



Exodus 1:1-22

EXODUS: LIVING IN BONDAGE

The land of Goshen was fruitful, and the Israelites had been greatly favored by the Egyptian king. The mass of them, therefore, had little thought of ever leaving that country... In all probability, if they had been left to themselves, they would have melted and been absorbed into the Egyptian race and lost their identity as God's special people. To a large degree, they began to adopt the superstitions, idolatries, and iniquities of Egypt. And these things clung to them in later years. Yet all the while God was resolved to bring them out of that evil connection. They must be a separated people. They could not be Egyptians nor live permanently like Egyptians, for Jehovah had chosen them for himself. The first thing to be done with the Israelites was to cause them to be anxious to come out of Egypt... God would not have the people dragged out of Egypt, or driven out in chains, against their own glad consent. He must bring them out in such a way that they would be willing to come out, so that they would march forth with joy and delight, being thoroughly weary and sick of all Egypt and, therefore, rejoicing to get away from it. How was this to be done? It was accomplished by a new king who did not know Joseph....

—Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-92)

Exodus begins where Genesis ends. Jacob's family, who came to Egypt to escape famine, under the protection of Joseph (Gen. 46), are living in Goshen in the delta region of the Nile River.

GOD'S PROMISE TO MULTIPLY HIS PEOPLE (1:1-7).

- **God's creation mandate was to be fruitful and to multiply.**

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

- **God's promise to Abraham was that He would greatly multiply his seed in order to bring blessing to the world.**

"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:4-8; cf. 22:16-17; 28:13-14; 48:3-4).

- **God's promise was being fulfilled in Egypt (Exodus 1:7).**

The children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Though the performance of God's promises is sometimes slow, yet it is always sure.

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

Moses packed into verse 7 about every possible way of saying that the Israelites rapidly increased in numbers. The Hebrew literally reads, "As for the Israelites, they grew, they were fruitful, they swarmed, they increased, they got powerful more and more, and the land was filled with them."

—Douglas K. Stuart

Do we agree with the Bible and face children with arms open in gratitude for the blessing of God, or do we turn our face away from children and count as a curse what God calls a blessing? ... Having children and giving years of life to costly prayerful nurture of them is precisely the distinctive means by which most married people do serve God. We do not serve God rather than having children; we serve God by having children.

—Christopher Ash

EGYPT'S PRESSURE TO STOP GOD'S PEOPLE (1:8-14).

- A _____ Pharaoh
- A _____ Policy
- A _____ People
- A _____ Promise

Pharaoh is presented as an anti-God figure; he repeatedly places himself in direct opposition to God's plan. —Peter Enns

It has been the policy of persecutors to represent God's Israel as a dangerous people...not fit to be trusted, not fit to be tolerated, that they may have some pretense for the barbarous treatment they design them... When men deal wickedly, it is common for them to imagine that they deal wisely.

—Matthew Henry

Serve. Hebrew, *abad*, "to work, serve, labor, worship, live for, be under the control of." (Stuart)

The evilness of Pharaoh's plan is evident in the fact that he looks to convert into agents of death those normally associated with bringing new life. —T. Desmond Alexander

When you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.

—Oswald Chambers

For all his "greatness," Pharaoh is left unnamed while the midwives are remembered individually. This is Exodus' perception of who is important and who is not!

—J. Alec Motyer

They not only refused to obey the Pharaoh's command but they also worked against it. "Rather they helped the male babies live" [1:17] suggests a redoubled effort to help the little boys survive...

—John I. Durham

The Nile was viewed both as giver and taker of life. By throwing babies into the Nile they were doing the will of the gods...

—Douglas K. Stuart

KEY PRINCIPLES FROM EXODUS 1

1. God's promises are sure even when they are delayed.
2. The world seeks to conform and control God's people.
3. God calls us to value life.
4. Your dominant fear will dictate your life.
5. Courage requires fearing God above all other fears.