

Exodus 1

Who wrote the book of Exodus? Moses

What are the first twenty chapters of the book of Exodus all about? They are the story of the journey of the Israelites from 430 years of captivity in Egypt (12:40) to the foot of Mt. Sinai where Moses was to receive the Ten Commandments from God.

Note: Three months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites found themselves camped in front of Mt Sinai (19:2). They would remain camped there for the next 57 chapters of the Bible....the remainder of Exodus....all of Leviticus and the first 10 chapter of Numbers. Total camped time was close to a year.

How many sons of Jacob originally went to Egypt with Jacob to escape the famine (vv. 1-3)? Eleven. Joseph was already in Egypt.

How many total family members went to Egypt with Jacob and his sons (v. 5)? Seventy

After all twelve of the sons of Jacob died, what happened to the Israelites in the intervening centuries (vv. 6-7)? Exponential growth! From the time of Joseph's death to Moses birth (300 years) the original seventy Israelites had grown to around two million. They were truly experiencing God's blessing and He was fulfilling His promises to the patriarchs (Genesis. 22:17; 32:12).

What happened next (v. 8)? A new king (Pharaoh) came into power in Egypt. He did not know anything about Joseph and he did not look with approval on the descendants of Joseph. There were several kings of Egypt during Moses' lifetime. Each one of them was also referred to by the title of Pharaoh.

What was the new king afraid of (vv. 9-10)? The Israelites had so increased in number that Pharaoh thought they could pose a potential threat by joining with one of his enemies in time of war.

Note: The words *deal shrewdly* imply a policy that would stop their increase in numbers while at the same time taking advantage of their labor potential.

Pharaoh launched three successive plans to reduce the threat of the exploding Jewish population. What were the specifics of the king's first plan (v. 11) He made slaves of the people and they were forced to work very hard to build the supply cities of Pithom and Raamses.

What was the result of the brutal treatment the Israelites received under Pharaoh's first plan (vv. 12-13)? Normally a population grows more slowly under oppression than in prosperous times. However, the opposite took place in the case of the Israelites ("the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied").¹ God caused them to grow larger in numbers. That made the Egyptian people very afraid of the Israelites. So, they made them work even harder.

Seeing that the brutal treatment of the Israelites failed to keep them from having babies, what was Pharaoh's second plan (vv. 15-16)? Making slaves out of them was only partially effective so Pharaoh decided to enact a more aggressive policy. He ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all the male Hebrew babies at birth.

They were to kill them, of course, secretly; in such a way that the parents and relatives would be unaware of the crime, and would think that the infant had died of natural causes either before or during birth.²

Why do you think the specific names of the midwives were recorded (v. 15)? They were memorialized as heroines. They did the right thing in the face of great adversity trusting and serving God with a pure heart. Their story was written in the Bible for millions to read. Their actions brought great honor and glory to God.

What did the midwives do and why (v. 17)? The midwives' fear of God (17, 21) led them to disobey Pharaoh's command to kill the male babies. They chose to "obey God rather than men."

When the king called in the midwives what did he ask them (v. 18)? Why they had disobeyed him and let the baby boys live.

How did the midwives respond (v. 19)? They told him that the Hebrew women were different from the Egyptian women. The Hebrew women are strong and their babies were usually born too quickly. So they came before the midwives could get there. It was then too late to kill the baby boys; they were gone.

Evidently Pharaoh did not punish them for not carrying out his policy.

Were the midwives wrong to lie? Even though these women lied to Pharaoh (which the Bible does not specifically condemn), they were praised for their outright refusal to take infant lives.³

What was God's response to the actions of the midwives (vv. 20-21)? God blessed the Israelites in general with more children but He specifically blessed the two midwives Shiphrah and Puah with families of their own.

When Pharaoh's second plan failed what was his next strategy (v. 22)? Blocked by the Hebrew midwives, Pharaoh then ratcheted up his attack. Pharaoh called on all his people to throw every Hebrew baby boy that was born into the Nile River.

Pharaoh's ultimate plan was to destroy every male child and thus eventually wipe out the Hebrew race.⁴

These satanically inspired atrocities were aimed at the extinction of the Messianic line. Satan had never forgotten God's promise in Genesis 3:15.⁵

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 18.

² Ibid., 20.

³ Ibid., 22.

⁴ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 89.

⁵ Ibid.