

# Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 11, Introduction to Exodus 1-4

## Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

Intro. to Exodus 1-4

### **1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 11, Introduction to Exodus 1-4, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt analyzes the Book of Exodus, focusing on its five main movements: Moses' birth and call, the ten plagues, the crossing of the Reed Sea, the building of the tabernacle, and the giving of the Torah at Sinai. He highlights the Exodus as the Old Testament's central redemptive act, paralleling Jesus's death and resurrection in the New Testament. The lecture also explores the interplay between oral and written traditions in the Torah's transmission and addresses criticisms of biblical authorship. Finally, it examines the geographical context of the Exodus and the significance of the Nile River in God's plan, concluding with an analysis of Moses's life and calling.

### **2. 33 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Introduction → Old Testament Literature).**



**Hildebrandt\_OTLit\_  
Session 11.mp3**

### 3. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 11, Introduction to Exodus 1-5

#### Exodus Study Guide

#### Quiz

1. What does the term "Pentateuch" refer to, and what is its significance in relation to the Old Testament? The Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Bible. It is significant because it lays the foundation for the entire Old Testament narrative, introducing key characters, covenants, and laws.
2. Describe the dualistic conflict presented in the early chapters of Exodus. The early chapters of Exodus depict a conflict between the God of Israel, Yahweh, and the "god" Pharaoh. The conflict centers around which god the Israelites will fear and obey, as God establishes himself through the ten plagues.
3. What is the tabernacle, and what purpose does it serve for the Israelites? The tabernacle is a portable structure that serves as a dwelling place for God among the Israelites. It functions as a portable temple, symbolizing God's presence with them as they move.
4. Explain the tension between the "oralness" and "writtenness" of the Torah, as discussed in the lecture. The tension refers to whether the material in the Pentateuch was primarily transmitted orally or in written form. While God speaks to Moses, He also commands Moses to write down what He said, creating a dynamic between the two forms of transmission.
5. According to the lecture, how do critics approach the authorship of the Old Testament books? Critics often challenge the traditional authorship of Old Testament books, arguing that figures like David, Isaiah, and Moses did not write the books attributed to them. This is often used to undermine the authority of those books.
6. How does Jesus affirm Moses' role in the giving of the Law, according to the lecture? Jesus, in the New Testament, affirms Moses' role by stating that the Law was given through Moses. He also acknowledges that Moses gave the commandments for circumcision and the Sabbath.
7. In what ways does the Exodus narrative echo throughout the Old and New Testaments? The Exodus narrative, a story of deliverance from bondage, is

echoed throughout both testaments as a theme of God as a liberator. It appears in the Old Testament through similar imagery and in the New Testament through Jesus who reenacts the exodus.

8. How did Pharaoh attempt to hinder the fulfillment of God's plan for the Israelites? Pharaoh attempts to hinder the fulfillment of God's plan by enslaving the Israelites, imposing harsh labor conditions, and ordering the killing of newborn male Hebrew babies. He is directly resisting God's plan to have the Israelites multiply.
9. How do the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, defy Pharaoh's orders, and what is their significance? Shiphrah and Puah defy Pharaoh's orders by refusing to kill Hebrew baby boys and lying to him to protect them. The midwives' significance is heightened by the irony of the text, where their names are known, while Pharaoh's is not.
10. Explain the meaning and significance of the name "Yahweh" as it is revealed to Moses in the burning bush. Yahweh means "I am who I am" or "I will be what I will be". This is significant because it is God's sacred name, revealing his self-existence, sovereign power, and role as the covenant-keeping God.

### **Answer Key**

1. The Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Bible. It is significant because it lays the foundation for the entire Old Testament narrative, introducing key characters, covenants, and laws.
2. The early chapters of Exodus depict a conflict between the God of Israel, Yahweh, and the "god" Pharaoh. The conflict centers around which god the Israelites will fear and obey, as God establishes himself through the ten plagues.
3. The tabernacle is a portable structure that serves as a dwelling place for God among the Israelites. It functions as a portable temple, symbolizing God's presence with them as they move.
4. The tension refers to whether the material in the Pentateuch was primarily transmitted orally or in written form. While God speaks to Moses, He also commands Moses to write down what He said, creating a dynamic between the two forms of transmission.

5. Critics often challenge the traditional authorship of Old Testament books, arguing that figures like David, Isaiah, and Moses did not write the books attributed to them. This is often used to undermine the authority of those books.
6. Jesus, in the New Testament, affirms Moses' role by stating that the Law was given through Moses. He also acknowledges that Moses gave the commandments for circumcision and the Sabbath.
7. The Exodus narrative, a story of deliverance from bondage, is echoed throughout both testaments as a theme of God as a liberator. It appears in the Old Testament through similar imagery and in the New Testament through Jesus who reenacts the exodus.
8. Pharaoh attempts to hinder the fulfillment of God's plan by enslaving the Israelites, imposing harsh labor conditions, and ordering the killing of newborn male Hebrew babies. He is directly resisting God's plan to have the Israelites multiply.
9. Shiprah and Puah defy Pharaoh's orders by refusing to kill Hebrew baby boys and lying to him to protect them. The midwives' significance is heightened by the irony of the text, where their names are known, while Pharaoh's is not.
10. Yahweh means "I am who I am" or "I will be what I will be". This is significant because it is God's sacred name, revealing his self-existence, sovereign power, and role as the covenant-keeping God.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the various stages of Moses' life as presented in the lecture. How do these stages prepare him for his role as the leader of the Israelites, and what is the significance of each stage?
2. Discuss the concept of "echoes" of the Exodus in the Old and New Testaments. How is the Exodus narrative used as a framework or symbol in later biblical texts, and what does this reveal about its significance?
3. Explore the complex ethical issues surrounding the actions of the Hebrew midwives. How does the lecture reconcile their acts of deception with biblical ethics, and what does this episode teach us about moral decision-making in difficult situations?
4. Examine the conflict between Pharaoh and Yahweh as presented in the lecture, including the symbolic significance of the plagues. What does this conflict reveal about the nature of God and his relationship with humanity?
5. Analyze the call of Moses, including his initial resistance and the significance of God's revelation of his name, "Yahweh." How does Moses' response to his calling illuminate the nature of God and his relationship with humanity?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Pentateuch:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible, traditionally attributed to Moses.
- **Torah:** The Hebrew term for the first five books of the Bible, often translated as "law" or "instruction."
- **Tabernacle:** A portable sanctuary or dwelling place for God, used by the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness.
- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible, often translated as "LORD" in English Bibles, revealing His self-existence and covenantal nature.
- **Exodus:** The biblical story of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, led by Moses.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement between God and humanity, typically involving promises and obligations.
- **Oral Tradition:** The passing down of stories, customs, and teachings by word of mouth from one generation to the next.
- **Written Tradition:** The transmission of knowledge and texts by writing, allowing for more permanent preservation and accessibility.
- **Ancient Near East (ANE):** A historical and geographical term referring to the regions around the eastern Mediterranean Sea, including Mesopotamia and Egypt, during ancient times.
- **Goshen:** The region in Egypt where the Israelites lived before the Exodus, characterized by its fertile land and location in the Nile Delta.
- **Midwives:** Women who assist in childbirth, specifically Shiphrah and Puah, who defied Pharaoh's orders in Exodus.
- **Red Sea:** The body of water that the Israelites crossed during the Exodus, traditionally understood as the site of the miraculous parting of the waters.
- **Mount Sinai:** The mountain where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and established the covenant with the Israelites.
- **El Shaddai:** A name of God in the Hebrew Bible, meaning "God Almighty."

## 4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes, ideas, and facts from the provided lecture excerpts on Exodus:

### Briefing Document: Key Themes and Ideas from Exodus Lecture

#### I. Introduction: The Foundational Importance of Exodus

- **Pentateuch/Torah:** The lecture begins by defining the Pentateuch as the first five books of the Bible. The speaker notes that Moses, traditionally attributed as the author, did not see books in the modern sense of bound codices, as that technology developed much later.
- **Exodus as a Major Redemptive Act:** The Exodus is positioned as the central redemptive event in the Old Testament, similar in significance to Jesus's death and resurrection in the New Testament. The Israelites would continually refer back to God's deliverance of them from Egyptian bondage.
- **Quote:** "In other words, as Jesus death and resurrection were huge in the New Testament, so the coming out of Egypt is huge for the Israelites. They'll go back over and over again to the fact that 'God delivered us out of the hands of the Egyptians and out of the hands of Pharaoh.'"

#### II. Key Conflicts and Figures

- **God vs. Pharaoh:** The conflict in Exodus is framed as a duel between the God of Israel (Jehovah/Yahweh) and Pharaoh, who was considered a god by the Egyptians. The central question is who they will fear: the visible power of Pharaoh or the invisible God. The plagues are a key battleground in this duel.
- **Moses:** The lecture highlights the importance of Moses, who becomes a central figure after his birth and call. It notes that he was literate due to his upbringing in Pharaoh's court, enabling him to record God's commands.
- **The Tabernacle:** The tabernacle is introduced as a portable temple where God will dwell among his people as they move. This highlights God's mobile presence alongside the Israelites.

#### III. The Giving of the Torah and its Nature

- **Torah/Law at Sinai:** The Torah, particularly the law given at Sinai including the Ten Commandments, is presented as the major covenant between God and Israel.

- **Oral and Written Torah:** The lecture examines the tension between the oral and written nature of the Torah. It emphasizes that while God spoke to Moses orally, God also commanded Moses to write down His words. There is a back and forth pattern between oral communication and written record in the text itself.
- **Quote:** "God says, 'Write this on a scroll to be remembered...' God's going to speak to Moses and Moses is going to write it down."
- **Moses' literacy:** The text specifically notes that Moses was a literate person trained in Pharaoh's court and by his own family.

#### IV. Critical Views and Biblical Authorship

- **Challenge to Traditional Authorship:** The lecture acknowledges that critics often challenge traditional authorship claims, arguing that figures like David, Isaiah, or Samuel did not write the books attributed to them. Moses also gets targeted in these critical arguments.
- **Jesus's Affirmation of Mosaic Authorship:** Jesus himself, in the Gospel of John, refers to the law as having come through Moses, which is seen as an affirmation of Mosaic authorship.
- **Quote:** "Jesus himself affirms that Moses wrote it. I usually say that if Jesus and the apostles think Moses wrote it is it good enough for me? Yes. I think Jesus is God so he's pretty good on this."

#### V. Echoes of Exodus in the Old Testament

- **Exodus as a Paradigm:** The Exodus theme of liberation and God as the great liberator is a recurring motif throughout the Old Testament, especially in the prophets.
- **Hosea 11:1:** The verse "Out of Egypt I called my son" is interpreted as referring to Israel, the nation, as God's son. This verse will be seen as an important point of connection with the New Testament.
- **Father-Son Relationship:** God portrays himself as a loving father to Israel, his "son," which sets the stage for how these ideas are reinterpreted in the New Testament.



## VI. Exodus in the New Testament

- **Jesus as the New Israel:** The lecture highlights how Matthew's Gospel uses parallels with the Exodus narrative to portray Jesus as the new Israel, coming out of Egypt and going into the wilderness.
- **Quote:** "So what you have in the Exodus account, is that God calls "his son Israel out of Egypt." Does Jesus himself in one sense stand for the whole nation of Israel? In himself he reenacts, what God's other son Israel did. So you get this echo in Jesus of what the nation of Israel did. Jesus is the new Israel in Matthew."
- **Jesus's Baptism and Temptation:** Jesus' baptism is seen as a parallel to Israel's crossing through the Red Sea and his temptation in the wilderness echoes the Israelites' wilderness wanderings.
- **The Passover and the Eucharist:** Jesus reinterprets the symbols of the Passover, such as the unleavened bread and the cup of wine, as representing his own body and blood in the Eucharist/Lord's Supper. Jesus himself is the Passover lamb.
- **Quote:** "Does Jesus take the symbols of the Passover and reinterpret them as applying to himself? So you see even Jesus, takes the cross, his death and the shedding of his blood are symbolized as coming out of these Exodus symbols."
- **Plagues in Revelation:** The plagues in the Book of Revelation are seen to echo the plagues of Egypt in Exodus.

## VII. Exodus and the Psalms

- **Psalms as a Reflection of Exodus:** Psalms 78, 105, and 106 are cited as examples of Psalms that are full of Exodus references.
- **The Great Hallel:** The Great Hallel (a set of Psalms) read during Passover is full of Exodus imagery, such as the parting of the Red Sea and the trembling of Mount Sinai.
- **Quote:** "Here's how it starts, 'when Israel came out of Egypt' so as soon as it does that what is it talking about?"

## VIII. Ancient Egyptian History and Geography

- **Egypt as the "Gift of the Nile":** The lecture emphasizes the Nile River's crucial role in Egypt's existence and fertility and that without it, Egypt would not exist.

- **Key Periods:** The speaker outlines the three main kingdoms of Egyptian history: the Old Kingdom (pyramid building), the Middle Kingdom (literature and wisdom), and the New Kingdom (expansion). The lecture notes that the Middle Kingdom was the period of literature and wisdom.
- **Israel in Egypt during Second Intermediate Period:** The Second Intermediate Period is noted as the time when the Israelites were in Egypt.
- **Egyptian Provincialism:** It is noted that Egypt was not historically expansionistic except for a brief period during the New Kingdom.
- **Geography of Goshen and Sinai:** The lecture explains the geography of the Sinai Peninsula (and notes that it is a dangerous area due to terrorism), the land of Goshen, and how Goshen is positioned on the Nile Delta to be the area where the Hebrew slaves were settled.
- **Goshen as a buffer zone:** The area of Goshen was located between Egypt and any potential attackers coming from the north east, so the Hebrew slaves were essentially a buffer zone that would be attacked first.
- **Conflict of Shepherds and Farmers:** The speaker notes that Egyptians were primarily farmers and the Hebrews were primarily shepherds and this difference in trades created a point of conflict.

## IX. Pharaoh's Oppression

- **Pharaoh's Resistance to God's Plan:** Pharaoh's plan to enslave and kill Hebrew children is seen as direct opposition to God's plan for the multiplication of Abraham's descendants and ultimately for all of humankind.
- **Quote:** "So Pharaoh will oppose God's plan for the multiplication of the seed. Do you see that?"
- **Taskmasters:** Pharaoh used taskmasters to oppress the Israelites through forced labor and to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses.
- **Midwives:** Pharaoh's initial plan to kill male Hebrew children involved the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, who were specifically named in the Bible, in contrast to Pharaoh, who is only known as "Pharaoh." This highlights Pharaoh's insignificance in comparison to the midwives' faithfulness to God.

- **Midwives' Resistance:** These midwives refuse to follow Pharaoh's orders, choosing to fear God rather than Pharaoh. They lied to Pharaoh about the Hebrew women giving birth before they arrived.
- **Lying and Altruistic Sinning:** The text explores whether lying was justified in this situation. Despite lying, the midwives are blessed by God, and this is connected to the concept of altruistic sinning and how there are certain times and situations where deception is justified when people are facing death.

## X. Moses's Birth and Early Life

- **Nile as a Tool of Death and Life:** Pharaoh uses the Nile River to kill the male babies and that God uses the same Nile river to save Moses.
- **Pharaoh's Daughter and Moses:** Moses is saved by Pharaoh's daughter and raised as her son. The speaker suggests Pharaoh's daughter may have interpreted this rescue through the lens of the Egyptian belief in the river god.
- **Miriam:** Moses' sister Miriam plays a key role in the rescue and the early life of Moses.
- **God Turning Evil into Good:** The speaker points out God's ability to take evil and turn it for good.
- **Quote:** "God can take that bad stuff and give it a few years and God will take the worst thing that ever happened to you in your life and all of a sudden turn it around for good."

## XI. Three Stages of Moses' Life

- **Stage 1: Egyptian Prince:** Moses is raised by his family and then by Pharaoh's daughter, receiving an Egyptian education and training.
- **Stage 2: Shepherd in Midian:** After leaving Egypt, Moses lives as a shepherd for forty years.
- **Stage 3: Leader of Israel:** The text will eventually discuss Moses' call and leadership of the Israelites in their journey out of Egypt.

## XII. The Call of Moses

- **God's Call and Moses's Resistance:** The lecture notes that when God calls Moses, he does not enthusiastically accept the call; rather, he resists and gives excuses.

Moses' resistance and reluctance to follow God should serve as a warning against people who are quick to claim that they will follow God's will.

- **"Who am I?":** Moses initially questions his ability and authority to lead the Israelites.
- **God's Assurance: "I will be with you."** God responds by promising his presence with Moses. This is compared to the idea of Emmanuel.
- **God's Name: "I AM that I AM":** Moses asks for God's name which results in God revealing his sacred name to Moses: "I AM that I AM." This is how he will be known to the Israelites.
- **Moses' Excuses:** Moses questions how he will be received by the Israelites and how he will speak to them due to being a poor public speaker.
- **God's Provision:** God provides Moses with a staff that turns into a snake and ultimately God sends Moses' brother Aaron to be his mouthpiece.
- **Prophetic Structure:** Moses will speak to Aaron and Aaron will speak to the people. This demonstrates that a prophet's job is to deliver God's word.

### XIII. Meaning of God's Name Yahweh ("I AM")

- **Ancient Near East:** The lecture explores the importance of names in the ancient Near East.
1. **Three Interpretations: Self-Existent One:** God is saying "I am what I am", self-existent and in need of nothing.
  2. **Sovereignty (less likely):** "I will be what I will be." This views the name as future oriented rather than a statement of being in the present, and says that the meaning of the name will become known through the events of the Exodus.
  3. **Covenant Keeper (most likely):** "I am what I said I would be," referring to the fulfillment of God's promises to the patriarchs. This interpretation is most likely because God is about to deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

#### **XIV. Exodus 6:3: An Apparent Contradiction**

- **Contradictory Statements:** The lecture notes that Exodus 6:3 claims that the patriarchs did not know God by the name Yahweh, but Genesis 49:18 uses Yahweh in reference to Jacob.
- **Simmering Question:** The issue of this apparent contradiction is left as an open question for further discussion.

This document provides a detailed overview of the material presented in the lecture, covering the key themes, narratives, and questions raised. It emphasizes the historical, theological, and literary aspects of the Book of Exodus.

## 5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 11, Introduction to Exodus 1-4, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions about Exodus

1. **What is the Pentateuch, and how does it relate to Moses?** The Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Bible. These books, which tell the story of creation, the patriarchs, and the exodus from Egypt, are traditionally attributed to Moses, although they were not written in the form of books as we know them today (with bindings), since that practice started later. While the scriptures say God spoke to Moses, and that Moses wrote down the words of God, it's understood there was an oral tradition in addition to the written account. Moses becomes a key figure in the Pentateuch after his birth and calling, and he is portrayed as a highly literate figure.
2. **What is the main conflict presented in the book of Exodus?** The central conflict is a duel between the God of Israel (Yahweh) and the "god" Pharaoh of Egypt. Pharaoh is seen as a god in his own right and the question posed is whether the Israelites will fear the visible power of Pharaoh or the invisible God of the Hebrews. The ten plagues sent upon Egypt are a demonstration of God's power to establish his supremacy over Pharaoh.
3. **What was the significance of the Tabernacle?** The Tabernacle was a portable structure built to be a dwelling place for God among His people. It was designed as a portable temple so that when the Israelites moved, God would move with them. It signified God's presence with Israel, a visible reminder of the covenant relationship.
4. **How was the Torah transmitted, and what is the relationship between oral and written tradition?** The Torah, or Law given at Sinai, was both spoken and written. God communicated orally to Moses, and the Ten Commandments were written by God on stone tablets. God commanded Moses to write down the things God spoke. The text shows an oscillation between oral communication, the people's confirmation of covenant, and then the written record. This pattern highlights the importance of both the spoken word and the preservation of scripture.

5. **How does the New Testament view Moses and the Law?** The New Testament clearly states that the law was given through Moses. Jesus himself acknowledges Moses as the author, including laws of circumcision and the Sabbath. The New Testament sees Jesus as the fulfillment of the law. The Exodus is a pivotal event in the Old Testament and its themes are carried over into the New Testament.
6. **How is the Exodus echoed in the Old Testament and the New Testament?** The Exodus is seen as a major redemptive event for the Israelites. The themes of deliverance from bondage and freedom are echoed throughout the rest of the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms and the Prophets. In the New Testament, Jesus is often seen as the "new Israel," and the exodus is reinterpreted through his life, death and resurrection. For example, Jesus' time in Egypt and his eventual exodus is seen as a parallel of the nation of Israel. He is seen as the "Paschal lamb," and his sacrifice is connected to the imagery and symbols of the Passover.
7. **How did the geographical and political situation of Egypt impact the Israelites?** Egypt was a fertile land, the "gift of the Nile," which allowed the civilization to flourish. The Israelites lived in the land of Goshen, located in the Nile Delta. This land was chosen because it was suitable for their pastoral lifestyle as shepherds. This also placed them in a position to act as a buffer zone, protecting the Egyptians from attacks from the northeast. Egypt was not traditionally expansionist, focused more on their own territory and agricultural production.
8. **How did Pharaoh try to oppress the Israelites, and how did God intervene?** Pharaoh sought to oppress the Israelites through forced labor and an attempt to limit their population. He ordered that male babies be killed at birth and later ordered they be thrown into the Nile. God used the Nile to preserve Moses' life and then intervene to rescue the Israelites. Pharaoh's oppressive acts are framed as a direct attack against God's plan to multiply his people. God's calling of Moses can be seen in this context and he ultimately delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. The acts of the midwives, who defied Pharaoh's orders, are also examples of how God works through faithful people to counter injustice.