

EXODUS – September 19, 2021

Exodus 1:8-11. There arose a new king over Egypt

8. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who didn't know Joseph. 9. He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10. Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it happen that when any war breaks out, they also join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and escape out of the land." 11. Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. They built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses.

8. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who didn't know Joseph"

The new king probably represented a new dynasty (a new series of rulers of the same dynasty line).

Joseph likely began his ascent to power under a pharaoh of the 17th Dynasty of foreign rulers.

Egypt hated to be under the rule of foreigners. They celebrated the coming of the 18th Dynasty Egyptian (around 1550 B.C. and lasted 250 years.)

New rulers are likely aware of Joseph's role in their history. He is also likely an unpopular foreign dynasty. Egyptians had no interest in perpetuating him or his descendants.

9. "He said to his people, 'Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we'"

Verse 7 established that the Israelites have "increased abundantly" and that "the land was filled with them."

If it is correct that this pharaoh is an Egyptian who has aggravated under foreign rule, it is only natural that he would be concerned with the growing power of the Israelites.

Is there anything similar in the American history?

10. "Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it happen that when any war breaks out, they also join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and escape out of the land"

Pharaoh's comments will sound familiar to anyone who has studied American history. Each successive wave of American immigration triggered intolerance toward African-Americans—Irish—Italians—Eastern Europeans—Jews—Asians—Hispanics—and others.

Can you name other times in our history that caused fear of people from other nations?

11a. “Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens”

Slavery is pharaoh’s first line of defense

- restrict the Israelites’ freedom
- force them to serve at hard labor
- limit their freedom to reduce the possibility they might rise up against the Egyptians
- force them to work at hard labor to make them too exhausted to carry out a revolt

11b. “They built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses”

The Israelites settled in Goshen, a fertile region in the Nile Delta (Genesis 47:27; 50:8).

They were supply cities, and the fertile land of the Delta would provide abundant crops for storage.

The Delta would also make it unnecessary to relocate the Israelites before putting them to work on the supply cities.

Exodus 1:12-14. The more they multiplied

12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out. They were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13. The Egyptians ruthlessly made the children of Israel serve, 14. and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all kinds of service in the field, all their service, in which they ruthlessly made them serve.

12. “But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out. They were grieved because of the children of Israel”

Pharaoh had bet that he could control the Israelites and limit their growth by requiring them to do backbreaking work, and their strength would decline in proportion to the hardship that they were required to bear.

The more Egypt oppressed them, the stronger they grew.

The Israelites didn’t prosper because they are a superior people but because they worship a superior God.

Egypt’s failed effort removed the idea they could control the Israelites?

13. “The Egyptians ruthlessly made the children of Israel serve”

After the failure to control, they will work them even harder.

14. “and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all kinds of service in the field, all their service, in which they ruthlessly made them serve”

Note the adjectives in this verse ‘bitter,’ ‘hard,’ and ‘ruthlessly.’ The Egyptians intend to break the spirit of the Israelites.

Exodus 1:15-22. If it is a son, kill him

15. The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah, 16. and he said, "When you perform the duty of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stool; if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." 17. But the midwives feared God, and didn't do what the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the baby boys alive. 18. The king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and have saved the boys alive?" 19. The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women aren't like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous, and give birth before the midwife comes to them. 20. God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and grew very mighty. 21. It happened, because the midwives feared God, that he gave them families. 22. Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "You shall cast every son who is born into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

15. "The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah"

Now pharaoh implements a new strategy. This verse raises two questions:

- First, does pharaoh personally instruct these two midwives?
- Second, why only two midwives?

This verse identifies the midwives as Hebrews. That does not necessarily mean that they are Israelites the word Hebrew was used to refer to various nomadic tribes.

It is significant that the text honors these women by giving their names, while pharaoh is not so honored. These women earn this honor by saving the lives of babies whom they have been ordered to kill.

16a. "When you perform the duty of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stool"

The word used for "a pair of stones," causes all kinds of speculation in the commentaries I reviewed.

One idea means "confirming that they are boys." I'll leave this to your imagination

Another is it refers to stones which new mothers would use for support while giving birth.

16b. "if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live"

Pharaoh's initial plan to stifle the growth of the Israelites has failed, so he now turns to a more direct method. He orders these midwives to kill all the baby boys.

Where do we see a similar story in the New Testament?

YOUR THOUGHTS?

17a. “But the midwives feared God”

Fearing God in Hebrew scripture means trusting God and having reverence and faith that leads to obedience to God’s will.

17b. “and didn’t do what the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the baby boys alive”

There are multiple examples of people who showed great courage to do the right thing in the face of great and evil power.

Israel today honors “Righteous Gentiles” post Holocaust

18. “The king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said to them, ‘Why have you done this thing, and have saved the boys alive?’

Pharaoh expects absolute obedience.

He could order their execution for disobeying his direct order.

19. “The midwives said to Pharaoh, ‘Because the Hebrew women aren’t like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous, and give birth before the midwife comes to them’

The Israelites are stronger than pharaoh expected.

The midwives tell pharaoh that Hebrew women are strong and independent when it comes to giving birth which I think is a bit of a slam to Egyptian women.

What do you think is their strategy with this argument?

20. “God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied, and grew very mighty”

This verse says the Israelite people continue to grow in numbers and in strength in spite of Pharaoh’s attempts to curtail growth.

21. “It happened, because the midwives feared God, that he gave them families”

God rewards the midwives for their faith and faithfulness by giving them families of their own.

22. “Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, ‘You shall cast every son who is born into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive’

The people are to throw the babies into the Nile River where they will drown or be eaten by crocodiles. Egyptians view the Nile as a sacred river, so he thinks they will see these actions as religious sacrifices. FRIGHTENING!!!

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The Lord bless us and keep us;
The Lord make his face to shine on us
The Lord be gracious to us
and give us peace.

Numbers 6:24-26