

Day 78 - SUNDAY: January 22nd

Exodus 1

Exodus 1:1-22 NKJV

Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made

them serve was with rigor. Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?" And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them." Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them. So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

Daily Deep Dive:

Book of Exodus Overview:

We get our old English name "Exodus" from the Greek "exodos" which literally means "a going out" (etymonline.com). The actual Hebrew title for the

book, *We'elleh Shemoth*, are the first two words of the opening verse meaning "these are the names" (Exodus 1:1). The author of the book is Moses (compare Exodus 17:14, Luke 16:29, John 1:45, 7:19, Mark 12:26). You'll likely remember from our introduction to Genesis, that this section of Exodus was once one unified scroll of all the material that now form the first five books of the bible (Pentateuch). It is commonly believed that Moses wrote and compiled this during the period of 40 years in the wilderness. It is likely that Moses wrote the major portions of this book with certain additions made by later editors. The Archaeology Study Bible (Crossway) states this about the author: "The biblical text is saturated with elements of Egyptian religion and cultural background. Only an author well versed in Egyptian tradition could have composed this book that fits its Egyptian background so well. The writer demonstrates this reality by employing linguistic parallels and Egyptian loanwords throughout. In addition, Egyptian names of people, gods, and locations accurately reflect ones in use during the mid to late second millennium BC. The author also makes frequent allusions to Egyptian customs that realistically reflect the circumstances of Egyptian life at this time. Finally, he demonstrates a keen

knowledge of Egyptian literature, sometimes using it as a foil to the teachings of the OT. In other words, he often polemicizes against Egyptian beliefs and practices found in their texts.” [END]

Moses was well versed and educated in the Egyptian culture (compare Act 7:22 – “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.”).

When did the Exodus actually occur? The complex issue remains a topic of much debate. There are two predominate views. The view that has long been held due to Exodus 1:11 is the Late Date theory. The problem with this theory for many is the lack of archeological evidence to support the Bible during this time period. I personally believe in the Early Date Theory due to both scriptural references and archeological evidence.

Early Date theory:

The “Early Date” (occurring in the 15th century BC), identifies that Pharaoh Thutmose III (approximately 1504–1450) would have been the pharaoh of the oppression and his son Pharaoh Amenhotop II (aka Amenophis II) (approximately 1450 – 1425 (although these dates vary on

many different sites)) as the pharaoh during the time of the exodus. This falls into what is known as the New Kingdom Period of Egypt.

Suggested early dates include: 1446, 1443, 1440, & 1437

Here are some of the arguments for these early dates:

- In 1 Kings 6:1 it states: “And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD”. The 4th year of King Solomon’s reign range from 966 to 957 BC, and backing up 480 years before these dates places the Exodus in the range of the dates up above.

- In Judges 11:26 it states: “While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* within that time?” This indicates that Israel had occupied Canaan for 400 years before Judge Jephthah. Jephthah is dated between 1100 to 1050 BC, which would mean that Joshua would

have had to conquer Canaan between 1400 to 1350 BC. If we add an additional 40 years of wandering in the desert, that would make the date of the Exodus around 1440 to 1390 timeframe. The approximate 1440 date falls right in alignment with the 1 Kings 6 timeframe.

●According to an ancient granite Egyptian hieroglyph known as the “Merneptah Stele”, which was inscribed by Pharaoh Merneptah who reigned from approximately 1213 to 1203 BC, the nation of Israel already existed during his reign. The bulk of this inscription deals with this pharaoh’s victory over the Libyians, but in the last lines dealing with the major players in the region of Canaan it states “Israel is laid waste, its seed is not”. Why is this significant? First, it’s the most ancient non-biblical source referencing the nation of Israel and it shows that Israel was significant enough at this time period to already be named among the other major city-states which were defeated by this pharaoh at this time.

●Another interesting, albeit inconclusive evidence, is that the next Pharaoh after this time period

(early Exodus time period), Thutmose IV, is revealed in the Dream Stele (aka Sphinx Stele – granite inscription found between the front paws of the Great Sphinx of Giza), as not the legal heir to the throne. One theory is that he wasn't the original legal heir (being the first-born), however because his first-born brother died in the 10th plague, Thutmose IV came to power.

●Jericho: Since we know that after leaving Egypt, wandering for 40 years and entering the promise land, that God knocked down the walls of Jericho and that Israel was able to conquer this impressive city, the date of its destruction is of great importance to dating. All experts agree that Jericho was destroyed in a violent, fiery manner consistent with the biblical account. I'll remind you that the book of Judges would cause the conquering of the promise land to fall around 1400 BC. Here is some of the various findings leading to dating:

○The following excavators dated the fall of Jericho as the following:

- Sellin and Watzinger – by at least 1600 BC

- John Garstang – 1400 BC

- Kathleen Kenyon – 1550 BC.

- Carbon 14 dating of radioactive decay:

- Italian Palestinian excavation team –

- dated one sample 1347 BC (+/- 85

- years) and dated another sample 1597

- (+/- 91 years). The first would fit with a

- 1400 time period, the second would have

- that Jericho was already destroyed before

- this time period.

- Egyptian Scarabs were found that contained names of three pharaohs:

- Hatshepsut – Queen and sister of Thutmose II. She became co-ruler with Thutmose III until her death around 1458 BC (Britannica).

- Thutmose III – Early date theory says he was the pharaoh of the oppression. His son, Amenhotep II in this theory was the pharaoh of the Exodus and reigned until 1400 BC (Britannica). His son (Thutmose IV – who was

not the natural heir (see notes above on Dream Stele), takes over.

□ Amenhotep III – This is the son of Thutmose IV, who reigned around 1390 to 1353).

□ What could this all mean? It means that whenever Jericho was destroyed, these men all had existed in power. Therefore, any dating that would have Jericho destroyed before approximately 1390 BC (for example 1550 BC of Kenyon above) would have to be false because these pharaohs weren't born yet. Additionally, the scarabs of Hatshepsut are rare because she was despised and her scarabs were not collected (unlike Thutmose III and Amenhotep III who were popular and their scarabs collected long after their deaths).

○ Snail shell – Kenyon herself discovered in Jericho an inscribed snail shell that was dated to 1485 BC, which contradicts her claim that Jericho was destroyed by 1550 BC (remember these BC dates count down to 1 BC (not up)).

○Ceramic pottery dating – Today, ceramic pottery dating is one of the most accurate and important methods of dating in archeology.

□Kenyon had dated the destruction of Jericho solely based on the absence of imported pottery. During her excavations, she did not find any two-colored pottery from Cyprus and concluded that Jericho was destroyed before 1400 BC and must have been destroyed around 1550 BC therefore. However, numerous examples of imitation two-color Cyprus pottery has been found in the destruction layer of Jericho. This again, now points to destruction around 1400 BC.

●Monotheism – The idea of one single God was introduced in Egypt by Thutmose IV (the non-natural heir of Amenhotep II (pharaoh of the Exodus in this theory)). This is interesting, because this is the first religious struggle we know about and was introduced against multiple pagan gods creating the universe. A cult arose in following this single god, known as the cult of Aton (Aten). During his reign, he disbanded the priesthood of all other gods in Egypt except Aten and

changed the religion from polytheistic to monotheistic. I share all this not to say that he worshiped the one true God, but it is interesting to me that had this individual witnessed the events of the Exodus from a young age, the death of his first-born brother (10th plague) at the hand of the Almighty (he is estimated to have died at 25 to 28 years old from his mummy remains. Based on his reign lasting about 10 years, this would have him been around 15 to 18 years old when he began to reign).

Late Date theory:

The "Late Date" (occurring in the 13th century BC), identifies that Pharaoh Rameses I (approximately 1320–1318) & Pharaoh Seti (approximately 1318–1304) as the pharaohs of the oppression and Pharaoh Seti's son Pharaoh Rameses II (approximately 1304–1237) as the pharaoh during the time of the exodus.

Suggested late dates include: 1350, 1290, 1280, 1275, & 1225

Here are some of the arguments for the late date:

- This argument discounts 1 Kings 6:1 (480 years) as simply symbolic of 12 generations and discounts the 300 years of Jephthah as a

generalization due to Jephthah not having historical records.

- They argue that had Israel already been a nation as the Merneptah Stele indicates, why do we not have any other documents for hundreds of years that also talk about them as a people/nation.

- They argue that Thutmose IV coming to power, but not as the natural legal heir, in no way proves that his brother died in the 10th plague.

- They argue that the civilizations of Edom, Ammon and Moab were not in existence in the 15th century and therefore it would not be possible for Israel to have been in contact with these nations at that time.

- They argue that had Israel been a nation by approximately the 15th century, why does the Bible not mention that Egypt invaded the land of Palestine under Pharaoh Seti I and Rameses II.

- In the 13th & 14th centuries BC there were massive building projects in Egypt that would have required a huge workforce. Some of these construction projects occurred in the Nile Delta area abutting the land of Goshen (the land where

the Israelites lives in Egypt). The greatest builder of this time was Ramesses II (1290 – 1224 BC). They argue that the Israelites were the builders of Pithom and Ramses (cities of the delta region).

○This theory is strongly linked with Exodus 1:11 – “Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.”

□This at first glance seems to be very clear that this had to occur in the late date period when Ramesses lived and reigned. However, it’s possible that these are editorial references that were added later to explain to the reader what the cities were called at their time, not that they had to be originally called by these names.

The UCG reading plan adds the following high level thoughts on the book of Exodus: “After calling Moses, God sends him to lead the people. But it is clear that the power to free the Israelites is not the power of Moses. Rather, it is

the power of the divine King of the universe. All the while, the weakness of man is made quite clear—from Moses' own initial resistance of God's will to the stubborn hardheartedness of Pharaoh to the incessant complaining, murmuring and outright rebellion of the Israelites.

God, however, proves ultimately faithful. He will deliver His people. And this is all a mere type or forerunner of the future deliverance that He will accomplish through sending Jesus Christ—first to die as the true Passover lamb (represented in type here in Exodus) and then to come again as immortal Savior—to destroy His enemies and glorify all who choose to serve Him and live according to His law, a law first spelled out for us in the book of Exodus. Archeologists and biblical scholars have entered into lively discussions about whether Israel's sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus really occurred. Biblical "minimalists" dispute the historicity of these events, because there is no evidence outside of the Bible for them. Yet many distinguished scholars uphold the veracity of the biblical account.

"'Absence of evidence,' observes Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen, 'is not evidence of absence.' Nahum Sarna, professor emeritus of biblical studies at Brandeis University, argues that the exodus story—tracing, as it does a nation's

origins to slavery and oppression—‘cannot possibly be fictional. No nation would be likely to invent for itself, and faithfully transmit century after century and millennium after millennium, an inglorious and inconvenient tradition of this nature,’ unless it had an authentic core. ‘If you’re making up history,’ adds Richard Elliott Friedman, professor at the University of California at San Diego, ‘it’s that you were descended from gods or kings, not from slaves.’

“Indeed, the absence of direct material evidence of an Israelite sojourn in Egypt is not as surprising, or as damaging to the Bible’s credibility, as it first might seem. What type of material evidence, after all, would one expect to find that could corroborate the biblical story? ‘Slaves, serfs and nomads leave few traces in the archeological record,’ notes [respected archeologist] William Dever. And since official records and inscriptions in the ancient Near East often were written to impress gods and potential enemies, it would be quite surprising to find an account of the destruction of the pharaoh’s army immortalized on the walls of an Egyptian temple” (Jeffery L. Sheler, *Is The Bible True?*, 1999, p. 78).” [END]

Exodus 1:

Verse 1 – 7 – From the UCG reading plan: “Here we have a recount of the sons of Israel, interestingly not by order of age, but listed according to the sons’ mothers. First listed are the sons of Leah, then the sons of Leah’s handmaid (Zilpah), Rachel’s son Benjamin (Joseph was already in Egypt), then the sons of Rachel’s handmaid (Bilhah). It is stated that Jacob’s family of “seventy persons” had come into Egypt (verse 5), just as was stated in Genesis 46:27. Yet some people see here a conflict with Stephen’s statement in Acts 7: “Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, *seventy-five* people” (verse 14). Yet, as Christ stated, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). And indeed, a simple explanation is given in John W. Haley’s *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*: “Jacob’s children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren amounted to sixty-six [Genesis 46:8–26]. Adding Jacob himself, and Joseph with his two sons, we have seventy. If to the sixty-six we add the nine wives of Jacob’s sons (Judah’s and Simeon’s wives were dead; Joseph could not be said to call himself, his own wife, or his two sons into Egypt; and Jacob is specified separately by Stephen), we have seventy-five persons, as in Acts” (p. 389).

But the Israelites were not to remain at these numbers for long. God had promised and covenanted with Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore (Genesis 22:17–18). He reiterated that promise with Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and with Jacob (Genesis 28:14), who was renamed Israel (Genesis 32:28). Now we see in Exodus the beginning of the fulfillment of that promise, emphasized by the use of five different descriptions: “were fruitful”; “increased abundantly”; “multiplied”; “waxed exceeding mighty”; “the land was filled with them.” It seems as though God inspired Moses to drive home the point that He was starting to fulfill the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is very easy to forget God’s Word, especially when we fall upon difficult times, but this shows God’s faithfulness to His promises.” [END]

Verse 8 – From Adam Clarke’s commentary: “The **yada**, which we translate “to know”, often signifies **יָדַע** verb to acknowledge or approve. We may therefore understand by the new king’s not knowing Joseph, his disapproving of that system of government which Joseph had established, as well as his haughtily refusing to acknowledge the

obligations under which the whole land of Egypt was laid to
".this eminent prime minister of one of his predecessors
Verse 14 – Uses terms for a couple building materials. The
first, translated as “mortar” is most commonly translated in
the KJV as “clay”. The Brown–Driver–Brigg’s definition is
“cement, mortar, clay”. It comes from a root word that
means to “boil up” and this root word can also be used for
“to cover or smear with asphalt”. When we combine this
word with the next, word that is translated “brick” and
means either “tile or brick”, we see that Israel was used
heavily in producing the building material (bricks and the
bonding material) that would be used to construct various
building projects of Egypt. Verse 11 tells us that they
constructed “supply/storage” cities for pharaoh.
Verse 15 – Interesting that God recorded and wanted the
names of these two midwives retained. The name Shiphrah
means “fair” (BDB) and the name of Puah means “splendid”.
From reading various commentaries, it seems clear that
these two women must have been over a large group of
other midwives, as two midwives would not have been
enough. Aben Ezra (a Spanish rabi) believed there would
have been no less than 500 midwives for this size group.

Verse 19 – A question that can come up in this verse is: Did the two midwives lie to pharaoh, and why did God approve of their deception? I won't pretend to have all the answers to these questions, but I think it's worth looking at a bit. First, did they lie? The bible never tells us they did. The KJV/NKJV says that the Hebrew women are "lively". This is the only time in the Bible this word is used, so what does it mean? This word comes from a root that is used 262 times in the Bible. That word means to "to live, have life, sustain life". The midwives indicate that the Hebrew women, who were active hardworking slaves, were very strong women, full of life, and delivered their babies without waiting for midwives to help them. Biblical scholar Kimchi states that the phrase "for they are lively" can signify and has been translated by others as "'for they are midwives"; or are skillful in the art of midwifery. Did the midwives tell the truth? Did the Israelite women most often have children without their assistance?

Adam Clarke's commentary states: "This is a simple statement of what general experience shows to be a fact, viz., that women, who during the whole of their pregnancy are accustomed to hard labor, especially in the open air, have comparatively little pain in parturition. At this time the

whole Hebrew nation, men and women, were in a state of slavery, and were obliged to work in mortar and brick, and all manner of service In The Field, [Exo_1:14](#), and this at once accounts for the ease and speediness of their travail. With the strictest truth the midwives might say, The Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women: the latter fare delicately, are not inured to labor, and are kept shut up at home, therefore they have hard, difficult, and dangerous [chayoth](#), are [חיות](#), labors; but the Hebrew women are lively strong, hale, and vigorous, and therefore are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. In such cases we may naturally conclude that the midwives were very seldom even sent for.” [END]

I find this interesting that the oppression that the Egyptians meant to harm the Israelites, may have been used to bless the Israelites by producing strong women who never had to call for a midwife and therefore their children were retained alive.

Was this 100% true? Did they never deliver any of the babies? We clearly see in verse 17 that the midwives saved some of the Israelite women’s male children alive. And this is necessary or there would have been nothing significant about their actions for God to commend.

My point here is that what we may view as an outright lie, may be different than it might first appear. Again, the bible never states that they lied.

Let's for a moment, assume they did lie. Even if that is true, no where does the Bible record God praising them or rewarding them for lying. What is said about them? In verse 17 tells us that the midwives "feared God" and in understanding that God would not be pleased with them if they harmed these children, saved them. For this, in verse 21, God dealt well, or made things to go well, for the midwives.

The Israelites have now been living in Egypt for some time, and we will clearly see in later chapters, that they are impacted by the Egyptian culture and have lost much of God's way and truth. God certainly understood that. Would God bless these women for fearing Him and for seeking to obey what they understood about His great law of love and that they shouldn't kill these babies? We see He does bless them for their fear and actions. Some of this we must speculate about. What we know for sure is that the Bible doesn't say clearly that they lied or that God approved or rewarded any lie here. We also know clearly from God's word that God doesn't want us to murder or lie.

Verse 21 – Jamieson–Faucet–Brown commentary states: “To “make” or “build up a house” in *Hebrew* idiom, means to have a numerous progeny. The passage then should be rendered thus: “God protected the midwives, and the people waxed very mighty; and because the midwives feared, the Hebrews grew and prospered.”

Verse 22 – Pharaoh now tasks the whole nation with killing the male children born to the Israelites.

Verse 8 – 12: Here is what the UCG reading plan says about the second half of chapter 1: “Now we read that a number of years have passed since Joseph and his family (including his brothers and their families) have all died. A new pharaoh has come into power who does not know, remember or acknowledge the deeds and position that Joseph once held. Ask any number of young adults today whether they remember men such as Dwight Eisenhower, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. It doesn't take long to forget men who once held highly visible positions. Yet in Egypt the tendency was far worse. There weren't textbooks to read or TV news to watch. And a new pharaoh often erased evidence of the glory of the previous pharaoh to aggrandize himself in the eyes of the people.

This new pharaoh now regards the Israelites as a threat because of their vast and growing population. So the Egyptians devise a plan to bring the Israelites into total submission through slavery. This is all according to God's plan that He had revealed to Abraham (Genesis 15:13–14). The attempt by the pharaoh to use the taskmasters to break the spirit of the Israelites, ruin their health through long, hard hours of work and discourage them from having children who would be born into slavery was not working. So an edict was proclaimed to *kill* the male children, thus restraining the population growth. It's interesting to note God's intervention here, as the midwives were not punished for disobeying Pharaoh's command. In fact, God blessed the midwives due to their respect for Him! Pharaoh, in turn, commanded the Egyptians to engage in the murder of the male Hebrew children. Though many were killed, it is improbable that the edict lasted very long as we can see that by the time Moses returned to lead Israel out of Egypt as a grown man (in his 80s), the adult males of Israel numbered approximately 600,000." [END]