Lamp stand is commanded in 25:31-40 and constructed in 37:17-24.

The altar of incense was commanded in 30:1-10 and constructed in 37:25-28.

The recipe for the anointing oil and incense was given in 30:22-33; 30:34-38 and were mixed in 37:29.

The altar of burnt offering was commanded in 27:1-8 and constructed in 38:1-7.

The laver was commanded in 30:17-21 and constructed in 38:8.

The curtains were commanded in 26:1-6 and constructed in 36:8-19.

The boards and bars were commanded in 26:15-30 and constructed in 36:20-34.

The veil for the screen was commanded in 26:31-37 and constructed in 36:35-38.

The court was commanded in 26:7-14; 27:9-29 and constructed in 38:9-20.

The priests' clothes were commanded in 28:1-43 and sewn in 39:1-31. The ritual to anoint the priests was given in 29:1-46 and the priests were anointed for service in 40:13, 15.

The furniture for the tabernacle were anointed in 40:9-11, 13, 15.

The "Passover," detailed in chapter 12, is described as the "Lord's Passover" because its ultimate aim was to honor Him (12:11). Related to that concept, the Passover was considered a "feast to the Lord" (12:14). It was to be celebrated by the Israelites indefinitely (12:15-20, 42), until the Messiah would fulfill its purpose (see "Christology" above).

"Singing" is yet another act of worship mentioned in Exodus (15:1, 21). Indeed a large portion of chapter 15 is a song written by Moses to praise Jehovah God. Jehovah is to be "praised" (15:2, 11 - this is the only time these two words are used in the OT) and "extolled" (15:2).

The "Sabbath" day was a significant day for Israel and was to be respected, having the death penalty associated with those who violated that day. It was celebrated "to the Lord" (16:23-29). See also, on the "Sabbath," 20:8-11; 31:13-17; 34:21; 35:2-3.

Community:

God also desires to form a "community" with people who follow Him. When Israel comes into Egypt, they are portrayed as a family, which grows exponentially (1:7). They are referred to as a "people" in 1:9, 20. God describes Israel as "My people" seventeen times (cf. 3:7). They are also identified as "Hebrews" on fourteen occasions (cf. 1:15-16, 19). God identifies Israel as His "possession" in 19:5; 34:9 and as a "kingdom" of priests in 19:6 as well as a "holy nation."

The motivation (at least partially) for Pharaoh's behavior toward Israel was that he was afraid of war (1:10). At the heart of God's treatment of Israel is the "covenant" He had made with the "fathers," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The word "covenant" is found 13 times in Exodus: 2:24; 6:4-5; 19:5; 23:32; 24:7-8; 31:16; 34:10, 12, 15, 27-28. "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" are mentioned in 2:24; 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 6:3, 8; 32:13 (not listed as "Jacob" but as "Israel"); 33:1. Jacob is also mentioned in 1:1, 5 as the ancestor of the Israelite family. The nation is identified as the "sons of Israel" 122 times in Exodus. With military connotations, God identifies Israel as His "hosts:" 6:26; 7:4; 12:17, 41, 51. This imagery is reflected in the description of Israel in 13:18.

One of the core components of the "covenant" God had made with the fathers (see Gen. 12:1-3) is the land of Canaan in which to dwell. That promise of land is found in Exodus at: 3:8, 12:25; 13:5, 11; 17; 6:4, 8; 23:20, 23, 28-31; 32:13; 33:1; 34:11, 24. God gave Israel "favor" or "grace" in the eyes of Egypt so that Egypt responded generously when Israel asked for supplies as they left: 3:21-22; 12:36. God intended to bring Israel to His "sanctuary" (15:17); He desired to "plant" them on His holy mountain (15:17).

God identifies Israel as His "son" in 4:22-23; 13:15. He also identifies Israel as His "firstborn" (4:22-23). For biblical theology, this point will strongly argue that God intended to take "sons" from other nations as well, which He does once the Gospel of Christ penetrates into the Gentile world (Acts 10). It is because Pharaoh persecuted God's "firstborn" that God takes the life of Pharaoh's (and all Egypt's) "firstborn:" 11:5; 12:12, 29. Because God did not take the life of Israel's firstborn, they belong to God: 13:2, 13, 15; 22:29; 34:19-20. God is said to have "purchased" Israel in 15:16.

An illustration of Israel's trust in Jehovah's covenant is seen when Israel took Joseph's bones out of Egypt with them on their way to the Promised Land: 13:19. Israel was not to make a covenant ("treaty") with other nations nor their gods: 23:32. Israel was not to allow pagans to live among them: 23:33.

This community had "elders," who are mentioned for the first time in 3:16, 18 having already been chosen by that point. It is clear that these men were leaders among the tribes of Israel (4:29; 12:21; 17:5-6; 19:7; 24:14). Moses gave them authority to judge Israel in chapter 18:13-16. There were at least 70 elders serving Israel: 24:1, 9.

God promises His presence with Israel on a number of occasions in Exodus (3:12; 4:12; 6:7; 29:45) and His protection (23:22; 30:12). On several occasions as God struck Egypt with the plagues, He made a distinction between Egypt and His people, Israel: 8:22-23; 9:4, 6, 26; 10:23; 11:7; 33:16.

While the majority of the laws revealed in Exodus have to do with worship, many also regulated the nation of Israel as a community. There were laws to protect slaves (21:2-10, 20-21, 26-27), women (21:7-10), especially pregnant women (21:22-24), and orphans (22:21-24; 23:9, 11). Murder was forbidden (20:13; 21:12-14) as was abusing or cursing parents (20:12; 21:15, 17), and kidnapping (21:16). Losing one's temper was discouraged (21:18-19). Fairness in court was prescribed in 20:16; 21:23-24; 23:1-3, 6-8. Israelites were responsible for controlling their animals: 21:28-32, 35-36; 22:5 and property-owners had rights and responsibilities: 21:33-34; 22:6, 10-15. Israel was to respect even their enemies' livestock: 23:4-5. Perhaps reflecting concern for hygiene, they were not to eat meat torn by wild animals: 22:31.

Theft was forbidden (20:15; 22:1-4, 7-9). The marriage relationship was to be protected: 20:14; 22:16-17, 29. Even coveting was forbidden (20:17). Even lending money was regulated: 22:25-27. Rulers were to be respected: 22:28. This was all required in order for Israel to be considered "holy" in the eyes of God: 22:31. "Holy" is, in fact, used 70 times throughout Exodus. See above under "Theology" for sins against fellow Israelites for which God required the death penalty.

Having heard the words of the covenant from chapters 20-23, Israel famously committed itself to obeying that covenant, living in harmony with its stipulations: 24:3, 7. They also famously broke the covenant in chapter 32.

Some Egyptians, with perhaps other strangers in Egypt, believed the message of God through Moses and left Egypt with Israel: 12:38. However, "foreigners" were not allowed to eat the Passover (12:43). If a "foreigner" lives among Israel, he is to be circumcised if he desires to eat the Passover: 12:44, 48. Once Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry land, the nations around Israel "trembled" in fear of Jehovah God: 15:14-16 (see also 23:27).

God required Israel to take a census (30:11-16) to raise money for the use in the tabernacle. Certain individuals out of Israel had unique skills in construction, which appears to have been enhanced through the Holy Spirit: Bezaleel (31:1; 35:30; 36:1-2, 8; 37:1; 38:22) and Oholiab (31:6; 35:34; 36:1-2; 38:23).

Soteriology:

The concept of "sin" takes a central role in Exodus (see above under "Hamartiology"). Consequently, the concept of "salvation" also takes a leading role. Early in the account, Moses and Aaron did what God had commanded (4:28). This theme runs through the whole book of Exodus: 6:13; 7:2, 6, 10, 20; 12:28, 50; 16:16, 24, 32, 34; 18:23; 19:7; 20:6; 23:15; 25:22; 27:20; 29:35; 31:6, 11; 32:8; 34:4, 11, 18, 32, 34; 35:1, 4, 10, 29; 36:1, 5-6; 38:22; 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31-32, 42-43; 40:16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32. "Just as the Lord had commanded" is found 18 times in Exodus. "I have commanded" is found three times: 29:35; 31:6, 11. Clearly the commands of Jehovah are important and obedience to them is imperative.

Synonymous with the idea of keeping commandments is the injunction in 19:5 in which God told Israel if she "obeyed" His voice and "kept" His covenant, she would be His people. To this, Israel affirmed her consent: "We will do!" (19:8). Moses challenged them to "hear" and to

“believe” (19:9). Part of their “salvation” was also consecration: 19:10, 14, 22. Synonymous with God’s “commands” are His “regulations” (12:24; 15:25-26; 18:16, 20; 30:21) and His “regulations” (15:25), also translated as “judgments” (21:1, 31; 23:6; 24:3; 26:30; 28:29-30). Then there is the word for “law” or “instruction:” 12:49; 13:9; 16:4; 18:16, 20; 24:12. As a part of God’s instructions, He specifically forbids “strange incense:” 30:8-9.

Humility is needed in order to submit to the Lord’s commands: 10:3. Pharaoh acknowledges that he needs forgiveness from God (10:17) and further passages illustrate God has the power to forgive or not: 23:21; 28:38; 32:32; 34:7. On the shore of the Red Sea, Moses challenged Israel to “see the salvation of the Lord” (14:13). As a sign of respect for Jehovah and His word, in 14:14, Moses calls on Israel to be “silent” before God. Eventually, Israel “believed the Lord and Moses” (14:31).

When it came to obedience, Moses refused to compromise with Pharaoh’s offers: 8:25, 27; 10:8-11, 26. God could and did test Israel to see if they would listen to Him or listen to their own selfish impulses: 15:25; 16:4; 20:20. Israel, of course, was to respect the name of God: 20:7.

The need for “atonement” (covering over sin) is seen in the “atonement cover” above the ark of the covenant as well as other actions. See 29:33, 36-37; 30:10, 15-16; 32:30. God is the one who “sanctifies:” 31:13. The need to obey God in order to be “holy” (the meaning of the verb “to sanctify”) is emphasized throughout Exodus, the verb being used 28 times: 13:2; 19:10, 14, 22-23; 20:8, 11; 28:3, 38, 41; 29:1, 21, 27, 33, 36-37, 43-44; 30:29-30; 31:13; 40:9-11, 13. God is the one who has to “forgive:” 32:32. Otherwise, Israel will be “blotted out” from His book.

Expressing regret for one’s sins is a part of the proper response to God, as Israel does in 33:4-6. They mourned and then removed the ornaments which they had earlier used to make the golden calf (see 32:2-3). In 33:7, the text reads that Israel “sought” the Lord; that is, the nation desired to meet God’s expectations in order to be right in His eyes.