

Exodus Chapter One

Introduction:

When we closed our study of the book of Genesis almost three years ago it ended with the death of Joseph.

Genesis 50:22-23 “AND JOSEPH DWELT IN EGYPT, HE, AND HIS FATHER'S HOUSE: AND JOSEPH LIVED AN HUNDRED AND TEN YEARS. AND JOSEPH SAW EPHRAIM'S CHILDREN OF THE THIRD *generation*: THE CHILDREN ALSO OF MACHIR THE SON OF MANASSEH WERE BROUGHT UP UPON JOSEPH'S KNEES.

At that time Joseph called his “BRETHREN”, those of the family of Jacob that were among the living, prophesying that the time would come when God would bring them out of the land which they had adopted.

Genesis 50:24 “AND JOSEPH SAID UNTO HIS BRETHREN, I DIE: AND GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU, AND BRING YOU OUT OF THIS LAND UNTO THE LAND WHICH HE SWARE TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC, AND TO JACOB.”

We also saw at that time that his words were counted as a proof of his faith in God and his faith that God would fulfill the land promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Hebrews 11:22 “BY FAITH JOSEPH, WHEN HIS END WAS NIGH, MADE MENTION OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; AND GAVE COMMANDMENT CONCERNING HIS BONES.” (ASV)

Between the time of the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses approximately 300 years have passed. This is estimated because there was a period of 430 years between the migration of Jacob's family into Egypt and the Exodus.

Exodus 12:40-41 “NOW THE SOJOURNING OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, WHO DWELT IN EGYPT, *was* FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS. AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS, EVEN THE SELFSAME DAY IT CAME TO PASS, THAT ALL THE HOSTS OF THE **LORD** WENT OUT FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

The children, or descendants of Israel have increased in numbers to the extent the Egyptians, their hosts, are now fearful of them. Scholars have quarreled for generations over just how numerous the Israelites had become. Many ignore God's record, the scriptures, and speculate, denying the Word of God; but the scriptures record the number of warriors available:

Exodus Chapter One

Numbers 1:45-46 "SO WERE ALL THOSE THAT WERE NUMBERED OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, BY THE HOUSE OF THEIR FATHERS, FROM TWENTY YEARS OLD AND UPWARD, ALL THAT WERE ABLE TO GO FORTH TO WAR IN ISRAEL; EVEN ALL THEY THAT WERE NUMBERED WERE SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND AND THREE THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY."

So the number of warriors available to Moses, excluding women, male children under the age of twenty and the entire tribe of Levi were 603,550. This would translate to a total population of about 3,000,000. Critics of the scripture like to dispute this as being impossible. However, others say that they would only need to double every 25 years, i.e. a man and woman would need to marry and have at least two children in that 25 year time span to have generated a population of that size. That possibility is not out the realm of reason. As I do family history research I find that under modern times, even when some family lines literally die out, others more than make up for those situations.

Egypt:

The Egyptians were descendants of Ham through his second son Mizraim:

Genesis 10:6 "AND THE SONS OF HAM; CUSH, AND MIZRAIM, AND PHUT, AND CANAAN." **v.13-14** "AND MIZRAIM BEGAT LUDIM, AND ANAMIM, AND LEHABIM, AND NAPHTUHIM, AND PATHRUSIM, AND CASLUHIM, (OUT OF WHOM CAME PHILISTIM,) AND CAPHTORIM."

Key Map of Africa:

These sons of Ham then settled the area of the continent of Africa that currently contain Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Lybia, Chad and probably other coastal regions of North Africa. One name that all of us should recognize is "Philistim", which refers to the Philistines that are later found in the south coastal plain of Canaan.

Insert the map of Egypt

At the time of the beginning of Exodus the country of Egypt had become the premier world empire of that period of history. Earlier empires from the north and east had faded and broken up. When they did a powerful people came into Northern Egypt and drove the Hamite Egyptians south. During the time of Joseph the descendants of Ham had ruled in the Southern Egypt for several dynasties. Northern Egypt was ruled by the Hyksos or Shepherd kings and had been for many years. The Shepherd kings were kin to the Israelites, all being descendants of Shem, and favored them.

Exodus Chapter One

Secular history indicates that this relationship would allow for the rise of a Shemite, descendant of Shem, even though a son of Israel, such as Joseph, to a position of power in Egypt (he was second only to Pharaoh) and the movement of Israel into Egypt.

The kings of Southern Egypt became powerful enough during their 18th dynasty to throw the Hyksos people out of Northern Egypt and restore their rule to the entire country. This would account for a Pharaoh coming to the throne of Egypt who would enslave the Israelites, especially if he thought that they were getting strong enough in numbers to challenge his rule. So this is the political situation under which Moses is born.

The physical attributes of Egypt, other than the vast area of the eastern Sahara Desert are few and centered upon the Nile River. The core of the country during these times was the Nile Valley. It is anywhere from 2 to 30 miles wide and approximately 750 miles long. There are desert plateaus that reach about 1,000 feet in elevation on each side of the river.

The floor of the valley was the bread basket of, not only Egypt, but much of the Mediterranean World. Much of the Phoenician (sea peoples) prosperity came from buying and hauling wheat in their ships from Alexandria to Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. The annual floods and the irrigation systems that have apparently been there since before the time of written history kept the soil rich and well watered.

The Nile Delta is about 100 miles north to south and 150 miles east to west. On this map it stretches from Port Said to Alexandria. Just like the Mississippi Delta in this country it is the most naturally fertile part of the entire country. The land of Goshen, where Israel settled and lived throughout their sojourn, is in the eastern part of this delta.

The Book of Exodus:

The book of Exodus is called the "Second Book of Moses". That it was written by Moses is certain and generally accepted without doubt, even among secular history scholars that are not particularly religious. Though Moses was not brought into existence through a miracle such as was Isaac, John the Baptist, or Jesus the Christ, himself, that doesn't mean that the hand of God wasn't involved in his birth, upbringing and his preparation for God's purpose. Moses was brought into the world and prepared specifically for the role he played in to bring a Savior into this world. Consider: he was born at a time when the rulers of his country were seeking to destroy all male children born to the Israelites. He was hidden by a faithful mother then placed at a certain spot on the Nile River in a water tight basket. He was retrieved by what was probably the only person that could protect him from death; the daughter of Pharaoh. He was raised up to manhood as the grandson of the ruler of the most powerful empire on earth at that time and afforded all of the benefits, blessings, education, etc. that would be provided to the grandson of the that ruler.

Exodus Chapter One

After his fortieth year, Moses was seasoned by the hardships of exile and service as a simple shepherd in a barren and unforgiving land. As the author of this book; no latter day priest or series of priests (such as is claimed by some critics) could have been familiar with many of the events it contains. He alone was an eye witness of the key facts and things revealed for the first time in this book. He alone of all the men that lived among the Israelites had the ability, the education and the opportunity to lead God's people out of Egypt and author the first five books of God's revelation to mankind.

As we noted above some would contend that rather than being written by Moses the Pentateuch was written by a priest or a group of priests much later, as late even as 800 BC. Not only is this contention contrary to the scripture, it also just does not hold up under the weight of the all of the evidence.

The date of the Exodus, the time of Moses and the time of his writing was approximately 1450-1400 B.C., based upon the scripture itself and calculations based upon Egyptian history. Also various words, expressions, events and constructions in the book can be distinguished as belonging only to that period of time. The following are offered by James Coffman in his commentary:

1. The syllable "man" in the word "manna" is not Hebrew at all but is found in the correspondence unearthed at Tel El Amarna in the Nile valley of Egypt. This correspondence was written in the cuniform of ancient Mesopotamia and is dated before 1350 B.C.
2. God's covenant with Israel follows the pattern of covenants made around and prior to 1500 B.C. That pattern changed over time and by 800 BC was not compatible with what is recorded in scripture as God's covenant with Israel.
3. Terms found in Chapter 21 describe a legal and social status found in community life dating to the second millennium B.C.
4. The words translated "Red Sea", which some claim should be "Reed Sea" are YAM SUP and actually mean "Sea of the End" as that body of water was known throughout the ancient world prior to 1500 B.C.
5. The burnt-offerings and peace-offerings of chapter 32, offered by Israel to the golden calf are described by words commonly found in Ugarit texts from the second millennium. Ugarit was a Syrian port on the northeastern Mediterrean coast generally thought to be the birthplace of the Phoenician peoples.
6. There are others but for our purposes one final note; Chapter 15 is poetry written in a form like that of Canaan in the period from 1700 to 1500 B.C. and different than that used during the time of David.

There is a wealth of material that has been written about Exodus, but these few paragraphs should be sufficient to introduce our study today. Some of the others will be brought out as we study specific chapters and verses in the days to come.

Exodus Chapter One

Read **Exodus 1:1-7** Israel Revisited

v.1 “NOW THESE *are* THE NAMES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, WHICH CAME INTO EGYPT; EVERY MAN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD CAME WITH JACOB.”

The first word of this verse translated “NOW” should in fact be translated “AND” indicating that Moses wrote the book of Exodus as a continuation of the book of Genesis and was mindful of the fact that he was writing what would become one book containing the revelation of God.

v.2 “REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, AND JUDAH,”

As we go through these few verses we’re going to look back at the words of Jacob to his sons just prior to his dying. Some were blessed; some were warned that the consequences of sins that they had committed would be brought upon them.

Reuben would not excel, his descendants would not play a major role in Israel’s history:

Genesis 49:4 “UNSTABLE AS WATER, THOU SHALT NOT EXCEL; BECAUSE THOU WENTEST UP TO THY FATHER’S BED; THEN DEFILEDST THOU *it*: HE WENT UP TO MY COUCH.”

Simeon and Levi were instruments of cruelty against Shechem:

Genesis 49:7 “CURSED *be* THEIR ANGER, FOR *it was* FIERCE; AND THEIR WRATH, FOR IT WAS CRUEL: I WILL DIVIDE THEM IN JACOB, AND SCATTER THEM IN ISRAEL.”

Very little is read of Simeon in the history of the united kingdom of Israel and as the priestly tribe, Levi was scattered among the other tribes.

Judah would not only provide many of the rulers for God’s people, he would be the source of God’s blessing to all mankind:

Genesis 49:10 “THE SCEPTRE SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH, NOR A LAWGIVER FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET, UNTIL SHILOH COME; AND UNTO HIM *shall* THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE *be*.”

v.3 “ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, AND BENJAMIN”

Issachar would become slaves to other people and serve like as beasts of burden; they would be content with that role, seeing it as acceptable with no ambition to throw off there burden:

Exodus Chapter One

Genesis 49:14-15 "ISSACHAR *is* A STRONG DONKEY, LYING DOWN BETWEEN TWO BURDENS; HE SAW THAT REST *was* GOOD, AND THAT THE LAND *was* PLEASANT; HE BOWED HIS SHOULDER TO BEAR *a burden*, AND BECAME A BAND OF SLAVES."

Zebulun would be a haven and would be on the border of Sidon. They were allocated land in the northwest corner of Canaan.

Genesis 49:13 "ZEBULUN SHALL DWELL AT THE HAVEN OF THE SEA; AND HE *shall be* FOR AN HAVEN OF SHIPS; AND HIS BORDER *shall be* UNTO ZIDON."

Typically we think of the tribe of Judah when we think of those who served the southern kingdom. But Jacob's blessing said that Benjamin would be warriors, fierce in battle, like wolves in pursuit of their prey:

Genesis 49:27 "BENJAMIN SHALL RAVIN *as* A WOLF: IN THE MORNING HE SHALL DEVOUR THE PREY, AND AT NIGHT HE SHALL DIVIDE THE SPOIL."

Also because Jerusalem, Bethel, Bethany and other major cities and towns were within the land allocated to the tribe of Benjamin they also would continue until the very end of the Jewish residence in God's Promised Land.

v.4 "DAN, AND NAPHTALI, GAD, AND ASHER,"

Dan would gain its' wealth by cunning and guile rather than the valor of warfare:

Genesis 49:17 "DAN SHALL BE A SERPENT BY THE WAY, AN ADDER IN THE PATH, THAT BITETH THE HORSE HEELS, SO THAT HIS RIDER SHALL FALL BACKWARD."

Naphtali would grow in number and also be known for wise words:

Genesis 49:21 "NAPHTALI IS A HIND LET LOOSE: HE GIVETH GOODLY WORDS"

Gad would be servants and slaves but would eventually triumph:

Genesis 49:19 "GAD, A TROOP SHALL OVERCOME HIM: BUT HE SHALL OVERCOME AT THE LAST."

Asher would be blessed with material wealth:

Genesis 49:20 "OUT OF ASHER HIS BREAD *shall be* FAT, AND HE SHALL YIELD ROYAL DAINTIES."

Exodus Chapter One

v.5 “AND ALL THE SOULS THAT CAME OUT OF THE LOINS OF JACOB WERE SEVENTY SOULS: FOR JOSEPH WAS IN EGYPT *already*.”

During our study of Genesis 46 we looked at this verse vs **Acts 7:14** where Stephen numbers the descendants of Jacob in Egypt as “THREE SCORE AND FIFTEEN” or seventy-five. The explanation lies in the fact that, as Moses writes here, Joseph and his family were already in Egypt. Therefore that number of Jacob’s descendants that came to Egypt at the time of the famine is 70; not 75.

v.6 “AND JOSEPH DIED, AND ALL HIS BRETHREN, AND ALL THAT GENERATION.”

Here Moses reflects the passage of time in that Joseph, his brothers and all of that generation has now passed on to their reward. The death of Joseph is the subject of the final verse in the book of Genesis:

Genesis 50:26 “SO JOSEPH DIED, *being* AN HUNDRED AND TEN YEARS OLD: AND THEY EMBALMED HIM, AND HE WAS PUT IN A COFFIN IN EGYPT.”

v.7 “AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE FRUITFUL, AND INCREASED ABUNDANTLY, AND MULTIPLIED, AND WAXED EXCEEDING MIGHTY; AND THE LAND WAS FILLED WITH THEM.”

When Isaac sent Jacob to Laban he gave him this blessing:

Genesis 28:3 “AND GOD ALMIGHTY BLESS THEE, AND MAKE THEE FRUITFUL, AND MULTIPLY THEE, THAT THOU MAYEST BE A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE;”

When Jacob returned with his family to the promised land, God repeated to him the promise that he had made to Abraham and Isaac.

Genesis 35:11 “AND GOD SAID UNTO HIM, I *am* GOD ALMIGHTY: BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY; A NATION AND A COMPANY OF NATIONS SHALL BE OF THEE, AND KINGS SHALL COME OUT OF THY LOINS;”

Stephen refers to this promise in his sermon before the Sanhedrin:

Acts 7:17 “BUT WHEN THE TIME OF THE PROMISE DREW NIGH, WHICH GOD HAD SWORN TO ABRAHAM, THE PEOPLE GREW AND MULTIPLIED IN EGYPT,”

Read **Exodus 1:8-14** – Israel Enslaved

v.8 “NOW THERE AROSE UP A NEW KING OVER EGYPT, WHICH KNEW NOT JOSEPH.”

Exodus Chapter One

This event is also confirmed by the words of Stephen:

Acts 7:18-19 “TILL ANOTHER KING AROSE, WHICH KNEW NOT JOSEPH. THE SAME DEALT SUBTILLY WITH OUR KINDRED, AND EVIL ENTREATED OUR FATHERS, SO THAT THEY CAST OUT THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN, TO THE END THEY MIGHT NOT LIVE.”

As we noted in our introduction to this book, the timing of this king coming to power who “KNEW NOT JOSEPH” corresponds to the rise of the Egyptian 18th dynasty to power. Egypt had been conquered and ruled for several hundred years by the Hyksos people or Shepherd People, descendants of Shem from east and north of the Nile. At about the same time that Moses was born these rulers were overthrown and driven from Egypt by the original Egyptians from the southern part of the country who were descendants of Ham. Thus it would be expected that the new rulers would be those who “KNEW NOT JOSEPH”.

v.9 “AND HE SAID UNTO HIS PEOPLE, BEHOLD, THE PEOPLE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL *are* MORE AND MIGHTIER THAN WE:”

At the time of their exodus from Egypt that Israel had a population of approximately 2.5 to 3 million so we can understand Pharaoh's concern. Only about 50 years later we find:

Numbers 2:32 “THESE ARE THOSE WHICH WERE NUMBERED OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BY THE HOUSE OF THEIR FATHERS: ALL THOSE THAT WERE NUMBERED OF THE CAMPS THROUGHOUT THEIR HOSTS WERE SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND AND THREE THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY.”

This numbering of 603,550 did not include women, children under 20 years of age or anyone from the tribe of Levi. It is estimated that the population of Egypt wasn't much more than 3 million at the time of Israel's enslavement.

v.10 “COME ON, LET US DEAL WISELY WITH THEM; LEST THEY MULTIPLY, AND IT COME TO PASS, THAT, WHEN THERE FALLETH OUT ANY WAR, THEY JOIN ALSO UNTO OUR ENEMIES, AND FIGHT AGAINST US, AND SO GET THEM UP OUT OF THE LAND.”

Pharaoh was apparently not afraid that the Israelite people would rise up and overcome Egypt. He seemed to be more afraid that if someone else decided to come against him they would not fail to take advantage of their numbers. If any enemy came against Egypt Pharaoh was afraid that Israel would join them in overthrowing his throne.

Exodus Chapter One

v.11 “THEREFORE THEY DID SET OVER THEM TASKMASTERS TO AFFLICT THEM WITH THEIR BURDENS. AND THEY BUILT FOR PHARAOH TREASURE CITIES, PITHOM AND RAAMSES.”

A literal translation of the original language behind the word “TASKMASTERS” could be “chiefs” or “princes” of “burdens”, “princes” of “works” or “princes” of “tribute”. Any of these definitions, burdens, works or tributes could all be used to build the cities that Pharaoh wanted.

Pithom is a Hebrew name applied to the Egyptian city of Per-Atum or house of Atum. Atum was the first god of the Egyptian hierarchy, one who it was claimed created himself and was also the god of kings or kingship. The city of Ramses was built prior to the existence of the Pharaoh of the same name and was also the name of the district in which it was located. Both were in the Nile delta, not far from the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived. The Pharaohs of Egypt were not the only kings that used tribute, conscripted labor and/or slaves to build cities and other monuments to their rule. We find that Solomon did the same thing:

I Kings 9:19 “AND ALL THE CITIES OF STORE THAT SOLOMON HAD, AND CITIES FOR HIS CHARIOTS, AND CITIES FOR HIS HORSEMEN, AND THAT WHICH SOLOMON DESIRED TO BUILD IN JERUSALEM, AND IN LEBANON, AND IN ALL THE LAND OF HIS DOMINION.”

This took manpower and money requiring conscripted men, slaves, tribute and taxes.

v.12 “BUT THE MORE THEY AFFLICTED THEM, THE MORE THEY MULTIPLIED AND GREW. AND THEY WERE GRIEVED BECAUSE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.”

It’s impossible to fight against the hand of God. The more that Egypt afflicted Israel, the more that they demanded of them, the more that God blessed and multiplied them in their affliction. Pharaoh’s strategy isn’t working so he and his advisors have to reconsider what they will do to keep this people from being multiplied to the extent that they become greater than Egypt.

v.13. “AND THE EGYPTIANS MADE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO SERVE WITH RIGOUR:

What does the word “RIGOUR” mean? Clarke’s Commentary gives us a definition of the original word as being “with cruelty, great oppression, being ferocious with them.” This is probably the root word for our word “fierce”, which is supposed to have been derived from Hebrew as well as the Latin “ferox”. Later Moses reminds the Israelites that God rescued them from an “IRON FURNACE”.

Exodus Chapter One

Deuteronomy 4:20 “BUT THE **LORD** HATH TAKEN YOU, AND BROUGHT YOU FORTH OUT OF THE IRON FURNACE, *even* OUT OF EGYPT, TO BE UNTO HIM A PEOPLE OF INHERITANCE, AS *ye are* THIS DAY.”

We also see that this same kind of use and abuse of people in the manner which they were abused in Egypt was forbidden of the Israelites:

Leviticus 25:46 “AND YE SHALL TAKE THEM AS AN INHERITANCE FOR YOUR CHILDREN AFTER YOU, TO INHERIT *them for* A POSSESSION; THEY SHALL BE YOUR BONDMEN FOR EVER: BUT OVER YOUR BRETHREN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, YE SHALL NOT RULE ONE OVER ANOTHER WITH RIGOUR.”

v.14 “AND THEY MADE THEIR LIVES BITTER WITH HARD BONDAGE, IN MORTER, AND IN BRICK, AND IN ALL MANNER OF SERVICE IN THE FIELD: ALL THEIR SERVICE, WHEREIN THEY MADE THEM SERVE, *was* WITH RIGOUR.”

The words translated “WITH HARD BONDAGE” could also be translated “with grievous servitude”. This was the general condition of their lives in Egypt during this time. It was a life of the most painful servitude, oppressive enough without the kind of treatment they received from their taskmasters. It was made much more so by the cruelty that they endured. Archaeologists confirm through their findings that the Pharaohs of this period had passion for building with brick. Josephus in his history (Antiquities) claims that they also built the pyramids but this has been proven false; the dates don't match.

Read **Exodus 1:15-22** – Kill Male Children!

Everything that Pharaoh has tried so far has failed to diminish the power and growth of the Israelite nation. The more he oppresses them the more they prosper. Two things are happening. First of all God is with them and causing their prosperity. Secondly God is causing them to be hardened, tried and prepared for life in the wilderness. So Pharaoh and his council decide to try another tactic.

v.15 “AND THE KING OF EGYPT SPAKE TO THE HEBREW MIDWIVES, OF WHICH THE NAME OF THE ONE WAS SHIPHRAH, AND THE NAME OF THE OTHER PUAH:”

It is pretty obvious that two mid-wives could not have provided to the needs of a group of people at large as the Israelites. Clarke in his commentary considers that since the names are Egyptian rather than Israeli that they were those who supervised or had oversight of the Hebrew mid-wives. Coffman agrees with the supervision idea but declares that they were Hebrew. Either way Pharaoh tried to control the population of the Hebrew nation through the mid-wives that tended to the births of Hebrew children.

Exodus Chapter One

v.16 “AND HE SAID, WHEN YE DO THE OFFICE OF A MIDWIFE TO THE HEBREW WOMEN, AND SEE *them* UPON THE STOOLS; IF IT *be* A SON, THEN YE SHALL KILL HIM: BUT IF IT *be* A DAUGHTER, THEN SHE SHALL LIVE.”

Pharoah's instructions were simple, kill all of the male children and let the female children live. In short those whose first responsibility in the activity is to preserve life were to destroy life. As I read this my thoughts were of the abortion mills and the activities of organization we help fund with our taxes called Planned Parenthood. There isn't much difference between the two. Stephen confirmed what Pharoah did in his sermon:

Acts 7:19 “THE SAME DEALT SUBTILLY WITH OUR KINDRED, AND EVIL ENTREATED OUR FATHERS, SO THAT THEY CAST OUT THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN, TO THE END THEY MIGHT NOT LIVE.”

v.17 “BUT THE MIDWIVES FEARED GOD, AND DID NOT AS THE KING OF EGYPT COMMANDED THEM, BUT SAVED THE MEN CHILDREN ALIVE.”

Since the Mosaic Law had not been given yet, how would these women know that to destroy these children would be contrary to God? There was law during the patriarchal period we just don't have record of it except for bits and pieces of that law. This one we know:

Genesis 9:6 “WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED: FOR IN THE IMAGE OF GOD MADE HE MAN.”

v.18 “AND THE KING OF EGYPT CALLED FOR THE MIDWIVES, AND SAID UNTO THEM, WHY HAVE YE DONE THIS THING, AND HAVE SAVED THE MEN CHILDREN ALIVE?”

Another plan has failed so Pharoah is not a happy man. He has called the midwives to account for the fact that they are not carrying out his orders.

v.19 “AND THE MIDWIVES SAID UNTO PHARAOH, BECAUSE THE HEBREW WOMEN *are* NOT AS THE EGYPTIAN WOMEN; FOR THEY *are* LIVELY, AND ARE DELIVERED ERE THE MIDWIVES COME IN UNTO THEM.”

When we look at the situation that the Israelite women were in this excuse seems much less of an excuse and more of a reason. They say that the Hebrew women are just not as delicate as the Egyptian women and have less need of the services of a midwife. These Hebrew women were accustomed to hard labor and they probably spent a lot time in the open air. The nation was in a state of slavery. If the Hebrew women were not actually engaged in the work that was being forced upon their nation they

would have had to be involved in providing for the family as farmer, gardeners, shepherdess', etc. Consequently they would have been much healthier and stronger than other women. We add to that the provision that God was making for his people, Pharaoh is doomed to failure.

Exodus Chapter One

v.20 “THEREFORE GOD DEALT WELL WITH THE MIDWIVES: AND THE PEOPLE MULTIPLIED, AND WAXED VERY MIGHTY.”

This shows God’s special provision and blessing upon the Hebrew women and their children. Typically in a state of slavery even if the children were born healthy they would languish due to neglect because of the demands being made on their mothers. But here this is not the case, Israel continues to grow in numbers and prosperity.

v.21 “AND IT CAME TO PASS, BECAUSE THE MIDWIVES FEARED GOD, THAT HE MADE THEM HOUSES.”

The main character in this paragraph is Pharaoh. So the “HE” in this verse probably refers to Pharaoh. One commentator says that apparently since the Israelites still lived in tents that it was easy for them to hide new-born children. So Pharaoh made them move into houses where they could be more closely watched and to make it harder to hide new arrivals. Another contends that the mid-wives married Hebrews and became mothers in Israel. He sees the expression as proverbial and refers to:

Proverbs 11:18 “THE WICKED WORKETH A DECEITFUL WORK: BUT TO HIM THAT SOWETH RIGHTEOUSNESS *shall be* A SURE REWARD.”

He contends that since the mid-wives are obeying God that he is blessing them in proportion to their faith.

v.22 “AND PHARAOH CHARGED ALL HIS PEOPLE, SAYING, EVERY SON THAT IS BORN YE SHALL CAST INTO THE RIVER, AND EVERY DAUGHTER YE SHALL SAVE ALIVE.”

So Pharaoh renews his edict. All male children were to be killed, cast into the river. Of course, the only river around was the Nile. Some speculate that this was a form of sacrifice by Pharaoh to a god of the river, but most find that to be pretty far-fetched. The extreme cruelty displayed in the past few verses appalls us when we think about it. But it is no worse that what many people are placing upon mankind today. It may be in different forms, in different parts of the world, or in the case of abortion right under our noses. It is not less cruel, just an activity that is separated from us by time and therefore it just doesn’t seem to have much of an impact on the consciences of many people.