

## Exodus 1:1 – 2:25

<sup>1:1</sup> Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: <sup>2</sup> Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; <sup>3</sup> Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; <sup>4</sup> Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup> All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was already in Egypt. <sup>6</sup> Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. <sup>7</sup> But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them. <sup>8</sup> Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> He said to his people, 'Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land.' <sup>11</sup> So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup> But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. <sup>13</sup> The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; <sup>14</sup> and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them. <sup>15</sup> Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; <sup>16</sup> and he said, 'When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.' <sup>17</sup> But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. <sup>18</sup> So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?' <sup>19</sup> The midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them.' <sup>20</sup> So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. <sup>21</sup> Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them. <sup>22</sup> Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, 'Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive.' <sup>2:1</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. <sup>3</sup> But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. <sup>4</sup> His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him. <sup>5</sup> The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?' <sup>8</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go ahead.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed him. <sup>10</sup> The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, 'Because I drew him out of the water.' <sup>11</sup> Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. <sup>12</sup> So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, 'Why are you striking your companion?' <sup>14</sup> But he said, 'Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid and said, 'Surely the matter has become known.' <sup>15</sup> When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well. <sup>16</sup> Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup> Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup> When they came to Reuel their father, he said, 'Why have you come back so soon today?' <sup>19</sup> So they said, 'An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.' <sup>20</sup> He said to his daughters, 'Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.' <sup>21</sup> Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. <sup>22</sup> Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, 'I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.' <sup>23</sup> Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. <sup>24</sup> So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>25</sup> God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

## Historical and Cultural Background

- *Egypt's New Rulers*: During the 18<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, several ethnic groups had infiltrated Egypt in the upper Nile Delta, including the Semitic Hyksos. This infuriated the Egyptians. 'By ca. 1720 B.C.E. they [the Hyksos] were fully in control of the eastern Delta of the Nile and had established their capital at Avaris...Gradually, Semites replaced Egyptians in high administrative office...The Hyksos occupation was a shameful humiliation for the Egyptians that had a profound effect upon the national psychology. About one hundred years after the liquidation of Hyksos rule, Queen Hatshepsut (ca. 1480 – 1469 B.C.E) had carved above the entrance to the rock-cut temple she built at Speos Artimedos, (Istabl Antar) in Middle Egypt, an inscription in which she recalled the ruination of the country caused by these Asiatics.'<sup>1</sup>
- *Israel's Labor*: Building cities and canals was backbreaking and risky work. 'Herodotus (*Histories*, II, 158) relates that in the restoration of the canal from the Nile to the Red Sea under Pharaoh Neco, 120,000 people perished.'<sup>2</sup> 'In a surviving Egyptian document called Leiden Papyrus 348, orders are given to "distribute grain rations to the soldiers and to the 'Apiru who transport stones to the great pylon of Rames[s]es." This brings to mind Exodus 1:11, which says the Hebrews "built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh." While hotly debated, 'Apiru is believed by some scholars to refer to the Hebrews, the 'Ibri. If a future discovery of an inscription could link this word to the Hebrews, this document would prove to be our first direct extrabiblical reference to the children of Israel in slavery in Egypt.'<sup>3</sup>
- *Moses*: Moses is God's new agent, even champion, in some sense.
  - He is placed in a wicker basket, literally 'an ark (*tevah*) of papyrus.' The word *tevah* occurs 28 times in the Old Testament. The story of Noah contains 26 of those times, describing the 'ark' that took Noah and family safely through the flood; the only other 2 are found here (Ex.2:1 and 5). The papyrus plant has huge stems which grow to as long as 13 feet, which were used for writing and for the construction of boats called skiffs.
  - Moses' mother is paid as a gift by the household of Pharaoh to nurse her own child! The phrase 'I will give you your wages' (Ex.2:9) reminds us of Jacob's story. By contrast, Jacob worked very hard to earn his wages from Laban.
  - Moses meets his wife Zipporah by a well (Ex.2:15 – 21): The well is an archetypal betrothal scene where a male hero-figure meets a woman and falls in love. Couples who met by water/wells are: Adam and Eve (Gen.2:7 – 14); Isaac and Rebekah (Gen.24:62) foreshadowed by Eleazar meeting Rebekah (Gen.24:11 – 20); Jacob and Rachel (Gen.29:1 – 12).

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<sup>1</sup> Nahum Sarna, *Exploring Exodus* (New York: Schocken, 1996), p.16 – 17

<sup>2</sup> Cornelius Houtman, *Exodus* (Kampen: Kok, 1993), 1:245

<sup>3</sup> Kevin D. Miller, 'Did the Exodus Never Happen?', *Christianity Today*, Sep.7, 1998; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1998/september7/8ta044.html>

## Questions

1. How are we reintroduced to Israel in Exodus 1:1 – 7, after the death of Joseph in Genesis 50?
  - a. The whole family is emphasized
  - b. Joseph's presence in Egypt is touched on.
  - c. Why is the author so repetitive in 1:7, when he says, 'the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them'? Those are words that tie God's blessing from Genesis 1 to Israel. Some of those words were used as God made promises to Israel's ancestors in Genesis, but never all of them. The fact that all of these words are used here means that God's involvement with the people have really made them fruitful.
2. Why would the new Pharaoh not 'know' or 'remember' Joseph?
  - a. Interesting that we know something that the current Pharaoh doesn't!
  - b. What does that suggest to us about the value of memory and remembrance? In this case the book of Genesis as an expression of faithful remembrance?
  - c. What are Pharaoh's motivations?
    - i. He seems to be from a new dynasty. This is hinted at because of the language 'a new king arose over Egypt' (1:8) and also because he didn't know the history.
    - ii. He speaks to 'his people' without evidence. He can't even provide past examples. He has no precedent in the case of the Hebrews. He just plays on their fears of 'the other' who can't be trusted. He positions himself with them. He makes it seem 'shrewd' and wise to think and act with him.<sup>4</sup>
    - iii. He stirs up their fears of alliances, a revolution, and/or a departure. Egypt seems to be made up of various groups – that is consistent with what we know of Egypt's history.
3. So what is Pharaoh's plan at first?
  - a. He stirs up 'his people' and 'they' appoint taskmasters 'over' the Hebrews just as he 'arose over Egypt.' This suggests cunning.
  - b. Israel has to build cities. What have cities been in the biblical story so far? Places of sin: Cain's city Enoch (Gen.4:16 – 24); Nimrod's city Babel (Gen.11:1 – 9); the Canaanite cities Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.13:13; 19:1 – 29).
  - c. But God continues to bless Israel and make them fruitful. Practically speaking, this meant that they had a very low infant mortality rate, and possible a zero rate, which would have been very surprising for people in these conditions.
  - d. Then Israel has to 'labor rigorously' (Ex.1:13).
    - i. Where have you heard of 'brick and mortar' before in the biblical story? Genesis 11:3, with the construction of the Tower of Babel
    - ii. What does 'all kinds of labor in the field' remind you of? Genesis 3:17 – 19, the curse on the ground because of Adam and Eve's sin. Humans would have to work with 'plants of the field' (Gen.3:18) and toil among thorns and thistles, which seem to refer back to 'shrubs of the field' and 'plants of the field' which did not exist in the garden area before the fall (Gen.2:5).
    - iii. Application: God can bless you even while you are waiting for relief from suffering! God blessed Jacob in exile from home, and Joseph in exile from home. It was connected to God blessing Adam and Eve in exile from the garden of Eden.
    - iv. Illus: My friends D & L, struggling with bio-toxin illness, not able to really live in their house because of mold and formaldehyde, and not able to eat many foods either. D is a doctor who was trying to practice a more preventative form of medicine called functional medicine. He had opened his own medical practice; L his wife was helping run it. This is what they emailed to friends on September 18, 2014:

Its amazing how many things have gone wrong in a span of 1 week.

1. Staff sick so billing wasn't done consistently--our funds got dried up. So no money.
2. Patient lost a 10,000 check that was supposed to come to us.
3. Harvard Pilgrim Insurance is auditing us for being an integrative/holistic clinic and auditing our business plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon F. Davies, *Israel in Egypt: Reading Exodus 1 – 2* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992), p.47 – 50

Threatening to take back 200,000 dollars.

4. Combined Lawyer fees for past and present-->>\$30,000's. Harvard Pilgrim is known locally to audit and give a hard time to integrative clinics.
5. I had a pretty serious petichial rash and swelling in my legs ( now resolved)
6. I created a petroleum spill/type of contamination in my yard--tried to burn the mildew, mold that grew under the tent. . . but intead the kerosene soaked into the soil. I got sick for two weeks. But remediated, dug out the area.
7. We are still living outdoors in the tent for 2 months, and its getting very cold. We are getting cold at night!!!
8. Our home still is getting remediated, . . formaldehyde and toxins are high, but taking out the structural beams and foam insulation to remove the toxins. . . won't be done until mid october.

Praises:

My wife is rocking in her time with Jesus. :) and has been a solid spiritual partner and support!!!  
After living two months outdoors in the yard, our kids food allergies are reversing, and they are now eating some veggies, etc. . BIG BIG praise, . . . :)

Praises:

New Staff--Gene is awesome at billing and very very dependable.  
Lenore is Amazing and power spiritual force. Prayer and prophetic warrior. . everyone loves her, . patient's love her, and the Cagua-Koo's love that she's apart of our Family/River of Life Medical.  
Amazing healings as we do Treasure Hunts as a staff--people getting healed on the streets!! Patients getting healed by the power of God!!!!  
Still getting lots and lots of referrals!!!! God is good.

Praises: staff are pitching in to help with our funding and they are growing in their prophetic giftings.  
Caroline is growing in her prophetic giftings, . .  
Staff members are pitching in financially in this tough time to support River of Life!!!! Offering !!!

But please, pray with us for not only surviving financially, but having more than enough to give. We want to have so much that we can give 50% of our income to missions work/poverty work/justice work for the Kingdom. We are asking you to join us. God is personally building my character, and creating "patience", . .in all possible ways. to trust in the Lord with ALL my heart. We are not stressed. . .But we do feed the spiritual need to have prayer surrounding us. We want to bless the church, we want to get the church healthy, we want to bring people to the Kingdom. We want to change the face of medicine to bring life and not just a pharmaceutical drug. We want to change the insurance industry. We want to build healthy homes for patients to heal.

- v. But sometimes this leads to even more challenges...
- e. What does the story lead us to expect from God? What will He do for Israel?
  - i. He sets the paradigm of freedom, return to the garden land.
  - ii. God called Abraham and Sarah to a new garden land in the land of Canaan (Gen.12:1 – 8), but they were pilgrims and sojourners, because God promised the land to their descendants (Gen.15:16 – 21). Before that, God washed the earth of human blood, and Noah and his family stepped out of the ark and planted a vineyard, a garden (Gen.6:9 – 9:29). Before that, God made Adam and Eve in a garden land (Gen.2).
4. So then Pharaoh's Plan B is to call in the Hebrew midwives, telling them to throw Hebrew baby boys into the river, presumably to be eaten by crocodiles or to drown. What impresses you about the faith and courage of these women?
  - a. They defy Pharaoh's order because they 'feared God' (Ex.1:17). They 'let the boys live' which was a radical step of civil disobedience. Did they fear getting punished?
  - b. Were they hoping for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham (Gen.15:16 – 21) soon?
  - c. Interesting that God was good to the midwives and established households for them (Ex.1:20 – 21). The midwives too were fruitful!
  - d. Then Pharaoh's Plan C is to make 'all his people' throw their baby boys into the Nile (Ex.1:22). That's fairly crazy...
5. Why aren't Moses' parents named?

- a. There is faith and courage in a certain marriage: ‘Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi’ (Ex.2:1) is literally, ‘a man from the house of Levi *dared to marry* a daughter of Levi.’ This was the triumph of faith, hope, and love – for God and one another.
  - b. Are there echoes of the ‘seed of the woman’ prophecy? Will Moses be the seed of the woman?
  - c. But Moses is from the tribe of Levi, not the tribe of Judah. And we know that Judah will have the kingship (Gen.49:8 – 12).
  - d. It’s interesting that later, they are named: Amram and Jochebed (Ex.6:20). So the narrative is definitely withholding that information from us at this point.
6. What kind of hero is Moses?
- a. What is ironic about Moses’ childhood in 2:1 – 10?
    - i. He’s rescued by Pharaoh’s daughter! The very one who sought to kill him has a daughter who basically adopted Moses and hid Moses within the Egyptian palace, right under Pharaoh’s nose. Pharaoh’s household is providing care and protection to Moses.
    - ii. Pharaoh’s daughter was moved by compassion, whereas Pharaoh was moved by fear.
    - iii. Moses’ sister Miriam is just a young girl but she is used by God to help her brother find a new home.
    - iv. Moses’ mom is paid to nurse him! That’s a total reversal of Jacob’s dilemma with Laban, when he had to strive hard for his ‘wages.’ God is clearly working through this. The symbolic value of the women being deliverers to Moses is very significant. God is working in such a way that the fall is being partially reversed in a limited, localized sense. Women obey God. Women defy the Pharaoh, who has a serpent on his crown, incidentally. Women help provide safety and life to the coming deliverer. Women are blessed by God in the process for their faithfulness.
    - v. Anticipations of the courage of women in Jesus’ life: at his birth, throughout his ministry, at his death and resurrection. There, God will work in such a way that the fall is being reversed in a fuller and more powerful way – in the person of Jesus.
  - b. What is ironic about Moses’ adulthood in 2:11 – 22?
    - i. He takes matters into his own hands and commits murder. He thinks he was doing justice, and acted without consulting God.
    - ii. He fears Pharaoh even when the midwives did not, so he runs away into the wilderness
    - iii. He fulfills the great biblical pattern of a hero finding a wife by a well.
    - iv. But then he seems to stay in the wilderness. He echoes Joseph in a pathetic way, because he names his son Gershom in a way that indicates despair.
  - c. So where does that leave Israel in 2:23 – 25? Crying out to God.
  - d. Moses will turn out to be a deliverer, but only because he stands in partnership with the True Deliverer, God. God will pick up where He left off and complete the task. As of now, God needs to deliver Moses from fear and shame and ignominy.
    - i. Illus: Story of me not being the champion – God is.
    - ii. Analogy: My son John said that God is like Nick Fury in the Avengers – He calls people together!