

Timeline of Truth – Israel Multiplies; Moses Is Born (Exodus 1:1 – 2:10)

1:1 The book begins by introducing to the reader a list of names. Accordingly, following the common *incipit* naming system of ancient times, the name of the book of Exodus in Hebrew is “These are the Names” (*’ēlleh šēmōt*). To a modern reader such an opening might not seem consistent with high literary style. It was, however, not only good style but entirely welcome in the ancient setting, where a group of refugees of mixed ethnic origin, many of whom were young enough to be learning their national traditions for the first time, were being reminded of God’s plan through a people descended from Abraham and heirs to the promises first made to him. These promises had four main components: (1) vast population increase for his descendants (Gen 12:2); (2) a long and important family lineage (the meaning of “make your name great” in Gen 12:2); (3) a worldwide blessing through his offspring (Gen 12:2–3), and (4) the eventual granting of unearned citizenship in a special land of God’s choosing (implied in Gen 12:1; explicit in Gen 15:18–21). The fact that several biblical books begin with a genealogy (e.g., 1 Chr 1–9) or end with one (e.g., Ruth) is a reflection of the importance ancient Israelites placed on being able to trace their lineage, as part of understanding who they were and what their purpose was on earth.

An even more basic reason for beginning the book with a list of names, however, was the desire to ensure that the reader understood Exodus as a direct continuation of Genesis, accomplished from the outset by making the first six words in the Hebrew of Exodus (“These are the names of the sons of Israel who went ...”) identical to the first six words of Gen 46:8. (Stuart, D. K. [2006]. *Exodus* (Vol. 2, pp. 57–58). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

<p>¹ Now these <i>are</i> 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 <i>already</i>).</p>	<p>1. Jacob’s Descendants <u>Numbered</u> at the Start in Egypt</p>
<p>⁶ And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation.</p>	<p>2. Joseph’s Generation <u>Dies</u></p>
<p>⁷ But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.</p>	<p>3. God <u>Multiplies</u> Israel’s Descendants as <u>Promised</u> <i>The Hebrew literally reads, “As for the Israelites, they grew, they were fruitful, they swarmed, they increased, they got powerful more and more, and the land was filled with them.” (Stuart)</i></p>
<p><i>In this brief sentence is contained reference to a vast political and ideological shift in Egypt. Joseph almost certainly rose to power (Gen 41–42) during the time of the Hyksos pharaohs, outsiders who had invaded and conquered Egypt. After the expulsion of the Hyksos, an accomplishment much celebrated in Egyptian history, it is quite understandable that feeling against foreigners would run high. It is also understandable that a pharaoh who had expelled—or whose ancestors had expelled—hated foreign oppressors would have had no sympathy for or even interest in honoring the memory of a foreigner who had served as Egypt’s prime minister during the reign of one of those Hyksos pharaohs. In other words, the Israelites were now foreigners in a country whose government hated foreigners, under a pharaoh who was surely determined to prevent what he saw as the miseries of the past from returning, and who would have had not the slightest sense of loyalty to any agreements his Hyksos predecessors worked out with Joseph. The functional implication of “did not know about Joseph” is therefore “refused to honor any prior arrangements protecting the status of the Israelites.” By implication, the Israelites are going to be in trouble, their former assurances of acceptance as foreigners in Egypt now being useless. (Stuart)</i></p>	
<p>⁸ 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 <i>are</i> 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.” <i>Next would come, gradually, a reduction also in numbers. This would be the expected natural result of the combination of poverty and extremely hard work the Israelites were forced to endure. The text does not overtly report that the pharaoh said, “Let’s kill off some of the Israelites with hard labor” because he probably never announced publicly any such wording, but that is surely the implication of his plan. (Stuart)</i></p>	<p>4. A New King <u>Fears</u> the Children of Israel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Did not <u>know</u> Joseph (different dynasty...)</i> • <i>Considered the number of Israelites a <u>threat</u></i> <i>A danger to the country might indeed grow out of the fact that the Israelites did not become Egyptianized. The power of Israelitish traditions is shown especially in the circumstance that even the descendants of Joseph, though they had an Egyptian mother, certainly became Jews. (Lange)</i> • <i>Wanted to limit the <u>population</u> of Israel</i>
<p><i>Their rapid growth was a glorious blessing of God, in faithful fulfillment of his creation decrees (see below) and patriarchal promises (see vv. 1–7). How then could it get them in so much trouble? The short answer is that in a fallen world, the blessings of God are often so in conflict with the prevailing corrupt values of this world’s culture that they function as a threat to those who are not aligned with God’s will. The parade example of this phenomenon is the rejection of Jesus. He was the purest example of good that the world has seen, and yet God could send him to earth with the certain knowledge that he would be put to death by people who thought they were doing the world a favor. (Stuart)</i></p>	
<p>¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.</p>	<p>5. <u>PLAN A</u>: Enslave the Children of Israel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Israelites Built great <u>cities</u> for Pharaoh</i>

<p>¹² But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel.</p>	<p>6. Israel Continues to <u>Grow</u>, and Egypt Continues to <u>Fear</u></p>
<p>¹³ 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.</p>	<p>7. <u>PLAN B</u>: Make Work Even <u>Harder</u> for Israel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brick making in the hot sun</i> • <i>Field work (requiring irrigation)</i>
<p>¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiprah 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 <i>them</i> on the birthstools, if it <i>is</i> a son, then you shall kill him; but if it <i>is</i> a daughter, then she shall live."</p>	<p>8. <u>PLAN C</u>: Command the Midwives to <u>Murder</u> Baby Boys</p> <p>Shiprah and Puah were likely the lead midwives of many.</p>
<p>¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.</p>	<p>9. The Midwives <u>Obey</u> God Rather than Man</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feared God</i> • <i>Obeyed God's Principle Above Man's Command</i>
<p>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 <i>are</i> not like the Egyptian women; for they <i>are</i> lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."</p>	<p>10. The King <u>Questions</u> the Midwives</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>11. God <u>Blesses</u> the Midwives, & <u>Multiplies</u> Israel</p> <p>NOTE: In 80 more years, Israel would have 603,550 men over 20 that were able to go to war. (Numbers 1:46)!</p>
<p>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."</p>	<p>12. <u>PLAN D</u>: Command the <u>People</u> to Kill their Baby Boys</p>
<p>^{2:1} And a man of the house of Levi went and took as <i>wife</i> a daughter of Levi. ² So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he <i>was</i> a beautiful <i>child</i>, she hid him three months.</p>	<p>13. One Family's Story: A Mother <u>Hides</u> Her Baby</p> <p>Heb 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw <i>he was</i> a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.</p>
<p>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 <i>it</i> in the reeds by the river's bank. ⁴ And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.</p>	<p>14. A Mother Takes a <u>Chance</u> with Pharaoh's Daughter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Put the baby in an <u>ark</u> of bulrushes</i> • <i>Put the ark in the <u>reeds</u> by the river's bank</i> • <i>Have the sister watch the <u>response</u></i>
<p>⁵ 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 had opened <i>it</i>, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."</p>	<p>15. Pharaoh's Daughter Has <u>Compassion</u> (as Hoped)</p>
<p>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?"</p>	<p>16. The Sister Offers to Call a <u>Nurse</u> (as Planned?)</p>
<p>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 <i>you</i> your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.</p>	<p>17. Pharaoh's Daughter Hires the <u>Mother</u> to Care for Her Son!</p>
<p>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."</p>	<p>18. The Baby Grows, and Is <u>Adopted</u> by Pharaoh's Daughter</p>

