



First Baptist Church At The Villages

INSPIRING FAITHFULNESS • MOSES' ADOPTION • EXODUS 1:1–2:10 •

FOR USE BY GROUPS 07/08 - 07/13/2019

Main Point

Even as the generations shifted for the Israelites and circumstances developed rapidly to their detriment, God faithfully preserved His people and prepared them for deliverance.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you think of the last six months, what are the first things you think about in terms of headline events? Did those events cause you heartache? Frustration? Anxiety?

What things that have swirled about in your soul in the last six months have caused you anxiety and heartache? How did those impact your understanding of God's provision?

How do you focus yourself on God's goodness and faithfulness in such seasons? What practices are the most helpful?

Genesis ended with the death of Joseph. The sons of Israel were still in the land of Egypt, where they had been permitted to settle by Pharaoh as Joseph led Egypt through the devastating famine. As Exodus opens, though, the seasons were changing for the Israelites. No longer guests in the land, they were made slaves because the successive pharaohs no longer honored Joseph's kingdom saving leadership. In the midst of incredible cruelty from Egypt's tyrannical leadership, though, God was patiently and deliberately working for the deliverance of His people.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read Exodus 1:1-10.

The opening of Exodus 1 links the events in the lives of the Israelites with the divine covenant with Abraham, recorded in Genesis 12 and 15. When Exodus opened by recounting the names of Abraham's great grandchildren (Jacob's sons), followed by the number of descendants, the writer confirmed God's faithfulness to His covenant. Verses 8-10 introduced two juxtaposed concepts: the evidence of God's continual covenantal blessing on the Israelites and the rise of an adversary as a result.

Do you tend to recognize God's activity in your life more easily in trying times or in bountiful times? Why do you think that is the case? Please give an example.

| Have a volunteer read Exodus 1:11-22.

The Egyptian solution to what was perceived as a mounting threat of the Israelite population was absolutely horrific. The first part of the solution was placing the Israelites in labor camps. Pharaoh's attempts to control the number of God's people—to prevent them from multiplying—were attempts to thwart God's stated plan in the garden of Eden in the midst of perfection, before sin entered the world. He had made himself an adversary of God. The attempts to control the multiplication of the Israelites failed miserably. This ushered in phase two of the attempts to control the population: genocide. In a sweeping stroke of evil, Pharaoh commanded the two Hebrew midwives to kill every male child born to a Hebrew woman. Nevertheless, the Hebrew midwives feared God more than Pharaoh and refused to carry out his orders of execution.

How does the resiliency of God's people in the face of malicious persecution shape your view about the way God is present with us?

What are some ways in your regular contexts that you have to decide if you fear God or man more?

| Have a volunteer read Exodus 2:1-10.

The misery of the people of Israel had long been a reality, certainly long enough for them to desperately desire to be freed. The opening of chapter 2, then, is the introduction to that eventual deliverer. The introduction of the parents' being from the house of Levi is significant as Moses retold the story of his birth. Moses was born into the only proper tribe for his future calling to serve as the leader and intermediary between God and His people.

What evidences of divine orchestration do you see in the circumstances of Moses' birth and adoption? How does it make you feel to know that God is just as mindful of you as He was of Moses?

Who are some people that God has specifically prepared to speak into your life? What experiences do you know God allowed into their life that are particularly helpful to you? What experiences in your life has God used to minister to others?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How do you handle seasons of persecution or difficulty, when God's moving may be imperceptible to you? What are some ways we can prepare now to face those challenges when they arrive?

How would you explain the difference between allowing God to use you as part of His redemptive plan and simply being kind to people? What are some practical differences that would characterize those different types of interactions?

Who in your life that you know you will see tomorrow needs the type of interaction that moves them toward freedom in Christ? Are you prepared to be a part of that? Why or why not?

Pray

Pray that God would allow our group to be instruments of redemption and deliverance. Pray that the Holy Spirit would prompt us in the areas in which we need to seek preparation now.

Commentary

| Exodus 1:1–2:10

1:1-7 These verses summarize Gen 37-50, which describe in full how Jacob's family arrived in Egypt, the welcome they received, and the deaths of Jacob and Joseph. The list of sons (vv. 2-4) does not follow chronological order. It begins with Leah's six sons, then Rachel's younger son, Benjamin. Rachel's older son, Joseph, had come to Egypt first, before Jacob and the rest. The names continue with the two sons of Rachel's maid and finally the two sons of Leah's maid. Without mentioning the mothers, the arrangement of the list reflects family tensions.

1:5 Two other Scripture passages also say that the number who went to Egypt was 70 (Gen 46:27; Dt 10:22). The Septuagint (at Gen 46:27 and Ex 1:5 but not Dt 10:22), two Qumran manuscripts of Exodus, and Ac 7:14 all mention 75. The Septuagint of Gen 46:20 lists five sons and grandsons of Ephraim and Manasseh. These go unmentioned in the Hebrew text and therefore account for the different totals.

1:7 Verses 7, 12, and 20 use several terms to talk about the multiplication of the Israelites. These terms also appear repeatedly in God's creation and flood mandates (Gen 1:20-22,28; 9:1,7) and in promises He made to the patriarchs (Gen 17:2,6,20; 18:18; 26:4,24; 28:14; 35:11). Any Egyptian king who feared and opposed the growth of the Israelite population was opposing the purposes of the Lord.

1:8-22 These unsuccessful attempts to deal shrewdly with the Israelites seem to escalate in desperation and decline in shrewdness. The king of Egypt never reexamined his assumptions; he only tried new methods.

1:8 One plausible explanation of Egyptian and Israelite connections contends that Joseph came to Egypt when the native Egyptian 12th Dynasty ruled in the Middle Kingdom era. Years later, Semitic foreigners known as "Hyksos" took over much of Egypt until the time of Kamose, who reasserted Egyptian rule. The new king is not named in Exodus, nor is any other Egyptian king, but perhaps he was a Hyksos ruler without concern for the rights granted to the Israelites by an earlier regime. Another suggestion is that the "new king" was Ahmose, who followed his brother Kamose as ruler, reigned about 25 years, completed the restoration of Egyptian rule, and founded Dynasty 18 and the New Kingdom era, a period when Egypt exerted a powerful presence in the ancient Near East. Any 18th Dynasty king might have been wary of the Israelites if he associated them with foreigners such as the ousted Hyksos.

1:9 This is the first time the Israelite people are called a "people." They came to Egypt as an extended family, but now Pharaoh compared their numbers with his own. This exaggeration indicates Pharaoh's eagerness to convince his courtiers that they must take decisive action.

1:10 Pharaoh's concerns are ironic in view of the Lord's later statement that if the Israelites faced war on the way to Canaan, they would flee back to Egypt for safety (13:17).

1:11 Supply cities held agricultural produce and other useful items as part of the king's strategic oversight of the country (Gen 41:35; 1Ki 9:15-19).

1:12 The Moabites shared with the Egyptians this dread of the Israelites when they saw how numerous they were (Num 22:3). Pharaoh's scheme resulted in more Israelites and more fear among the Egyptians, not less of both as he had intended.

1:13-14 Five forms of the same Hebrew word are translated here with forms of "work" or "labor." (A different word for labor is in v. 11.) The repetition drives home what the Egyptians were doing, and also prepares for making a comparison, since the same word can refer to service in worship. The Lord would give the Israelites new work of a different sort (3:12; 4:23; 7:16,26; 8:1). Elsewhere forms of the word translated bitter describe situations of severe hardship and loss (Ru 1:13,20; 1Sam 30:6; 2Ki 4:27; Isa 22:4).

1:15 In this book that takes a profound interest in identities, ironically the king is nameless, but the midwives who honored God are named. Verse 15 begins with the introduction to the king's speech, but then it is as if the king could not speak until the midwives were identified. The delay is more obvious in Hebrew since verse 16 starts over with the same statement the king... said that starts verse 15.

1:16 Observe them as they deliver is literally "look at the stones," a term referring here to the genitals. The orders are clear; the midwives must kill Israelite sons and let the daughters live.

1:17 By letting the boys live, the midwives showed that they feared God rather than Pharaoh (Pss 96; 112; Pr 1:7; 3:7; Ac 4:19; 5:29).

1:18-20 True or not, the midwives' excuse about the superior ability of Hebrew women must have been believable, since Pharaoh did not pursue the matter further.

1:22 When Pharaoh commanded all his people, his desperate desire to kill Israelites came out into the open.

2:1-10 The story of how this unnamed baby was protected during dangerous and uncertain times adds to the suspense and indicates the child's important future role. Its close-up depiction of Pharaoh's oppression in one family helps communicate how all the Israelites needed deliverance. It also raises sympathy for the rescued infant and causes us to wonder what he will be like as both a child of slaves and the adopted son of a princess.

2:1 The genealogy of Aaron and Moses names Amram and Jochebed as the parents (6:20; Num. 26:59). Moses' Levite heritage is appropriate, considering his later responsibilities in instituting national worship, since the tribe of Levi was set apart for priestly service (chapters 28-29; Num. 1:47-54; 3:5-13; 8:5-26).

2:2 Readers in cultures that prize superficial attractiveness may wonder if the mother would have cared for the baby if he had been homely. Her reaction is probably better understood against a background of high infant mortality. The mother recognized that, except for the decree of Pharaoh, this baby would surely live and thrive. Also, the broadly positive adjective translated "beautiful" is often translated "good" and could describe such varied items as a calf (Gen. 18:7), houses (Deut. 8:12), a tree (2 Kings 3:19), land (Ex. 3:8), a method of operating (Ex. 18:7), or what is morally right (Ps. 14:1; 34:8). The combination of "saw" and "good" in Exodus 2 echoes its use in Genesis 1. Hebrews 11:23 refers to hiding this child as an exercise of faith by his parents. No doubt they were both involved, though the narrative focuses on what the mother and sister did.

2:3 Asphalt and pitch made the basket waterproof; even full-sized boats could be similarly sealed (Isa. 18:2).

2:4 His sister was Miriam (15:20; Num. 26:59). If a baby was found, people might look around for the mother, but a small girl would attract little attention and could report to her mother or, better yet, think quickly and offer the services of her mother.

2:5-6 The wording in Hebrew tracks the movements of Pharaoh's daughter more closely than the English wording can easily do, helping reflect her important status.

2:10 During the New Kingdom era, Egypt would bring foreign boys to court to train them for service in Egyptian territories. The actions of Pharaoh's daughter continue the undermining of his plans by women, though he considered daughters safe enough to let them live (1:16,22). Moses' name had significance for both Egyptian and Hebrew hearers. In an Egyptian name like Thutmose, "mose" is related to an Egyptian verb meaning "bear, produce, bring forth" and a noun meaning "child," while "Thut/Thoth" was a god; so "Thutmose" and similar names celebrated a connection between the birth of a child and an Egyptian god. Pharaoh's daughter named Moses in a way that suited Egyptian naming patterns and commemorated her action in saving his life, celebrating his connection with her. The name calls to mind a verb meaning "draw out" (2 Sam. 22:17; Ps. 18:16), which to Hebrew readers must have sounded appropriate for the person who led the Israelites out of Egypt. This child's name seems more appropriate than Pharaoh or his daughter could have thought.