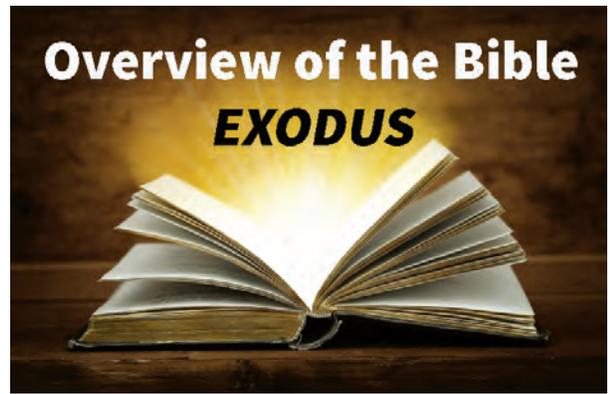


# EXODUS: The Emergence of Moses

*Exodus 1 - 2 – Lesson 11*

Wednesday, April 22, 2020



## Moses as Infant and Refugee (1-2)

One cannot help but notice the difference between the end of Genesis and the first few verses in Exodus in terms of divine activity. With his life in jeopardy, Joseph bears witness to God's protection of his life. The story is as much about God as it is about Joseph.

Then follow the first seven verses of Exodus; it is a period covering no less than four hundred years. During this hiatus there is no explicit reference to the activity of God. No great figure emerges on whom Scripture's spotlight will shine. The gulf is comparable to the period between Noah and Abraham. There are times when God is here (Isa. 55:6), and times when his presence is veiled.

## Preservation by God

Still, we should not pass the first seven verses of Exodus too quickly. Note that Exod. 1:1 does not begin where Gen. 50:26 ended. Instead the narrative tape is rewound, and the reader of Exod. 1:1 is taken back to Gen. 46:8: *"These are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt."* Both genealogies introduce Jacob's sons as the *"sons of Israel,"* not as the sons of Jacob. The covenant line is through the new covenant name given to Jacob. Those who do multiply in Egypt are Israelites rather than Jacobites.

This four-hundred-year period is the time in which God's promise to the patriarchs continue toward fulfillment, especially the promise of numerous progenies. In Egypt, Israel was *"fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong* (Exod. 1:7)." Not only is there a new king over Egypt who does not know Joseph, but also there now is a host of Israelites who do not know Joseph, at least as a contemporary.

The verb used in these seven verses to describe Israel's growth in Egypt (*"were fruitful, multiplied, became numerous, was filled with them"*) are simply the fulfillment of the promised blessings and mandates of God made to Adam (Gen. 1:28), Noah (Gen. 9:1,7), Abraham (Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 17:2) and Jacob (Gen. 28:14, 46:3). In one sense, the reason that Pharaoh is on edge is because God is blessing his people. Wherever God's unique blessing is on his own, someone somewhere is sure to squirm or get riled. In Genesis 12-50 it was often infertility that posed a threat to the realization of God's promises. In the opening chapter of Exodus, it is super fertility that poses a threat.

The Egyptians began to fret over the presence of ever-increasing Israelites. To that end, the unnamed Pharaoh orders the institution of a plan to remedy the situation. To prevent both, the escape of the Israelites, and the possibility of them sieging Egypt. Pharaoh has them perform excruciatingly difficult labor (Exod. 1:8-14). The intent is to demoralize them, to impress on them their role of servitude and to diminish as much as possible any likelihood of insurrection.

But the Egyptians discovered that physical punishment only brings out the best in its religious minorities.