

Exodus Overview:

1. Exodus 1: "To Multiply or to Die."
2. Exodus 2:1-4:17 "Preparation for Deliverance."
3. Exodus 4:18-7:5: "A Weak Leader; A Strong God."
4. Exodus 7:5-8:19: "God Judges Through Plagues."
5. Exodus 8:20-12:32: God Saves Through Plagues."
6. Exodus 12: "The Passover as Exodus."
7. Exodus 13-14 "Set Apart by Deliverance."
8. Exodus 15:1-21: Hebrew Poetry in "A Song of Moses."
9. Exodus 15:22-17:16: "A Grumbling Journey; A Patient God."
10. Exodus 18:1-20:21: "In the Presence of God."
11. Exodus 20:22-25:9 (25:10-31:18 are overviewed): "Instructions for God's People and His Dwelling Place."
12. Exodus 32:1-40:38: "The Tabernacle and the People of God Built."
13. Exodus 33:1-23 "The Backside of God"

Opening

"To Multiply or to Die." That is the question. It is also the title of our study and should remind you of a familiar quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "To be or not to be; that is the question." When Pharaoh asks the question, "To multiply or to die?" he is asking the wrong question because he isn't God. In this study, we will see how only God gets to answer that question.

Setting the Stage

- Who wrote Exodus?
- What was happening in the narrative before Exodus begins?
 - And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (Gen 50:24-26)
- What then is the book of Exodus about based upon Joseph's prophecy?

Why look at Genesis so much? Because Exodus is a continuation of the narrative in Genesis.

- If you look at Genesis 1:1 ff and Genesis 50:26, it is interesting to note how there is a movement from "in the beginning" to "in Egypt." You begin with the creation of all life and end with death. Egypt is the place of death. But it is also the place of a new beginning.
- How is the word "multiply" used throughout Genesis?
 - Gen. 1:28: "28 And God blessed them [Adam and Eve]. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."
 - Gen. 9:1: "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.
 - Gen. 16:10: "10 The angel of the Lord also said to her (Sarai), "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."

- Gen. 17:1-2: "When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, 2 that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."
 - Gen. 26:3-4: "I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. (God speaks to Isaac)
 - Gen. 28:3-4: "God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you [Jacob], that you may become a company of peoples. 4 May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"
 - Gen. 48:3-4: 3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.'"
- Who is doing the multiplying?
 - Who is being multiplied?
 - The entire book of Exodus is the fulfillment of this promise.

Israel Increases Greatly in Egypt

These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. 6 Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. 7 But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Pharaoh Oppresses Israel

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. 10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. 13 So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves 14 and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

15 Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." 17 But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. 18 So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" 19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." 20 So God dealt well with the midwives.

And the people multiplied and grew very strong. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. 22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."

- Who is being multiplied in Exodus 1?
- What is Pharaoh trying to prevent?
- Note especially Exodus 1:6-7, 20. How does Moses narrate what happened in the world of multiplication?
- Recalling how Genesis speaks of multiplication, how is God still at work in Exodus?
- If Pharaoh knew how God had used the word multiply, how do you think he would have considered his command, namely, "Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies..." (Exodus 1:10)?

God is Still Multiplying Offspring Today

- Read Matthew 2:13-20
- In this narrative, who is trying to prevent God from multiplying his offspring?
- Does he succeed in stopping God?

Look

- What does Jesus' birth mean for us in terms of multiplying or dying?
- "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7)
- "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (Jn 12:24)
- Note especially Matthew 2:15 and Exodus 4:22. If you know the stories, what happens to both Jesus and the Israelites? What connection do you see between these passages?
- What hope does this give us in our day to day lives?

- What do these names mean?
 - Jacob:
 - Look up Genesis 27:36
 - Reuben
 - See Genesis 29:32
 - Simeon
 - See Genesis 29:33
 - Levi
 - See Genesis 29:34
 - Judah
 - See Genesis 29:35
 - Issachar
 - Genesis 30:18
 - Zebulun
 - See Genesis 30:20
 - Benjamin
 - See Genesis 35:18
 - Dan
 - See Genesis 30:6
 - Naphtali
 - See Genesis 30:8
 - Gad
 - See Genesis 30:11
 - Asher
 - See Genesis 30:13
 - Joseph
 - See Genesis 30:24
- Speaking of names, who else gets named in Exodus 1:8-22?
- Who doesn't get named?
 - See especially Ex. 1:8, 11, 15, 17-19, 22

Take Home

1. Consider how Pharaoh was unable to stop God's plan to multiply his people.
2. Consider the hope we have that, although we will die, with Christ, we will be raised to new life on the last day, and God's act of multiplying offspring will continue.

Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise you for showing your might over Pharaoh. Only you get to decide when your people will be multiplied or die off. Please strengthen us this week in the hope that even though we die, one day, we will live again in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Highlights of verb “to build” in Exodus:

Ex. 1:11

- They **built** for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Ex. 17:15

- And Moses **built** an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner,

Ex. 20:25

- “If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not **build** it of hewn stones, for if you wield your tool on it you profane it.”

Ex. 24:4

- 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning and **built** an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Exodus 32:5

- And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”
5 When Aaron saw this, he **built** an altar before it.

I will sing unto the Lord, For He hath triumphed gloriously

The horse and rider thrown into the sea (repeat)

The Lord, my God, my Strength, my Song

He is become my victory (repeat)

The Lord is God and I will praise Him

My Father's God and I will exalt Him

The Lord is God and I will praise Him

My Father's God and I will exalt Him