

Exodus 1-2 - “Foreigners in a Foreign Land”

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings (which is what the very name of Genesis means). Exodus now follows and is a book of redemption. The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt is a wonderful type or picture of what Jesus did for us, and the redemption He purchased for us on the cross. The name Exodus means ‘exit’, ‘departure’, or ‘the way out’. And Jesus has definitely provided for us a way out from our sinful life and the penalty for that sin.

We are going to see many wonderful types and pictures in our study through Exodus. Many New Testament principles has an Old Testament picture. And much of New Testament doctrine cannot be fully understood without an understanding of the various events and symbols found in Exodus.

An example of some basic types in Exodus:

1. Egypt is a type of the world system – against the things of God.
2. Pharoah is a type of Satan; prideful, lying, seeking praise.
3. Israel is a type of the church – delivered from the power of the world and set on a pilgrim journey.
4. The crossing of the Red Sea is a type of baptism (1 Corinthians 10:2).
5. Moses is a type of Christ, God’s prophet and deliverer.
6. The manna pictures Jesus as the Bread of Life (John 6).
7. The rock that is struck is a picture of the smitten Christ, through whose death the Holy Spirit is poured out.
8. The tabernacle and its furnishings has many types associated with it.
9. And of course, the Passover is a great picture to us of the sacrifice of Christ, by which we gain life through His shed blood.

So with the name Exodus meaning ‘departure’, this sets us up to see the major theme we’re going to look at in the book of Exodus, and that is the Passover and deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

In a sense we can say the Exodus story is our story. Like Israel, we are:

- 1) Saved from slavery and sin, and saved to worship God and be a witness of God.
- 2) Saved by the blood of a lamb.
- 3) Saved to leave the former things behind and embark on a pilgrimage trusting the Lord until we reach the promised land.

If you're looking for a way out from that which might have you in bondage, Exodus is the book for you! It's very name reminds us that God wants to deliver us and lead us into victory in Him.

Outline:

1. God's Power – 1-19
 - a. Persecution – 1-6
 - b. Plagues – 7-12
 - c. Pilgrimage – 13-19
2. God's Precepts – 20-24
3. God's Presence – 25-40
 - a. Designed – 25-31
 - b. Delayed – 32-34
 - c. Dedicated 35-40 ¹

1:1-7 - *Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; ³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; ⁴ Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. ⁵ All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). ⁶ And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. ⁷ But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.*

There has been about 300 years that have passed since the death of Joseph to where we pick up the story in Exodus (there will be some 400 years that will transpire in Egypt for the Israelites, counting from the time Jacob moved there to the time of their Exodus). Exodus is just a continuation from Genesis. The word **Now** which is used at the beginning of the book is basically like saying 'and'. Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible, didn't write them as books but as one continuous account. The book, chapter, and verse divisions were all added by various translators over time. So Moses is simply picking up the story again from a point which needs to be explained.

- He shows us the limited amount of people that first travelled down to Egypt. The sons of Jacob and their families totalled 70 people. Stephen said 75

¹ Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., p. 236). College Press Pub. Co.

people in Acts 7:14, as he was using the Septuagint which included Joseph's grandsons and thus came to the number 75).

But notice how these people, the Israelites, were blessed in this land that they were foreigners in. They were prosperous, fruitful, and grew to be a large nation there in Goshen. By the time of the Exodus out of Egypt there were 603,550 men 20 years and older (Ex. 12:37; 38:26). This means totalling all the people they were probably upwards of 2-3 million people. This is exactly what God had said in **Genesis 46:3-4**, *"So He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. ⁴ 'I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.'"*

- This was not a very logical thing for Jacob to do (previous encounters with Egypt had been quite detrimental for his fathers). Yet God says, *'Go, you'll be blessed.'*
- In fact this was the very reason for Jacob to take his family there. God knew that if they were to remain in the land of Canaan, they would be enticed by their neighbors to follow after their practices. They would also begin to intermarry which would pollute this race of people that God was going to work wonders through. But, in the land of Egypt, they would be a separated group with which they could grow and flourish as an individual nation. Egyptians were a group of people that felt they were of a superior class from all others, and their dealings with Israel would have been few and far in between. Egypt acted as this protective womb for the nation of Israel to be birthed. And here we see the fruit of this.

God had His people in Egypt to:

1. Prepare His people for the land of promise
2. Protect His people from potential problems

So Israel has had it good in the land of Egypt. Now if they keep having it go well for them, they'll never want to leave. And God's purpose was not for them to remain in Egypt. So things get a little uncomfortable for Israel...

1:8-11 - *Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; ¹⁰ come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our*

enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.”¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Israel had gained much favour from the previous ruling kings. The people had remembered what a great influence and blessing Joseph had been. But now they find themselves in a period well after those days, where Joseph, and the things he did, were not remembered.

- It's believed that Joseph was ruling during a period called the Hyksos period. The Hyksos were shepherd kings, a Semitic people who were very open and kind to the Hebrew people. But now it would seem this line of kings were deposed and the former dynasty of Egyptian kings were on the throne again.

At some point down the line, the testimony and account of Joseph was not talked about or discussed. It's amazing how quick people can forget about important events or happenings in their history.

- Bringing it home on more of a personal level, it's sad when Christians begin to forget or neglect that first love, that gratefulness for their salvation. Jesus addressed that with the church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:4-5. A person can easily get comfortable, get busy, and begin to neglect the Word of God. Soon they find themselves no longer talking about the Lord and having a heart for Him. Things quickly go sideways and digress into spiritual poverty when that happens.
- May we never cease remembering what Jesus has done for us and giving Him praise every day for His goodness.

1:12 - But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel.

Opposition or persecution does not need to have the affect the enemy wants it to have on the person who is a believer. God gives us the ability to bear that and to produce fruit through it. It's often through the pressure and trials that God is birthing something wonderful. Don't let circumstance defeat you, let them cause you to move ahead with excitement at what God is going to do in it.

It's exciting to see God work against the flow. Joseph has already revealed this truth so wonderfully in what he went through. In the same manner, the early church was persecuted and pressed, but they grew exponentially out of that. We

don't like being afflicted in our lives, but God often times will use that to bring much growth in our walk with Him.

- **Genesis 50:20**, *"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."*
- "Persecuting the church is like pouring gas on a fire – it causes the flame to burn brighter. Under persecution true believers intensify their commitment, streamline their service, bulk up their faith. In times of ease faith can get flabby. But under mounting persecution the Church becomes clean, lean, and serene." (Sandy Adams)
- We've certainly seen an element of that in the last couple of years.
- And it's so true that difficulty and suffering causes us to cling all the more to our Saviour. "If we never have any trouble along the journey, we would never have any reason to long for Heaven. Like the Israelites, we need the house of bondage to help drive us to the Promised Land." ²

1:13-14 - *So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. ¹⁴ And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.*

So before things got better, they got worse.

The Hebrew people are believed to be the ones that built some of these large pyramids in Egypt.

1:15-16 - *Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; ¹⁶ and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live."*

Again we see the attempt of Satan to try and prevent the Messiah from being born. There's been many attempts in history to exterminate the Jewish race (Haman in Esther, King Herod in Matthew, Hitler). Satan did not want to encounter the Seed which would crush his head (Genesis 3:15). So he's been at work to try and subvert God's plan.

² Ryken, P. G., & Hughes, R. K. (2005). *Exodus: saved for God's glory* (p. 37). Crossway Books.

- Here's the great thing, Satan cannot do anything to subvert God's plans! He might think he's getting the upper hand at times, but I think he's just deceiving himself to think he might actually be gaining ground.
- Satan can only gain the ground we allow him to. Don't give him an inch.

Notice here the progression of Pharaoh's attack: bring the people into slavery, and then to death. These are the same tactics of Satan in his attempt to destroy humanity. To bring people under bondage and in slavery to sin (**John 8:34**, "*Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.'*"). And then sin leads to death (**Romans 6:23**, "*For the wages of sin is death...*").

Just like Israel who needed a Saviour to free them from these shackles, so too we needed a Saviour to deliver us from bondage and death. For Israel, Moses would be that figure, for us, Jesus is our ultimate Saviour who brings us out of death and into abundant life!

Now were these midwives Hebrew or Egyptian? We're not for sure on that, but their names seem to be Hebrew. And were these the only two midwives over the Israelites? Seems like a tall order with so many women. Perhaps they were head nurses that oversaw many other midwives and they were the closest to Pharaoh in the chain of command.

What we do know is these midwives seem to be honorable women. Their names are: **Shiprah** = beautiful one, and **Puah** = splendid one. And they truly did a splendidly beautiful act...

1:17-21 - *But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?' ¹⁹ And the midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.' ²⁰ Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. ²¹ And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.*

These midwives are to be commended as some of the first champions of pro-life. They had a fear of God that was greater than their fear of man.

A reverent fear of God is a healthy way of dictating our actions and deciding what we should do or not do. Our highest calling is to obey God. When the law of the

land is contrary to the commands of God, the believers first responsibility and priority is to God!

- **Acts 5:27–29**, *"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, ²⁸ saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" ²⁹ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."*

Now there's been a lot of debate over whether these midwives lied and whether it was right to do so or not. We've all given ourselves excuses of when it's acceptable to bend the truth a bit and we love to use this as a good proof-text. Some have come down hard on these midwives for conducting themselves in deceit.

"A less critical answer is offered by J. B. Lightfoot, the astute nineteenth-century English Bible commentator, who described the words of the Hebrew midwives as "not a lie, but a glorious confession of their faith."¹⁷ Their lie—if it can even be considered a lie—was such a whopper that they can hardly be accused of trying to deceive anyone! Think about it: If what Shiphrah and Puah said was literally true, then why would the Hebrews even need midwives? This is one of the places where understanding the Bible requires a sense of humor. Speaking tongue-in-cheek, the midwives were making sport of Pharaoh by suggesting that the Hebrews were hardier than the Egyptians. What they said was more a joke than a lie. Thus Pharaoh was mocked as well as deceived."³

Nevertheless, these midwives were blessed for their actions. They went from being midwives to being housewives. They were blessed with families of their own!

1:22 - So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive." Interesting how Pharaoh wanted to drown all the babies. This would be the same fate he and the Egyptian army would face at the Red Sea. You reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7).

¹⁷ John Lightfoot, "A Handful of Gleanings out of the Book of Exodus," in *Works* (London, 1822), 2:357.

³ Ryken, P. G., & Hughes, R. K. (2005). *Exodus: saved for God's glory* (p. 42). Crossway Books.

2:1-4 - *And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. ² So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. ³ But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. ⁴ And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.*

Moses does not go into much detail of his family, or even his own upbringing for that matter. He doesn't even mention his parents' names at this point. They were Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20). Truly Moses became a man of humility, not drawing attention to himself.

- "Fanciful Jewish legends say that Moses' birth was painless to his mother, that at his birth his face was so beautiful that the room was filled with light equal to the sun and moon combined, that he walked and spoke when he was a day old, and that he refused to nurse, eating solid food from birth." ⁴

There was no doubt something that compelled Amram and Jochebed to go against the king's command to throw their baby boy into the river. It went beyond a maternal love for their child. It was an act done out of faith in God. **Hebrews 11:23**, *"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command."*

- They must have believed that this was a special person that would be used by God in a special way.
- Little did they know how right they would be.

It's also a wonderful testament of how when we step out in faith, God can take even the most dire circumstances and do such wonderful things through them. We'll see that as we continue.

Interestingly, Jochebed followed the King's command by putting her son in the river, only she did so with special protection.

Jochebed followed a Biblical example from another era in which lives were threatened. I'm speaking of course of Noah and the Ark he built. Again that ark was covered inside and out with pitch. The Hebrew word used was 'kopher',

⁴ Guzik, D. (2013). *Exodus* (Ex 2:1–2). David Guzik.

later translated as atonement. It's a different word for pitch used here, nevertheless, we see an important model followed by this women of faith.

2:5-10 - *Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. ⁶ And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?" ⁸ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. ⁹ Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. ¹⁰ And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."*

Jochebed and Miriam took the initial steps of faith, but they left a lot in the hands of the Lord. Yet here we see the amazing providence of the Lord. At just the right time, the right person happens to come down to the river where Moses was. God has everything worked out so wonderfully.

Initially Jochebed was only hoping for her son's life to be spared and safe. Yet now she's reunited with her son and getting paid to raise him! How awesome is that!?

- **Ephesians 3:20–21**, *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*

If the king at this time is Thutmose I, then his daughter would be Hatshepsut. She called his name Moses which means 'drawn out'. This is so fitting as he was not just drawn out of the river, but he will be the means God will use to draw the Israelite nation out of Egypt and to draw them out of the Red Sea into salvation.

2:11-15 - *Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. ¹² So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him*

in the sand. ¹³ And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” ¹⁴ Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

At this point Moses is 40 years old. For a further account of his life up to this point look at Acts 7:20–23.

As much as Moses had grown up in Egyptian wealth and education, the Hebrew heritage instilled in his life by his mom probably burned in his heart as well. It caused him to go and investigate the conditions of his Hebrew brethren.

So Moses goes out and comes upon a conflict between an Egyptian and a Hebrew. Perhaps Moses is beginning to see that perhaps God has some special plans for him and so Moses takes it upon himself to fix this situation. So he looks one way, looks the other way, and then kills the Egyptian! What have you done Moses! This surely wasn't what God had for you! And Moses buries this man in the sand. We often try to bury our mistakes and sin rather than confess them. The Bible is clear, *“Be sure your sin will find you out”* (Numbers 32:23).

- You see, Moses looked one way, then the other way, but he should have looked up! That's the most important direction. We need to ask God what He has for us.
- Though Moses may have thought he had a special role in God's plans for the Hebrew people, he went out in the power of the flesh rather than being led of the Spirit. If we're not taking time to look up and consider God's ways, we won't be walking in the Spirit and we will make a mess of our ways.

Moses now begins to face the repercussions of his actions. And he flees. Moses came out flexing his muscles, but he will have to learn it's not by his ingenuity or wisdom that God's work will be done, it will be through dependency on God alone.

And so Moses spent 40 years in the education system of Egypt, and now he will spend the next 40 years in the education system of the desert. Moses will need to be broken of his pride and self-sufficiency before he can be used of God mightily.

2:16-20 - *Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How is it that you have come so soon today?" ¹⁹ And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock." ²⁰ So he said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."*

Moses, trained in Egyptian military, saw the need and stepped in to help.

Now when the daughters went back to pops to tell them what this man did for them, he's thinking, 'What, you left a guy like that behind!! I could use some extra hands around here. That guys marriage material, go get him!!'

2:21-25 - *Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. ²² And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land." ²³ Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. ²⁴ So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.*

Moses was content... That's good. He's come from the palace of Egypt and is now in the rugged plains living as a shepherd – a despised and degraded group of people in the eyes of an Egyptian. Moses is learning humility and simplicity and he's content!

- We will only find joy and peace when we learn to be content in whatever situation we find ourselves in. Our contentment does not come through our circumstances, but it's from the Lord.

Part of Moses' secret is found in the identity of his son – Gershom = foreigner. Moses understood he was just a foreigner in a foreign land. We're not to make this place our home.

God heard the groaning of Israel and responded. Not because they were so faithful, or good, or because they deserved it, but it was based on His covenant that He had made with them (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:14; 17:1-14).

- It's the same reason that He deals with you and me on a daily basis. Not because we've earned it, but because He promised He would. **Hebrews 8:7-12** says, *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- ⁹ 'not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. ¹⁰ 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹¹ 'None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. ¹² 'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'"*
- We can come before the Lord and call out to Him knowing that it is by grace we can come. And it is by that grace and love that the Lord is faithful to respond.

"The Pharaoh who sought Moses' life died, but the government policy of oppressing the Hebrews did not change. At this point the people of God turned with one accord to the Lord. They groaned and cried out to God for help. Four verbs stress the divine response: God *heard* their groaning; he *remembered* the covenant with the patriarchs; he *looked* on the Israelites; and he was *concerned* about them (2:23–25). The divine concern was translated into concrete action when God called a prophet to be their deliverer." That deliverer is Moses and the commissioning of Moses unfolds in the next chapter. ⁵

This chapter reveals to us Moses as a very interesting type of Christ:

- They were both born in troubling times where the boys were to be killed, yet God preserved them.
- Both had to leave a glorious dwelling place and accept humility.

⁵ Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., p. 252). College Press Pub. Co.

- They were both rejected by their own people the first time.
- They both went out and received a gentile bride unto themselves.
- They were accepted by their people upon their second coming, as their deliverer.