

## Israel in Egypt (1806–1526 BC)

Exodus 1:6–22

### Israel Fills the Land

6 Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation.

7 But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.

### Oppression Under a New King (Hyksos c. 1730?)

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. [[Acts 7:18](#)]

9 He said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.

10 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.”

11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.

### Continued Oppression (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty c. 1570)

12 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.

13 The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously;

14 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.

### Pharaoh Orders the Murder of Newborn Israelite Males

15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah;

16 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.”

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live.

18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?”

19 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.”

20 So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty.

21 Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.

22 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.”

## The Birth of Moses (1526 BC)

Exodus 2:1–10

1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi.

2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. [[Acts 7:20–21](#); [Heb 11:23](#)]

Numbers 26:59

59 The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses

and their sister Miriam.

3 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.

4 His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 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*.

6 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.”

7 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?”

8 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go *ahead*.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother.

9 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.

10 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.”

### ‘He supposed that his brothers would understand...’ (c. 1486 BC)

Exodus 2:11–20

#### Moses Murders an Egyptian

11 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.

12 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.

13 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?”

14a But he said, “Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” [cf. [Acts 7:22–28](#); [Heb 11:24–26](#)]

#### Moses Flees to Midian

14b Then Moses was afraid and said, “Surely the matter has become known.” [cf. [Acts 7:29](#)]

15 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.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock.

17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock.

18 When they came to Reuel their father, he said, “Why have you come *back* so soon today?”

19 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.”

20 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.”

### A God Who Sees, Hears and Remembers (c. 1486 – 1447 BC)

Exodus 2:21–25

#### Moses’ Family

21 Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses.

22 Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

**The Death of Thutmose III (c. 1450 BC)**

23 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.

24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice *of them*.

**Encounter at Mount Sinai (1447 BC)**

Exodus 3:1–4:17

**The Burning Bush**

3:1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

2 The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

3 So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."

4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

5 Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. [[Matt 22:31–33](#)]

7 The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.

8 "So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

9 "Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.

10 "Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." [cf. [Acts 7:30–35](#)]

**"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"**

11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"

12 And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

**"Who should I say sent me?"**

13 Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.

17 “So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”

18 “They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’

19 “But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion.

20 “So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go.

21 “I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

22 “But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.”

### **“But they will not believe me”**

4:1 Then Moses said, “What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’”

2 The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he said, “A staff.”

3 Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.

4 But the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand and grasp *it* by its tail”—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—

5 “that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

6 The LORD furthermore said to him, “Now put your hand into your bosom.” So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow.

7 Then He said, “Put your hand into your bosom again.” So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like *the rest of* his flesh.

8 “If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign.

9 “But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

### **“But I am not eloquent”**

10 Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

11 The LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes *him* mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?

12 “Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”

### **“Please send someone else!”**

13 But he said, “Please, Lord, now send *the message* by whomever You will.”

14 Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, “Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

15 “You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do.

16 “Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him.

17 “You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.”

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## Chronological Notes

### 1) Length of the Sojourn.

A) My chronology places the length of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt at 430 years (see Exodus 12:40–41). For a defense of this view, see the following:

- Harold W. Hoehner, “The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (1969): 306–316.
- Jack R. Riggs, “The Length of Israel’s Sojourn in Egypt,” *Grace Theological Journal* 12.1 (Winter 1971): 18–35.
- Paul J. Ray, Jr., “The Duration of the Israelite Sojourn in Egypt,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24.3 (Autumn 1986): 231–248.
- Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, (Moody Press, 1994), 238.
- Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 93–96.
- Andrew E. Steinmann, “Israel’s Patriarchs,” *From Abraham to Paul*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 68–70.

B) Below is an overview of the various references to Israel’s time in Egypt:

- (1) Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:17 to “the law, which came 430 years afterward” (ESV) refers, not to the original promise to Abraham, but to God’s last promise to Jacob as he was beginning the journey to Goshen in 1876 BC (see Gen 46:1–6). From Jacob’s entry into Egypt to the Exodus in 1446 BC is  $1876 - 1446 = 430$  years.
- (2) God’s statement in Genesis 15:13 that “your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years” (NASB, see also Acts 7:6) is a round number referring to the length of time Israel would sojourn in Egypt. From Jacob’s death in 1859 BC to the Exodus in 1446 BC is  $1859 - 1446 = 413$  years or about 400 years.
  - (a) The “fourth generation” of Genesis 15:16 should be understood in context. The word “generation” can reference a person’s entire lifetime (see *TWOT* 418c.1). Since Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all lived well over 100 years, the “fourth generation” may well be intended to indicate somewhat less than four complete lifetimes in terms understandable to Abraham.
- (3) Paul’s statement in Acts 13:17–20 that from Israel’s stay in the land of Egypt until the end of the Canaan conquest was “about 450 years” (ESV) is a reasonable approximation of the total time involved. The actual time was 447 years: the 400 year sojourn (Gen 15:13) plus the 40 years of wilderness wandering (Num 32:13) plus the 7 years of conquest (Josh 14:6–12) is  $400 + 40 + 7 = 447$ .

## 2) A New King Over Egypt.

A) Some identify the unnamed Pharaoh mentioned in Exodus 1:8 as one of the first kings of the Hyksos (lit. “foreign rulers”). Proponents of this view include:

- George Bush, *Notes on the Book of Exodus*, Vol. 1, (Boston, 1841), 11–12.
- John Rea, “The Time of the Oppression and the Exodus,” *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 3.3 (Summer 1960): 58–66.
- John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, Second Edition, (BHM Books, 1998), 53–57.
- Bryant G. Wood, “From Ramesses to Shiloh: Archaeological Discoveries Bearing on the Exodus-Judges Period,” *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts*, ed. David M. Howard, Jr. and Michael A. Grisanti (Kregel Publications, 2003) 256–282.

B) Others identify the unnamed Pharaoh as the first king of Egypt’s 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (c. 1570 BC). Proponents of this view include:

- John D. Hannah, “Exodus,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, (Victor Books, 1985), 108.
- Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, Rev. Ed., (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 227–228.
- Douglas K. Stuart, “Exodus,” *The New American Commentary*, (Broadman & Holman, 2006), 62.
- Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 75.
- Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul*, (Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 82.

3) Historical Setting of Moses’ Birth.<sup>1</sup>

A) Kings of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (“high” dates from *Cambridge Ancient History*).

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|-------------------|-----------|
| • Amosis (Ahmose) | 1570–1546 |
| • Amenhotep I     | 1546–1526 |
| • Thutmose I      | 1526–1512 |
| • Thutmose II     | 1512–1504 |
| • Hatshepsut      | 1503–1483 |
| • Thutmose III    | 1504–1450 |
| • Amenhotep II    | 1450–1425 |

B) Given a 1446 BC date for the exodus, we can establish the birth date of Moses, a fact of greatest interest at this juncture. The Old Testament relates that Moses was 80 just before the exodus (7:7) and 120 at his death (Deut. 34:7). Since his death was at the very close of the wilderness period, it occurred in 1406. Simple calculation yields a birth date of 1526. Thus Moses was born in the very year of Amenhotep’s death.

C) Amenhotep was succeeded by Thutmose I (1526–1512), a commoner who had married the king’s sister. He was probably the author of the decree of infanticide, for, although Moses was in imminent danger of death, Aaron, born three years earlier (Exod 7:7), appears to have been exempt. One must assume that the king who promulgated the policy came to the throne after the birth of Aaron and

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 75–78.

before that of Moses. Thus the biblical evidence points directly at Thutmose I.

- D) Thutmose II (1512–1504) married his older half-sister Hatshepsut. He died young under mysterious circumstances. Sensing, no doubt, his impending demise, he had named his son Thutmose III (1504–1450) as coregent and heir. This energetic ruler, the most illustrious and powerful of the entire New Kingdom, distinguished himself in many ways. His beginnings were not promising—he was the son of a concubine and married his own half-sister, the daughter of Hatshepsut and Thutmose II—but he eventually went on to achieve notable victories in surrounding lands, including sixteen campaigns to Palestine alone. The first twenty years or so of his reign, however, were dominated by his powerful mother-in-law, Hatshepsut. Forbidden by custom to be pharaoh, she acted out the part nonetheless and by all criteria was one of the most fascinating and influential persons of Egyptian history. Without question, she pulled the strings in the early years of Thutmose III, a relationship he detested but was powerless to oppose. Only after her death did he show his contempt by expunging as many inscriptional and monumental references to her as possible.
- E) The general picture of Hatshepsut leads to the possibility that this bold queen was the pharaoh's daughter who rescued Moses. Only she, of all known women of the period, possessed the presumption and independence to violate an ordinance of the king, and under his very nose at that. Although the birth date of this daughter of Thutmose I is unknown, she was probably several years older than her husband, Thutmose II, who died in 1504 while in his late twenties. She may have been in her early teens by 1526, Moses's birth date, and therefore able to effect his deliverance.

#### 4) The Pharaoh Who Sought to Kill Moses.<sup>2</sup>

- A) Thutmose III was a minor when he came to power in 1504, and thus was younger than Moses. If, indeed, Moses had been reared as the foster son of Hatshepsut, there is every likelihood that he posed a real threat to the younger Thutmose, since Hatshepsut had no natural sons. That is, Moses may have been a candidate for pharaoh, with only his Semitic origins standing in the way. In any case, there appears to have been genuine animosity between Moses and the pharaoh. This is evident in the fact that Moses, having slain an Egyptian, was forced to flee Egypt for his life. That the pharaoh himself took note of what would otherwise have been a relatively minor issue suggests that this particular pharaoh had more than casual interest in ridding himself of Moses. Moses's self-imposed exile took place in 1486, when he was forty years old (Acts 7:23). Thutmose III had been in power for eighteen years, and the aged Hatshepsut, who died three years later, was likely no longer able to interdict the will of her son-in-law/nephew.
- B) For forty long years Moses remained a fugitive from Egypt, having found a home among the Midianites of the Sinai and Arabia. One of the reasons for such a long exile was the fact that the pharaoh from whom Moses fled continued to live and reign—it was only after his death that Moses felt free to return to Egypt (Exod 2:23; 4:19). Thutmose III died in 1450 and was succeeded by his son Amenhotep II (1450–1425).
- (1) It is important to note that the biblical narrative requires a rule of almost forty years for the pharaoh who sought Moses's life, since the king who died at the end of Moses's sojourn in Midian was clearly the same one who had threatened him nearly forty years earlier. Of all the rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty, only Thutmose III reigned long enough to qualify.

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<sup>2</sup> Sourced from Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, Second Edition, (Baker Publishing, 2008), 75–78.