



WEEK 1
GOD VS. GOVERNMENT

EXODUS 1:1-14

Scripture to Read: Exodus 1:1-14

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation:

Acts 13:17 – The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it.

Exodus Was Prophesied in Genesis

Genesis 15:1,13-14,16 –the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”...Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions...And they shall come back here in the fourth generation...”

The book of Exodus is part of the Pentateuch, meaning “book in five parts,” written by Moses. If you think of it like a movie, Genesis would be the prequel, and Exodus would be the sequel. Like any great story, Genesis provides some sneak previews of what’s coming in the follow-up book of Exodus. This came in the form of “the word of the Lord” coming to “Abram” in a “vision,” which is clearly sacred Scripture, and a divine revelation from God to Abram. Abram is awake for the vision, unlike a dream, which happens when someone is asleep. Because God is all-knowing about the future and sovereign over it, He reveals what will happen no less than roughly 400 years later. Anticipating that Abram would be startled and scared at God’s appearing, he is told “fear not,” which is the most common command in all of Scripture, appearing in a variety of ways.

God then gives Abram five prophecies as follows:

1. **Descendants:** In saying to Abram, who was childless and married to the barren, elderly Sarah, “your offspring,” God was promising that Isaac would be born and that through that son would come a legacy. However, at this point, Abram and Sarah had waited no less than 10 years for a son since God first promised his birth and would have to wait another 14 years (24 years in total) to have their son born and this prophecy fulfilled.
2. **Destruction:** When God spoke of Egypt, saying Abram’s descendants would become “servants there,” it was prophesied they would be taken from free to slaves. The Hebrew word translated “servants” can also be translated as “slave.”^{1,2}
3. **Deadline:** The timing of the enslavement of the Hebrew descendants of Abram was prophesied to be “400 years,” also spoken of as the “fourth generation.” As a general rule, in the ancient world, one generation was 100 years.
4. **Deliverance:** God not only promised enslavement to Abram’s descendants but

that they would also experience deliverance and “come out with great possessions.” This plundering of the Egyptians allowed the former slaves to be repaid by God from their captors, funding what would later be the construction of the Tabernacle^a, which was roughly \$300 million in today’s dollars, and possibly was even later used to build the Temple, which was roughly \$3 billion in today’s dollars.

5. Depart: After being away from the Promised Land, God prophesied that Abram’s descendants would “come back here in the fourth generation.”

In summary, everything God promised in Genesis 15 came to pass in the book of Exodus exactly as God promised. Roughly 25% of the Bible was prophecy when written, and there is nothing like biblical prophecy in any other religion. This helps to prove that the One True God is speaking through sacred Scripture, unlike anyone or anything else on earth or in the history of the world.

God Sovereignly Foreknew the Exodus

Genesis 46:2–5 – And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes.” Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

Nearing the end of the book of Genesis, God also spoke prophecy about the coming events detailed in the book of Exodus to Abram’s grandson Jacob (meaning “he cheats” or “supplants”). He was later renamed Israel (meaning “he wrestles with God”) after a night of doing just that. In fact, four specific prophecies as follows were given to him, starting with the same command to “not be afraid”:

1. Famine: God tells Israel during a time of great famine to move his family to the nation of “Egypt.”
2. Fate: God promises that “I will make you into a great nation,” speaking of the family of dozens becoming a nation of millions over the course of roughly 400 years.
3. Following: God promises, “I myself will go down with you.” By moving in obedience to God, they are not abandoning God, as He will travel with them. This will be a great comfort to the family, as the presence of God is the certainty of their future fate.
4. Future: God tells the old man Israel that he will die in Egypt, but that one day

^aExodus 25-40

his body will be returned to the Promised Land.

Jacob/Israel obeyed God and led his family to Egypt, where the family of Abram was originally welcomed, because Israel's son was second in command to the Pharaoh due to his God-given prophetic dreams that spared the nation. For roughly 400 years, they lived and multiplied in Egypt. During this time, no Scripture was written, and no miracle was recorded as the generations came and went. Amazingly, when you turn the page from the end of Genesis to the beginning of Exodus, you are covering 400 years of history. Everything begins to change in Exodus 1, written roughly 3,500 or so years ago.

God's Word Proves Totally True

Exodus 1:1-7 – These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Joseph died at the age of 110, having honored God and blessed his family along with the pagan nation of Egypt. God blessed Joseph, and he literally blessed everyone who came in contact with him throughout his life.

While in Egypt, God's people, descended from Abram, were "fruitful and increased greatly." Because of God's blessing, "they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong." The question to be answered is, "Why was Israel so prosperous in every way? The answer lies in the promises to Abraham and his descendants in Gen 12:1-3; 15:1-5, 12-16; 17:1-8; 21:12; 26:1-5; 28:10-17; 35:9-15; 50:24; and elsewhere. The Creator blesses Abraham's descendants..."³

A Blessed Family Can Become a Nation

Exodus 1:5 – All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons...

Exodus 12:37 – And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.

Numbers 1:45-46 – So all those listed of the people of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war in Israel— all those listed were 603,550.

The descendants of Abram entered Egypt as a small, broke, broken extended

family of 70 people; 400 years later, they had become a nation of 2-3 million. Since there were 600,000 men of military age, if you included their wives and children, you would expect the nation to be a few million people. "The census at Sinai (Numbers 1) showed 603,000 males, 20 years and older. If they represented about ¼ of the total population, which is a conservative estimate, then the Israelites numbered as many as two to three million people..."⁴

The encouragement here is that believers should be thinking in terms of generational legacy through their family. With the blessing of God, who knows what your descendants will be doing for God in 400 years!

God Creates, Satan Counterfeits

Exodus 1:8-14 – Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

What God creates, Satan counterfeits. The nation of Egypt was a counterfeit of the Kingdom of God. Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth and would rule and reign for some 1,300 years—more than the Greek and Roman Empires combined! The power of Egypt was from it being incredibly and overtly demonic. The demons gave Egypt military power, financial wealth, spiritual authority, sexual pleasure, and creative genius. These were the most demonic and proud people on earth:

Pharaoh appears in archaeological records with the snake on his crown. It makes us think of the promise in Genesis 3:15, where we read of the enmity between the triumphant seed of the woman over the opposing seed of the serpent. Pharaoh lived out the serpent role by killing boys. Egypt was the enemy of God, and God must deliver Israel so that "they may worship [Him]" (Exod 9:1). This story shows us a cosmic, spiritual battle, not just a battle between Moses and Pharaoh.⁵

The symbol for Egypt from 1,600 B.C. until the days of Moses was the serpent "Ouroboros," meaning "Devouring its Own Tail" or "All is One."⁶



Egyptian theology linked Pharaoh and Egypt's pantheon. From the fourth dynasty onward in Egypt, the pharaohs who ruled were worshiped as the "son of god Re." He was, to borrow the biblical expression, Re's image on earth, the maintainer of the cosmic order established by Re and his pantheon at the creation. He was a counterfeit to Christ, considered a god and man who walked between the seen and unseen realms.⁷



The Hebrew descendants of Abram who arrived in Egypt in the days of Joseph were forced into impossible slavery. Egypt was an incredibly wealthy nation with no formidable enemies, surrounded by the best building materials, and filled with the greatest minds in engineering—all of which led to legendary building projects.^{8,9}

When Government Becomes God

The forced hard slave labor of God's covenant people was intended to demoralize and exhaust. God's blessing on His people triggered fear and jealousy in those who worshiped counterfeit demonic spirits. The same principle is true today—some people will hate, despise, and even harm you because they are jealous and/or afraid of God's blessing on your life. The new role of creating bricks and doing hard labor was not what they were used to. As one commentary says, "The Israelitish colony was originally employed to a large extent in tending the royal flocks and herds (Gen. 47:6)."¹⁰

One of the backdrops of the Exodus story in the opening chapter is the war between God and government. When a government does not honor the One True God, it seeks to remove and replace God with some form of state worship. This is precisely what happened in Egypt. The king was worshiped as a god, the government literally

owned everything, and then they made a few million people slaves and property of the government as well. Egypt serves as an early example of the demonic spirit of communism—where the state owns and controls everyone and everything. Furthermore, the foolish adage that believers should not be involved in politics is on full display in Exodus—God’s people were not given a vote and had no political rights, which led to their enslavement and abuse. You can be sure that they wished they could vote for the king and have a court system to appeal their injustice to—but none of those freedoms were afforded. A story in Hebrew Midrash (a genre of Jewish literature that interprets and elaborates upon biblical texts) suggests that the Hebrews began as paid guests, but under this Pharaoh they were no longer paid, became property of the state, and were forced to work long and degrading hours under cruel taskmasters. This abuse came because of a change in political leadership.

Four Kinds of People

When it comes to wealth and power, our current cultural trend towards socialism sees good people as those who are without money and power and bad people as those who have money and power. This false framework was set by atheist Karl Marx in *The Communist Manifesto*. But in the Bible, there are actually four kinds of people:

1. Godly people with wealth and power
2. Godly people without wealth or power
3. Ungodly people with wealth and power
4. Ungodly people without wealth and power

In the story of Exodus, Pharaoh is category 3 at the beginning of the story and largely category 4 by the end of the story when God crushes his family and nation. God’s people start out as category 2 and, by the end of the story, move to category 1 after they plunder the Egyptians. They used the wealth to build a tabernacle where they could worship God—a 676-square-foot portable tent worth \$300 million in today’s dollars, amounting to roughly \$444,000 a square foot!

With the stage now set for God to show up in power and deliver His people, we learn from the New Testament writings of Jesus’ half-brother that the Deliverer who came for them is the same One who came for us—Jesus Christ! Jude 5 says, “Now I want to remind you...that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.” The same Jesus who destroys and delivers is the Hero getting ready to step into the battle in Egypt as a precursor to His later battle over Satan, who is the greater Pharaoh, and the kingdom of darkness, which is the greater Egypt.

Dig Deeper.

1. Read Exodus 1-18 or listen to it on the YouVersion Bible app on your

smartphone. You should be able to read it in about an hour.

2. If you want to, read all of Exodus 1-40 or have it read to you on the YouVersion Bible app on your smartphone. You should be able to read this in about three hours.

Walk it out. Talk it out.

1. If the group is new, take some time introducing yourself and explaining if you have any familiarity with the book of Exodus.
2. What stood out to you from the prophecies in Genesis that predicted Exodus in specific detail?
3. God blessed His people for generations between Genesis and Exodus. How have you seen God bless you and/or bless your family?
4. How can group members be praying for each other this week?

ENDNOTES

1. The words that describe both the affliction and the servitude of Israel (עבד ; ענה) are used in Gen 15:13. It is foretold that a people would “enslave and oppress them” (ענה) four hundred years (cf. Exod 12:40–42).
2. Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, vol. 1, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 96.
3. *Ibid.*, 55.
4. Rod Mattoon, *Treasures from Exodus*, vol. 1, Treasures from Scripture Series (Springfield, IL: Rod Mattoon, 2007), 7.
5. Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 12.
6. <https://www.egypttoursportal.com/en-us/the-ouroboros-symbol/>
7. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/beyond-king-tut/>
8. The abundant sandstone and limestone hills on either side of the Nile provided stone for massive Egyptian building projects, including pyramids and temples (Wilson, “Egypt,” 272). Exodus 5:6–19 indicates that buildings were also constructed from straw and mud bricks. Aswan was the main source for the granite, basalt, and quartz used in Egypt’s obelisks, statues, and sarcophagi (Aldred, *The Egyptians*, 28). Copper mined from Sinai and the Eastern Desert furnished the country with tools and weapons during the late Bronze Age. Mining in the Eastern Desert yielded gemstones—such as carnelians, garnets, jaspers, rock crystal, and amazonite—and metals, particularly gold and silver (Aldred, *The Egyptians*, 62). During the time of the New Kingdom, it “became proverbial among the nations of Asia that gold was as dust in the land of Egypt” (Aldred, *The Egyptians*, 62). This abundance of gold made Egypt wealthy and helped make possible many elaborate building projects. The gold earrings the Israelites brought from Egypt formed the raw

material from which Aaron fashioned the golden calf at Mount Sinai (Exod 32:4).

9. Andrew Koetsier, "Egypt, Geography of," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).
10. H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Exodus*, vol. 1, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 11.