**Introducing Exodus**

When we're young we can hardly wait to get our independence. Responsibility rarely crosses our minds. Our parents, on the other hand, think about responsibility a great deal. They cautiously increase our independence bit by bit, anxiously waiting for signs of growing maturity. But that's just the beginning. For the rest of our lives we walk the tightrope between independence and responsibility.

Long ago this issue was dramatized for us in ancient Israel's struggle to gain its independence and to show responsible obedience to God. Moses was, as it were, the anxious parent deputized by God to lead the nation to independence and to teach them responsible freedom.

The book of Exodus tells it all. Written by Moses himself Exodus is the story of abject slavery and glorious liberation. Then God patiently teaches what human responsibility means, both in worship and in our relationships with others.

Just like children struggling through adolescence to responsible adulthood, Israel had its good and bad days. Their exodus to freedom did not give them the right to do as they pleased. They had to learn loyalty and obedience to God as a consequence of his giving them their independence. For them, learning to trust and obey God was rooted in God's gracious deliverance from bondage.

In effect, God owned them because he had redeemed them from bondage. The story of Israel's exodus thus becomes a prototype of every Christian's exodus from the enslaving power of sin. Jesus Christ the redeemer becomes lord of those who would acknowledge his saving love and power.

All this and more is bound up in the book of Exodus. Serious students will find a gold mine of insight ad practical values that relate to living today. This is history with a punch. Allow yourself the benefit of careful reflection. Take time to cross 3,500 years and think about both victories and defeats among God's people. Thrill to Moses' encounters with Pharaoh, with his own rebellious people and with God at Mount Sinai. Grasp the significance of the Ten Commandments and the worship of the true and living God. Meditate on new ideas about the meaning of worship, music, and the consecration of one's possessions and talents to the glory of God.

Exodus begins with Moses' account of cruel bondage in Egypt, moves through the bitter struggle with Pharaoh for deliverance, continues on to Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments, and climaxes with the building of a place of worship and the establishment of a priesthood. It covers a period of close to one hundred years.

Major themes include the name and glory of God, the covenants (agreements) between God and Israel, the law and the tabernacle. The institution of the Passover points to salvation through the death of Christ. The tabernacle and the priesthood speak of the God-given principles of how we worship God and the privileges we have to praise and glorify him.

Because there is much historical data to be covered, some of it is not included in the questions. The guide is organized around the major events in the story, their significance for Israel, and what we can learn from them about Christian living. You will need to develop the skill of scanning blocks of text, looking for highlights. Pertinent New Testament doctrines and applications for Christian living are also considered.

The questions are designed to help you discover the facts and to reflect on their significance for your life. The apostle Paul wrote that these ancient accounts were given to teach and warn us (1 Cor 10:11). May God help you to grasp life-changing truth as you grow in your ability to trust and obey him.