

**A PERSONAL  
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

**EXODUS**

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**Ex. 1:1** Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.

**Ex. 1:2** Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,

**Ex. 1:3** Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

**Ex. 1:4** Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

**Ex. 1:5** And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt *already*.

**Ex. 1:6** And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

Exodus opens with the names of the twelve sons of Israel (Jacob) who went to Egypt; there were 70 of Jacob's descendants in all (each son and his household). Then we are told that Joseph and his brothers "and all that generation" died. (This, of course, jumps out to me in trying to define a "generation" re the coming of the Lord. It sounds like it is talking about a period of time relating to people of a like or closely associated life span--i.e., that of brothers. Genesis 15:13-16 implies that a generation is 100 years.)

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them *four hundred years*; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But *in the fourth generation* they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.

**Ex. 1:7** And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

This verse tells us that the Israelites "were fruitful, and increased abundantly." This was the first major growth spurt for the nation of Israel—the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Emphasis is made on their growth through the use of many phrases that seem a bit redundant. The point seems to be that the people flourished, increased in great numbers and were mighty in strength. They **filled** the land (I'm assuming this means the land of Goshen that they were given by the Pharaoh).

**Ex. 1:8** Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

**Ex. 1:9** And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we:

**Ex. 1:10** 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.

A new king comes to power in Egypt that did not know about Joseph. He immediately realizes that the Israelites have become too numerous and strong and pose a possible danger to the security of the Egyptians. They were afraid the Israelites might choose to join their enemies in war against them and try to take over more than the land of Goshen.

The interesting thought is that if the Israelites were more and mightier than the Egyptians, how did they keep them enslaved them so easily?

My daughter-in-law made a good observation: “The need to oppress others comes from a lack of character (be it courage, strength, wisdom, leadership...) in the oppressor.

**Ex. 1:11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.**

**Ex. 1:12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.**

**Ex. 1:13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:**

**Ex. 1:14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, *was* with rigour.**

So they decided to make the Israelites their slaves and put them to work building cities to store their treasures. They intimidated the Israelites by using taskmasters to debase them and make their work harder. It became a vicious cycle—the harder they were worked, the more they multiplied, and the harder they were worked and oppressed. This caused the Egyptians to loathe/abhor the Israelites and feel a “sickening dread” toward them. So, the taskmasters worked the Israelites that much harder and treated them more cruelly. They were made to labor by making bricks, mortar, and any other type of service in the field that was needed. The Israelites became bitter with the hard labor and ruthless treatment. The amazing thing is that the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew.

Principle: Suffering and affliction produce growth.

**Ex. 1:15 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:**

**Ex. 1:16 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.**

**Ex. 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.**

There were two Hebrew midwives at this time, Shiphrah and Puah. The king of Egypt gave them orders to kill any male babies being delivered, but to let the female babies live. Because the midwives feared God, they disobeyed the king. Scripture supports the actions of the midwives, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

**Ex. 1:18 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?**

**Ex. 1:19 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.**

**Ex. 1:20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty.**

**Ex. 1:21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.**

The midwives were summoned to the king; he asked them why they were letting the baby boys live. Then the midwives tell a lie—they tell the king that the Hebrew women are strong (not like the Egyptian women) and give birth before they get there.

Evidently, this was justified in the eyes of God because verse 20 says God “dealt well with” the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. Then He also gave the midwives families of their own.

This is interesting to me since the emphasis is definitely on the obedience/fear to/of God by the midwives. Basically no emphasis at all is placed on the fact that they lied. The emphasis seems to be that what is in our heart, our intent, is what is most important. I realize that this is before the time of the “ten commandments,” but the stories in scripture to this point indicate that the people knew that certain things were pleasing to God and certain things were not. The midwives knew it would not please God for them to kill the babies. It is always our priority to follow God’s commands and desires for us as opposed to human leaders or governments.

**Ex. 1:22 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.**

In this verse the king gives a command to all the people—not just the midwives—to throw every baby boy that is born into the Nile River, but to let the girls live. (He surely couldn’t think that the parents/relatives would obey such an edict.)