

“Let my people go!” Everyone over 45 sees this image in their head (PIC of Charlton Heston). I see this image in my head (AI pic of me). Today we officially kick off the book of Exodus, which is rip roaring fun. It has inspired freedom movements from the Pilgrim Fathers and the English revolutionaries of the 17th C to the anti-slavery campaigns of the 19th C to the civil rights movements in the 20th C. / Often attributed to Moses but the book itself never claims such. The Exodus occurred 480 years prior to Solomon (1 Kin 6:1, 967/66), which puts it 1447/46 BC under the Egyptian leader Thutmose III.

The book outlines real nicely into three sections: redemption through water (1-15), covenant on the mountain (16-24), presence in God’s house (25-40). Redemption, covenant, presence.¹ Or through water, to the mountain, for life in God’s house.²

Or David Helm says Exodus is answers how does God save (1-18), what does God say (19-32), how does God settle (33-40). Save, say, settle. / Some just break it down into two sections: Israel out of Egypt (1-14), then getting Egypt out of them (15-40). Or another way is part one: Covenant Remembered: Redemption, part two: covenant established: presence.

The Exodus tends to get the coverage, but that event is done by ch. 12. Rather, weight is placed on God dwelling: seven chapters of directions (25:1-31:18) then six chapters on the execution (35:1-40:33). Exodus is fundamentally about a home for God. To dwell with God in the house of God. Goal: **29:44-46** (25:8).

The NDBT says this: “Exodus is a story of the lengths to which God is willing to go to create for himself a people, ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ (Exod. 19:6), through whom his plan of universal blessing, promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, will one day be realized.”³ / **1:1-22** [42]. Increase of Israel, Opposition to. Friends, regardless of how powerful the opposition, God can’t be stopped. He is for you and he is with you.

I. The Increase of Israel (1-7) 1-5 Though the ESV obscures it, the first word of the book is “and.” So does Leviticus and Numbers. Exodus is a bridge. In fact, the first 6 words are the exact same as Gen 46:8 when it narrates Joseph bringing his family to Egypt.⁴ Here we have 70 of them. Fairly small start, but it doesn’t stay that way. Its like Chinese bamboo. Bamboo spends its first several years growing almost entirely underground, root system getting strong, then all of a sudden, around year 5, it shoots up 90 feet in just six weeks.

¹ Wright, 11.

² Morales.

³ NDBT, 146.

⁴ Names Gen 29:31-30:22, 35:25-26, 46:8-27, 49:1-28.

6-7 Note the contrast: verse 6 has one verb: died. Verse 7 has 5 verbs.⁵ Joseph and his generation *died*, but the people of Israel were fruitful, increased, multiplied, grew, filled the earth. If you know your Bible, this language should sound familiar. Keep a finger in Exod 1, and one in Gen 1. **Gen 1:28**. God's plan is to fill the world with his people who are called to rule the world on God's behalf. It's the call Jesus would call the KoG. But you know the story. Gen 3 the Fall, Gen 6 the sons of God with the daughters of men, then flood. But God preserves his people. **9:1**. But then we have another Fall in ch. 10 with the tower of Babel. Rather than multiplying and filling the earth, humanity stays in one place and tries to make a name for themselves lest they scatter abroad as God would have them do. The Lord confuses their languages and disperses them. Then Gen **12:1-3**, **15:5**: Land, Offspring, Blessing. Repeated to Isaac and Jacob. **46:2-4** (47:27).

So as we enter Exodus, God has kept his promise. In verse 1 a family comes, and in verse 7 the family has turned into a nation. Deut 10:20-22: "You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

That last verb in v. 7: the land was *filled* with them also means *swarm*. This is often used of insects. The Egyptians viewed them like multiplying cockroaches, or maybe even a swarm of locusts. This is creation language: **Gen 1:20-21**, **8:17**. The land was swarming with Hebrews. **Exod 12:37**. Fruitful! Sounds like SSBC. Drinking the same water.

God has kept his promise to multiply the offspring of Abraham, which gives the people of God confidence that he will also see them to the land, and also that he will then bless the nations through an offspring of Abraham. God's gonna keep his promise. And how will God bless the nations? By what means does God keep his promise to Abraham? Through those who will bring them the gospel. Who does that? The church.

God's plan has not changed. Gen 1:28 is the first GC. Matt 28 is the second GC. . . . We should be seeking multiplication. Not just addition, but multiplication – in all kinds of ways, but in two ways in particular: what we could call mission and motherhood or proclamation and procreation. By proclamation, I simply mean through evangelism and missions. Tell people the gospel. Pray for opportunities. Be bold. Take advantage. Fear God not man. Ask questions. Invite people to church. We'll have some more room here in a few weeks as our beloved college kids go home. Who's your one? Pray for the lost. We make disciples who make disciples. We plant churches who plant churches. We send missionaries.

Proclamation, then procreation. If you are in child-bearing years, round up. The replacement level fertility rate is 2.1 children per couple. The U.S is currently 1.6. Muslims average 2.9

⁵ Wright, 44.

children per couple. But don't just have kids, foster them, adopt them, disciple and educate them. All Christians should care about the next generation. Passing on the faith. Serve in kids ministry, youth ministry. Practice family worship at home. Pass on the faith. Pray for the young ones in this church. Historically, the main way the Kingdom of Christ expands is through the Christian home. We need both proclamation and procreation.

II. Opposition to Israel (8-22) 8 – This new king knew not Joseph, meaning he did not “acknowledge” Joseph. Gen 50:26 tells us that Joseph died at *110 years old*. That generation was forgotten. Flip over to **Judges 2:6-10**, where there is similar language used. He knew not Joseph. They knew not the Lord. They forgot. Church, we must combat generational failure and generational forgetfulness. Always. How? Teach the Word and model the Word. Talk the talk and walk the walk. Older people mentor younger people. Deut 4:9: “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.” A diligent watch on yourself and a diligent teaching of the next generation.

9-10 Egypt loathed Hebrew multiplication. They worry Israel might become the enemy of Egypt but there is one greater that they should be concerned with who will become their enemy: the God of Israel himself. / Pharaoh wants to keep them from multiplying. Keep in mind God’s plan in Genesis: for his people to multiply. Pharaoh has set himself up as the antigod. He wants to put God’s plan to a stop. Pharaoh is the seed of the serpent. **Gen 3:15**. Have you seen a **picture**?⁶ They had a serpent on their headdress. Listen to Ezek 29:3: “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, ‘My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.’” Exod 32:2a: “Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him: “You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas.” Rev 12:3: a great dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

Church, you will face opposition. The offspring of the serpent is perpetually hostile to the offspring of the woman. The people of God always have had opposition, always will this side of glory. Just be ready. Expect it. Buckle up. Put on the armor. And take heart. What did Jesus say? “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world”

11-12⁷ - This word for “afflict” is used in Gen 16:6 (*anaw*), which is about Sarah, wife of Abraham, afflicting the *Egyptian* slave Hagar. A bit of irony. In Genesis, the mother of all Hebrews oppresses/afflicts an Egyptian slave while Exodus 1 presents an Egyptian king oppressing/afflicting all Israel as slaves. In Genesis, God hears the cry of the oppressed and

⁶ <https://www.crystalinks.com/uraeus.html>

⁷ 1:11, 25:9 similar word.

provides water in the wilderness. In Exodus, God hears the cry of the oppressed and saves them through water into the wilderness (Deut 10:18-19)⁸

Israel is oppressed, but the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied. Compare 10 and 12. This is the first of many of Pharaoh's losses. Here we have a hint at the eventual outcome. The Lord will overcome. Regardless of how powerful the opposition, God can't be stopped.

13-14 The word for work (*abad*) is used 5 times in these verses: work work work work work. They could be translated like this: "And the Egyptians forced the sons of Israel to serve with violence. And they caused their lives to be bitter with hard *service*, with mortar and with brick and with all kinds of *service* in the field. In all their *service* with which they *served*, in violence."⁹ They made them work ruthlessly. The word can mean to pulverize, or to crush. There were not a ton of stones available so bricks had to be made. And brickmaking was no joke. It was heavy, hot, dangerous, dirty, exhausting work.¹⁰

This word for "work" can also be translated as serve, and is often used of worship. **4:22-23** (cf. 23:25). Israel will be freed from service to Pharaoh to service to Yahweh. Church, if you are in Christ, you are freed from slavery to Satan, sin, and death. But not freed from slavery. We move from slavery to self to slavery to Jesus. Rom 1:1: Paul a servant (slave) of Christ. Gal 1:10: "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant (slave) of Christ."

But friends, slavery to Christ is true freedom. It is what you were made for. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt 11:29-30). Deut 10:12-13: "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to *serve* the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today *for your good*?" In bondage to God, one finds freedom.

15-16 The king of Egypt is never named. But Shiphrah and Puah are. Pharaoh seeks to convert agents of life into agents of death. But the King of Egypt is not the sharpest tool in the shed. He tries to get *Hebrew* midwives to discard the *Hebrew* baby boys. But.

17 But. Something the Pharaoh didn't account for. These women fear God more than man – even the most powerful of men. God is finally mentioned for the first time in the chapter. Of

⁸ Wright, 53.

⁹ Blackburn, 32.

¹⁰ Wright, 57, Blackburn 32,33.

course, He has been behind the scenes all along. Dearly beloved, when you don't see or feel God, look to his promises and act in light of them. When you seemingly can't find him, look to his promises and act in light of them.

These women fear God, meaning they fear displeasing Him. They want to honor Him. To fear of God is to revere him as our Creator who owns us. They know what the consequences will be for disobeying the King of Egypt. They knew what they were doing: "they did not do as the King of Egypt commanded." Dearly beloved, courageous civil disobedience is sometimes called for. We submit to the governing authorities so long as they do not ask us to dishonor God. Like the apostles in Acts:

Acts 4:18-20: "So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." 5:29: "But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Church, let's resolve to fear God. W Gurnall: "We fear men so much because we fear God so little." Let's resolve to put God in his rightful place and people in their proper place. If you are pleasing Jesus, it doesn't matter who you displease. If you are displeasing Jesus, it doesn't matter who you please. Resolve to be like Shiphrah and Pua. Let me ask it this way: Will you live for the smile of men and the frown of God or will you live for the frown of men and the smile of God? These women lived for the smile of God! Starting early in the Bible, God uses the unlikely, the small ones. The God of Shiphrah and Puah is the God of Moses and our God too.

18-19 These women are vigorous! No midwives needed. The Hebrew midwife must have been a highly sought after position, a cakewalk job. Reminds me of Alicia the steadfast. I almost missed Karis' birth. We lived in Fort Worth and I was here in order to preach in Eula and on Saturday night she is running errands and texts me just so you know I am contracting. She really wanted me to preach in my hometown so kept saying she was fine. I finally stopped believing her, rushed to FW, rushed to the hospital and doc is like you're 7cm. Vigorous!

20-21 The Lord blesses their obedience. And rather than limiting multiplication, it adds fuel to the fire.

In physics, compression often strengthens rather than destroys. As Justin Martyr would say centuries later, the blood of the martyrs is seed for the church. Regardless of how powerful the opposition, God can't be stopped. But that doesn't mean it won't get tough.

22 Pharaoh doubles down. There are allusions to Gen 12, when Abram and Sarai went down to Egypt due to a famine. He tells his wife, "when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me, but they will let you live" (Gen 12:11-12). The Egyptian pattern continues: death to sons but let every daughter live. And Pharaoh enlists all his people. Death to all Hebrew baby boys. Those gender reveal parties would turn from celebration to dread. "It's a boy" goes from being a celebratory exclamation to a dreaded death sentence.

Sidenote: children suffer when God is pushed out of the picture. When God is in the picture, exposure of infants ceases, abortion is pushed back, trafficking is exposed. Where Christianity goes in the world, women and children flourish. Just facts.

Exodus 1:22 is a challenge to Gen 1:28. Antigod and anticreation, but God will show the Pharaoh through his own acts of de-creation, which we'll see in the plagues in a few chapters. In many ways, the whole book is a reversal of verse 22. It will not be Hebrew firstborns who die and it will not be Hebrews who drown in a body of water.

Several centuries later, another pagan King would issue a decree to kill all Hebrew baby boys. Matthew 2:13-15: "Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to *Egypt*, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I called my son'."

Though the offspring of the serpent tries to kill the offspring of the Woman, this Hebrew baby boy will prevail. The true Son of God will accomplish a New Exodus. / Friends, no human power can stop what God has planned and promised. Look to the promises and act in light of them. Regardless of how seemingly powerful the opposition, God can't be stopped.

Benediction: 1 Thess 3:12-13