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[http://www.harpercollins.com/books/9780061469077/HarperCollins\\_Bible\\_Dictionary\\_\\_\\_Condensed\\_Edition/index.aspx](http://www.harpercollins.com/books/9780061469077/HarperCollins_Bible_Dictionary___Condensed_Edition/index.aspx)

***Exodus, the Book of***

- I. Introduction: the new threat (1:1–22)
- II. Moses (2:1–7:7)
  - A. A child is found (2:1–10)
  - B. Escape to Midian (2:11–22)
  - C. Transition (2:23–25)
  - D. Call and commission (3:1–4:17)
  - E. Return to Egypt and encounter with Pharaoh (4:18–6:1)
  - F. Covenant promises and commission (6:2–13)
  - G. Genealogy and summary and transition (6:14–27)
  - H. Renewed commission (6:28–7:7)
- III. Contest with Pharaoh (7:8–12:32)
  - A. Rod to serpent (7:8–13)
  - B. Plagues (7:14–10:29)

**labor**, a term mentioned in a variety of contexts in the Bible meaning manual labor or great effort. Ancient Near Eastern society knew several types of work and workers: the farmer, shepherd, craftsman, day laborer (Matt. 20:1–15), forced labor for the monarchy (1 Sam. 8:11–17), native slave (Exod. 21:2–11), and foreign slave (Deut. 21:10–14). Women generally worked in the home and field (cf. Prov. 31:10–31). Work is viewed as natural to humans (Gen. 2:15), and labor is to be honored and appreciated (Prov. 22:29; 10:4; Eccles. 5:12). Biblical laws protect the wages of laborers as part of an orderly society (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14–15). But hard work is also presented as a punishment for sin (Gen. 3:17–19) and generally as a wearisome part of the human condition. In the NT Paul

speaks most often about labor. He worked as a tentmaker or leather-worker to earn his living while preaching the gospel (Acts 18:3; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:9) and speaks of work as part of an orderly Christian life (1 Thess. 4:12; 2 Thess. 3:10–12).

**Moses** (moh´zis), the first and preeminent leader of the Israelites, who led the people out of Egypt to the threshold of the promised land; he is also the lawgiver and the archetypical prophet. He is the dominant individual character in the OT narrative from Exodus through Deuteronomy. Accounts there tell of his birth to a Hebrew slave in Egypt, his remarkable deliverance from the slaughter of infants under Pharaoh, his subsequent divine call (in an incident involving a burning bush), his confrontations with Pharaoh demanding the release of the Israelites from slavery, his leadership of the people in the exodus and subsequent wilderness wanderings, and his role as the great lawgiver in mediating the covenant between God and Israel at Mt. Sinai. In the NT Moses is mentioned principally in this latter context, in connection with the law (Matt. 19:7; Mark 7:10; Luke 16:31; John 1:17; Rom. 9:15; 10:19; 1 Cor. 9:9; 2 Cor. 3:13). He is also cited as exemplary for his faith in God (Heb. 3:2; 11:24).

**tax collectors**, persons responsible for collecting tolls and taxes on behalf of the Roman government. In areas ruled by the Roman Empire, contracts for collecting taxes in a region were farmed out, usually to wealthy foreigners. These persons, in turn, hired local inhabitants to collect the taxes, such as Zacchaeus, who is called a chief tax collector in Jericho (Luke 19:1). Such individuals would rely on low-level tax gatherers (often slaves) to do the actual work of collecting the monies, which might involve, for example, examining goods being transported along local roads and assessing tolls accordingly. Goods sold in certain markets were also subject to taxes. Tax collectors were responsible for paying to the government the revenue they had promised in obtaining their contract,

but they were generally free to collect extra taxes from the people in order to make a profit. Opportunities for theft, fraud, and corruption abounded, and tax collectors are portrayed negatively in almost all Greco-Roman literature. Thus in the NT, “tax collectors and sinners” are cited together as examples of undesirable types (Matt. 9:11; 11:19; Luke 15:1). In a surprising reversal of cultural norms, Jesus lauds tax collectors and harlots over the Jewish leaders, because the tax collectors and harlots believed John the Baptist (Matt. 21:31). The chief tax collector Zacchaeus believes in Jesus and says that he will repay fourfold those whom he has defrauded (Luke 19:8). Jesus is also sharply criticized for associating with tax collectors (Matt. 9:10–13; 11:19; Luke 15:1), and he is even reported to have called a tax collector to be one of his disciples (Matt. 9:9; cf. 10:3).