

# Old Testament History

Lesson #5

Exodus 1:1-15:21

## Outline

### I. ***The Exodus From Egypt (Exodus 1:1-15:21)***

- A. God remembers His people (1:1-2:25).
  1. Israel's suffering (1:8-22).
  2. The birth of Moses (2:1-10).
  3. Moses flees to Midian (2:11-25).
- B. The call of Moses (3:1-4:17).
- C. Moses leaves Midian (4:18-31).
- D. Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go (5:1-7:13).
- E. God's judgment against Egypt (7:14-11:10).
  1. First plague: Water turned to blood (7:14-24).
  2. Second plague: Frogs (7:25-8:15).
  3. Third plague: Gnats (8:16-19).
  4. Fourth plague: Flies (8:20-32).
  5. Fifth plague: Death of the livestock (9:1-7).
  6. Sixth plague: Boils (9:8-12).
  7. Seventh plague: Hail (9:13-35).
  8. Eighth plague: Locusts (10:1-20).
  9. Ninth plague: Darkness (10:21-29).
  10. Announcement of tenth plague: Death of the firstborn (11:1-10).
- F. The Passover (12:1-28).
- G. Deliverance from Egypt (12:29-13:16).
- H. Salvation at the Red Sea (13:17-15:21).

## Notes

### ***Exodus 1:8-22***

- The "new king" who was ignorant of Joseph's contribution to Egypt has been variously identified. The most likely choice favors Ahmose I (1570-1546 B.C.), who expelled the Hyksos rulers from Egypt, or more like Amenhotep I (1546-1525 B.C.) or Thutmose (1525-1512 B.C.). The Hyksos or shepherds were foreign invaders who drove the Egyptians south and did not use Egyptian hieroglyphic writing on their scarabs. They ruled Egypt and were a barbaric race of invaders, hated and opposed by the people and hostile to their ancient civilization and religion. They were most likely of Phoenician origin.
- The first measure of the Pharaohs against Israel produced the opposite result from what had been expected. Far from diminishing, the Israelites increased so much that it frightened the Egyptian leadership.

- The term “taskmasters” is common to both Hebrew and Egyptian. The same official Egyptian name appears on the famous wall painting from the Theban tomb of Rekhmire, the overseer of the brick-making slaves during the reign of Thutmose III. The painting shows such overseers armed with heavy whips. Their rank is denoted by the long staff held in their hands and by the Egyptian hieroglyphic determinative of the head and neck of a giraffe. The two storehouse cities Israel built were for the storage of provisions and perhaps armaments. The location of Pithom may be equated with Tell er-Retabeh (“Broomhill”), which some equate with Heliopolis. Rameses has most recently been located at or near Qantir (“Bridge”).
- Pharaoh resorted to another measure where all male children were to be killed. However, Shiphrah and Puah had respect for life, as God wanted them to have. Even though they lied to Pharaoh, they are praised for their outright refusal to take infant lives. Their reverence for life reflected a reverence for God. Thus God gave them “families.” The midwives may also have attempted to avoid answering Pharaoh’s question directly, and therefore they commented on what was true without giving all the details.

### ***Exodus 2:1-25***

- It is remarkable that the very measure which Pharaoh had taken for the destruction of Israel eventually led to their deliverance. Had it not been for the command to cast the Hebrew children into the river, Moses would not have been rescued by Pharaoh’s daughter, nor trained in all the wisdom in Egypt to fit him for his calling.
- It is also remarkable that there was no special revelation to Amram and Jochebed, nor was there need for it. It was a simple question of faith, weighing the command of Pharaoh against the command of God and their own hopes. They decided to trust the God of their fathers.
- Zoan was the ancient Avaris, the capital of the Shepherd kings. It lay on an arm of the Nile which was not infested by crocodiles, and where the princess therefore could bathe. Under the circumstances, Pharaoh's daughter acted as every woman would have done. At this time, the royal princesses exercised special influence -- in fact, two of them were coregents. The salvation of Israel was connected with the instrumentality of the Gentiles.
- When Jochebed brought the child back to the princess, she gave her adopted son the Egyptian name “Moses,” which appears in several of the old Egyptian papyri, meaning “brought forth” or “drawn out.”
- In no country was such value attached to education, nor was it begun so early as in Egypt. No sooner was a child weaned than it was sent to school and instructed by regularly chosen scribes. There would be no

doubt that Moses would have received the highest training possible. Undoubtedly, had Moses wanted, a career higher even than Joseph's might have been open to him, but he had chosen a different path (Hebrews 11:24-26).

- Although Moses' faith was deep and genuine, it was far from pure and spiritual. When Moses saw the well-known severity of the ancient Egyptians, he struck down the Egyptian. In so doing, he had taken the part of the Hebrews and encouraged them to rebellion. Open resistance to Pharaoh was impossible; the sole hope of safety lay in renouncing all further connection with his people. Like Jacob of old, and Joseph under similar circumstances, Moses must go into a strange land. All that Egypt could teach him he had acquired. What he still needed could only be learned in loneliness, humiliation, and suffering. This lesson taught him to trust in God who would fulfill His word.
- The land of Midian was an area east of the Gulf of Aqaba or on the Sinai Peninsula, inhabited by the nomadic sons of Abraham by Keturah (Genesis 25:2). Reuel was probably a worshiper of God. His daughter, Zipporah, was a violent-tempered woman who had little sympathy with the religious convictions of her husband. During the most trying period of Moses' life, he actually had to send her away (Exodus 18:2-3).
- The king of Egypt who died was probably the same one who sought Moses' life for murdering an Egyptian. Thutmose III was probably the Pharaoh of the oppression. The bondage of the children of Israel now seemed to be part of the settled policy of the Pharaohs. Centuries had passed without any revelation from God, but the children of Israel turned in earnest prayer to the Lord. God, in having "respect unto them," recognized them as the chosen seed of Abraham.

### ***Exodus 3:1-4:17***

- Moses had taken Reuel's flocks to Mt. Horeb or Sinai for pasturage and water probably in the early summer. Moses saw that the only timber tree of any size in the area was wrapped in fire, but it was not consumed. The angel of the Lord instructed him to take off his shoes. In the East, shoes are worn mainly as protection from defilement and dust, and are taken off so as to not bring defilement into a holy place.
- Israel, in its present despised state, was like the thorn bush in the wilderness, burning in the fiery "furnace" of Egypt, but not consumed. God was ready to deliver them out of Egypt into a land that flowed with "milk and honey." It was large and fruitful enough to support six Canaanite races.
- There could not have been a greater contrast between Moses of forty years ago and the Moses who pleaded to be relieved of his work. If his former self-confidence prompted him to take the matter into his own

hands, his timidness now showed his complete reluctance to act as the Lord's messenger.

- In scripture, the "name" is regarded as the manifestation of character or purpose. "I AM THAT I AM" signified God's unchangeable nature and faithfulness.
- To prepare the people for leaving Egypt, Moses gathered the elders of the people together to announce that the promised time had come. Moses was cautioned not to misconstrue any rejection he received as a sign that God had not called him or that God was not with him. God would break the will of Pharaoh, and when Israel left Egypt, they would do so as conquerors, not slaves. The terror of Israel had fallen on the Egyptians and when the Israelites asked for their gold, they gave it to them.
- For the first time in history, God bestowed upon man the power to work miracles. These miracles were intended to be like "a voice" from heaven, bearing direct testimony to the truth of Moses' commission. The three signs which were to be displayed each had its own special reference: the first to Pharaoh, the second to Israel, and the third to the might of Egypt.
- Pharaoh really had no right to detain the people in Egypt (cf. Genesis 47:4). Not only were they wrongfully oppressed, but unrighteously detained. Very little was asked of Pharaoh, and his obedience could have been very easy. The demands of God are supposed to try what is in us. In this case, the divine forbearance went to the very edge of condescension.

### ***Exodus 4:18-31***

- Moses' conversion took place in Midian, not in Sinai where God had appeared to him. Furthermore, Moses had made his decision to return before he heard that the Pharaoh who had sought his life had died.
- In all, there are ten places where "hardening" of Pharaoh is ascribed to God (4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17). But it must be stated just as firmly that Pharaoh hardened his own heart in another ten passages (7:13, 14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34, 35; 13:15). The effect of one is the hardening of man to his own destruction, and the other, the hardening of man to the glory of God.
- It is interesting to note that Israel is called "my firstborn" by God, conveying that Israel was not to be alone in the family of God.
- Zipporah's words of reproach indicate that the root of the problem of not circumcising the boy earlier lay in her rejection of the rite. For one small neglect, apparently out of deference to his wife's wishes, or perhaps to keep peace in the home, Moses almost forfeited his opportunity to serve God and wasted eighty years of preparation and training!

- The response was just as had been predicted -- "the people believed" (4:31). The pressure of physical hardship had made this people more receptive than would be their custom in later years. It is encouraging at this point, though, that their long stay in Egypt nor their bondage had extinguished their faith in God or their hope of deliverance.
- It is sad to say, but with Pharaoh we learn that even the most stupendous miracles cannot subdue man's rebellious will. Resistance to God must ultimately end in fearful judgment.

### ***Exodus 5:1-11:10***

- The plagues would show the Egyptians that God was the only true and living God, far above all power of men and gods (Exodus 9:14). It also is showed that He was faithful to His covenant, who remembered His promises and would bring His own people out of the land of Egypt.
- Moses and Aaron had to appear before Pharaoh twice before the plagues occurred. The first time was with a simple message, and the second time with a message and a sign to attest their mission. When they used their sign, the superiority of their power was proven by Aaron's rod swallowing up their rods. There was really nothing that the Egyptians "magicians" did that Eastern "magicians" cannot do today.
- The plagues were miraculous, even though they were known in Egypt, and had all previously visited the land in some measure. The miraculousness of the plagues consisted in their severity, their successive occurrence, and their beginning and ending at the word of Moses.
- They were also orderly arranged and steadily progressed. In actuality, there were only nine plagues because the tenth plague was a judgment by God Himself. The first three were in connection to the Nile River. The other six came exclusively upon the Egyptians. The first three plagues showed the impotence of Egypt, while the last six plagues showed that God reigned in the midst of the earth. The first plague would have probably started in the middle of June, and the killing of the firstborn would have occurred about ten months later.
- Each one of the plagues was a direct attack on the Egyptian gods: Turning the Nile River into blood (Hapi, Khnum), frogs (Heqt, Hapi), swarms of lice (uncertain; perhaps an attack on Egyptian priests), flies (Uatchit), disease on the cattle (Apis, Ptah, Mnrvis, Hathor), boils (Sekhmet, Serapis), destruction of crops by locusts (Isis, Seth), darkness (Ra, Atum), death of the firstborn (Osiris, Pharaoh).

### ***Exodus 12:1-15:21***

- Although there was darkness in Egypt, in Goshen during the three days there was light and festive joy. The children of Israel, as directed by God, had already selected their passover lambs and were awaiting their deliverance.
- The direction to sprinkle the doorway meant that the blood was to be applied to the house itself, to make atonement for it, and in a sense to convert it into an altar. While the angel was killing the firstborn in Egypt, the Israelites were engaged in their sacrificial meal, consisting of the passover lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. The sacrificial lamb pointed to Jesus; the hyssop was a symbol of purification; and the unleavened bread was symbolic of the removal of the old leaven or corruption. They would sit down with their loins girded, shoes on their feet, and a staff in their hand professing their faith in their coming deliverance.
- This was the night of Israel's birth as a nation and of their adoption as the people of God. The month of the passover from that time forward became the first of their year. The passover was made a perpetual institution, and its observance was followed by a feast of unleavened bread lasting seven days.
- There were approximately two million Israelites who left Egypt. They took the bones of Joseph with them, professing their faith in the promises of God. The straight road to Canaan would have taken them into the land of the Philistines, face to face with a warlike race, against which the Egyptians could barely stand. God did not lead them the fastest way, but the best way.
- At Etham, the Lord first went before His people in a cloud and fire (Exodus 13:21). This was the "Shekinah," or visible presence, which rested on the Most Holy Place when the tabernacle was built (cf. Isaiah 4:5).
- When the Israelites turned south, Pharaoh quickly gathered his army, the main strength of which was 600 chariots. For the Israelites, both fleeing and defense were impossible. Unfortunately, the faith of Israel failed and they murmured against Moses. Fear and faith cannot exist in the same heart.
- God parted the Red Sea by a strong east wind blowing all night. By the time Israel had reached the far shore, night had probably fallen. To the Egyptians, victory would have been within easy reach. A spectacular display of thunder, lightning, rain, and earthquake struck terror in their hearts (cf. Psalm 77:16-20). God had also made the chariot wheels come off or jam against one another.
- Most scholars believe the Red Sea crossing must have taken place near Suez. The "tongue" of the Gulf of Suez may have reached farther north into the depressions known today as the Bitter Lakes. If a steady wind

pushed the shallow water north into the Bitter lakes, it would have lowered the level of the water so that a land bridge would appear. According to Egyptian history, 17 years elapsed after the death of Amenhotep II before any Egyptian expedition was undertaken into the Sinai Peninsula, and 22 years before any attempt was made to recover the power over Syria which Egypt had lost.

- The Israelites' firstborn were to be consecrated to God perpetually, as a reminder of the Israelites' redemption by the death of Egypt's firstborn. As they left Egypt and had to travel through hostile territory, God took them under His own care, with this visible sign of His guidance and protection. It never left them until they reached Canaan, 40 years later (14:19, 24; 33:9-10; 40:34-38; Numbers 9:15, 23; 10:11).
- The first recorded song in the Bible is a song of redemption from bondage. On the other side of the sea, Moses and the Israelites sang a song of thanksgiving and triumph which was repeated every Sabbath in the temple, when the drink offering of the festive sacrifice was poured out. The song consists of three stanzas (Exodus 15:2-5, 6-10, 11-18), of which the first two show the power of God in the destruction of His enemies, while the third gives thanks for the result. In fact, God is mentioned 45 times in 18 verses. As the deliverance from Egypt, with its plagues of judgment on Egypt, became for the Jew a signal of God's just rule over the world, so God's judgment and the deliverance of the followers of the Lamb bring forth from the victors over the beast songs of praise to God for His righteous acts in history (Revelation 15:3).