

# A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Ron Roberts

Lesson 2

## CHAPTER ONE

*“Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.”* So begins the book of Exodus, and with these words the author accomplishes an important purpose that might not be obvious to the modern reader: He connects this book with the previous one. How? By using almost the exact words of Genesis 46:8. That may not seem too important to you and me, but it was of great significance to the original writers of the sacred books, and was a universal practice among those men who authored the ancient historical scriptures. By inserting an almost verbatim quote from a passage of another work, they connected the two together, thereby demonstrating that even though they are penning an individual “book,” they are actually contributing to one larger SINGLE book – the Holy Bible!

This “linking” doesn’t just appear here in Exodus: Compare Joshua 1:1 with Judges 1:1 where you will see two very similar phrases there, as well. Throughout the ancient writing – Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, you will find this practice. All of those writers, penning their words at different times through ancient history, connected their part of God’s Holy Scripture with that of other inspired writers in this way.

The first verses of Exodus also provide us with a quick “who’s who” of the ones that made the journey to start a new life in Egypt. They are, of course, the twelve sons of Jacob, later to be the “twelve tribes of Israel.” We knew from Genesis 50 that Joseph has died – at the age of 110 – after having seen his son *“Ephraim’s children of the third generation.”* Verse 6 reiterates this and adds: *“...and all his brethren, and all that generation.”* So in other words, enough time has elapsed that all of the twelve brothers have died, *“and all that generation,”* which I take to mean everyone who was of a similar age and made the journey with Jacob into Egypt. Remember, in Genesis.6:3 we’re told that the average lifespan of the time was about 120 years.

I don’t believe we’re intended to deduce from Genesis 6:3, *“And the LORD said, ‘My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years...’”* that the number 120 is an absolute. After all, we know from

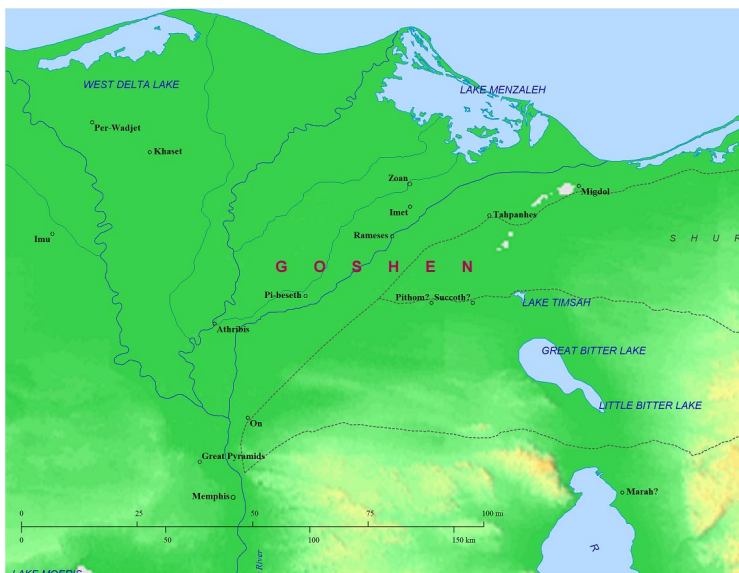
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Jacob's conversation with the Pharaoh that he was 130 when he arrived in Egypt. Instead, from that point forward man's lifespan was going to be reduced from the 800 - 900 years that we have previously seen in the beginning, to a much shorter span. The fact that God mentions His Spirit *"striving with man,"* seems to indicate that those long life spans had boded trouble. In fact, that quote comes just before the great flood when God *"saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

And just prior to this statement in Genesis 6, we're given examples of extreme ages: Adam - 930 years; Seth - 912 years; Enos - 905 years; Mahalaleel - 895 years; Jarad - 962 years; and, of course, the famous Methuselah with the record of 969 years. After the Great Flood, though, we notice a gradual decline in the human lifespan: Shem - 600 years; Peleg - 239 years; Abraham - 175 years, and by the time of Moses it appears that it was down to an average of 120 years as written in Genesis 6:3. Over the next several hundred years we continue to see a decline until we read in Psalm 90:10: *"As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years..."* (NASV) This statement in Psalms – most likely written somewhere around 1000 BC – is the last figure given to us in regard to man's projected lifespan. Of course there are exceptions, but it is interesting to note that as of the year 2020, the *global average* life expectancy was 72.6 years, which we are not surprised to say, coincides quite well with Psalms 90.



So, as Exodus begins, Joseph is dead along with all of the adult generation that came to Egypt with his father Jacob and his descendants. The new generation, however, has continued to thrive and multiply in Goshen in what is now northern Egypt, a well-irrigated and fertile region that offered excellent soil for tilling and good grazing pastures for their herds.

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It intrigues me that the Pharaoh of Joseph's time thought so highly of him that he not only welcomed his entire family into Egypt when the famine became severe, but also gave them this prime property to call their own. We are told that he even sent wagons to help them move all their possessions and livestock! What respect he must have had for Joseph, a mere Hebrew.

But a reversal of fortune is about to befall the Israelites, and we're given a hint to that in verses 8-9, where we are told, ***"there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we..."***

It may interest you to learn that the expression ***"a new king"*** is not found anywhere else in the bible. In fact, Albert Barnes says in his commentary, *"It is understood by most commentators this phrase implies that he did not succeed his predecessor in the natural order of descent and inheritance."* In other words, he rose to power under different terms than normal, perhaps by usurpation or military conquest. While we don't know how he obtained this position of honor and power, I think we can assume he was not among the first few Pharaohs after Joseph's death. It would be highly unlikely that such a person as Joseph, with all that he did to make Egypt a great and powerful nation, would have been so easily forgotten in the period immediately after his passing. But, as time moves on, memories do fade.

The Bible doesn't tell us the identity of "Joseph's pharaoh" or of the one who enslaved his people. In fact, there seems to be a gap in history between Joseph's death and the reign of this new king. In all the lists of Pharaohs I have found in my research, none were listed for the period in which the Israelites were in Egypt until I came across the one you see on the next page from an ancient Egypt historical website. If this chart is correct I believe we can know the identity of both of those rulers!

Because the document is lengthy (almost 300 lines) I will only show the two pages that I believe surround the period in question. The chart on the left lists 37 Pharaohs, 15 of them including the dates of their reigns. Why bother with this list of practically unpronounceable names? Because I believe we can prove the Israelites arrived in Egypt during the reign of

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**Amenemhat IV** (1772 BC to 1763 BC) in this lesson! Furthermore, I also believe the last five men on the left chart along with the eight at the top of the right chart form the “gap in history” we are discussing. The extreme left column in both charts marks the dynasties, and the two columns on the right of each chart show the beginning and ending of the reigns for those with dates.

Obviously, the chart is missing some dates for a period of 13 Pharaohs – from the end of Wegaf’s reign in 1779 BC (near the bottom of the left chart), until the beginning of Ahmose’s reign in 1539 BC (near the top of the right chart.)

7th and 8th	Neferkahor			17th	Semenenre		
	Neferkare VI				Suserenre		
	Neferkamin II				Sobekemzaf II		
	Ibi I				Antef VI		
	Neferkaure				Antef VII		
	Neferkauhor				Tao I		
	Neferirkare II				Tao II		
	Wadjkare				Kamose		
	Sekhemkare				Ahmose	1539	1514
	Iti				Amenhotep I	1514	1493
	Imhotep				Thutmose I	1493	1481
	Isu				Thutmose II	1491	1479
	Iytenu				Hatshepsut	1473	1458
9th and 10th	Neferkare			18th	Thutmose III	1504	1450
	Several Named Kheti				Amenhotep II	1427	1392
	Meri-Hathor (?)				Thutmose IV	1419	1386
11th	Merikare				Amenhotep III	1382	1344
	Inyotef I	2134	2117		Amenhotep IV	1350	1334
	Inyotef II	2117	2069		Smenkhkare	1336	1334
11th	Inyotef III	2069	2060		Tutankhamun	1334	1325
	Mentuhotep II	2055	2004		Ay	1325	1321
	Mentuhotep III	2004	1992		Horemheb	1323	1295
12th	Mentuhotep IV	1992	1987		Ramesses I	1295	1294
	Amenemhet I	1991	1962		Seti I	1394	1279
	Senusret I	1956	1911		Ramesses II	1279	1213
12th	Amenemhat II	1911	1877		Merenptah	1213	1203
	Senusret II	1877	1870		Amenmesse	1203	1200
	Senusret III	1836	1817		Seti II	1200	1194
12th	Amenemhat III	1817	1772	19th	Siptah	1194	1188
	Amenemhat IV	1772	1763		Tausert	1185	1187
	Neferusobek	1763	1759		Setakht	1186	1184
12th	Wegaf	1783	1779		Ramesses III	1184	1153
	Amenemhat-senebef				Ramesses IV	1153	1147
	Sekhemre-khutawi				Ramesses V	1147	1143
12th	Amenemhat V				Ramesses VI	1143	1136
	Sehetepibre I				Ramesses VII	1136	1129
	Iufni				Ramesses VIII	1129	1126

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The period of time between Wegaf and Ahmose (the Pharaohs with no dates attached) is the gap with which we are concerned.

The end of Wegaf's reign: 1779 BC  
The start of Ahmose's reign: - 1539 BC  
The gap: = 240 Yrs.

**Why is the number 240 significant?**

**Because, I believe it can be proven to be the maximum amount of time the Israelites spent in Egypt!**

How many of those 240 years were spent in bondage? I believe we can be certain it was between 80 – 100! How do we know this? Because the new king who said “*the people of Israel are more and mightier than we*” and wished to squelch them came to power soon before the birth of Moses – how soon, we don’t know, but most likely fewer than 20 years – and we know that Moses was in his 80<sup>th</sup> year when he led the people out. I will readily admit the length of time the Israelites spent in Egypt is a much disputed number and, depending on who you ask, you will be told it was anywhere from 300 to 1100 years.

Many commentators even hold fast to a claim of slavery for 500 to 1000 years, to render more “palatable” the notion that well over two million people walked across the Red Sea on the day of that famous exodus. Exodus 12:37 tells us that 600,000 “men on foot” came out of Egypt – a number that does not include the elderly men, women or children – only those eligible to be “fighting men.” So, they have a hard time reconciling that the original “seventy” could have grown to that staggering number by the time of the exodus... in only 240 years? I believe it is exactly what happened taking into account not only God’s unlimited power to have His will be done, but also evidence from scripture.

It may or may not have been an exaggeration for this new king to say that the children of Israel outnumbered the Egyptians as verse 9 states, but this Pharaoh definitely saw them as a threat, and possibly resented the fact that they were living on prime real estate in his country. His thought process must have included a fear that, if a war should break out, the Israelites might side with Egypt’s enemies and Egypt would fall. Therefore, his plan was to subjugate and weaken them, thus reducing their birth rate, breaking their will, and bringing them into

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submission to his throne. Once he had them making bricks under the lash of an Egyptian taskmaster, they were forced to build two “treasure cities” Pithom and Rameses (shown on the map here as the two red dots) in which to store the provisions for Egypt’s army as well as their weapons and ammunition.



But there is a very important factor that this Pharaoh did not take into consideration or even understand: the children of Israel were key players in God’s overall plan! Of course, in the minds of the Egyptians, this “God of Israel” was no different than the gods they worshiped. Imagine how perplexed they must have been when the Pharaoh’s plan to reduce their offspring didn’t work. In fact, the more they afflicted the Israelites, the more they multiplied! Even when the Israelites were made to “*serve with rigor*” they continued to grow in number. So much so that the Pharaoh directed the Hebrew midwives (Shiphrah and Puah) to kill all the male Israelite children as they were born. These women would not carry out the Pharaoh’s orders, though, and it is recorded that God dealt well with them. Isn’t it interesting that we are given these women’s names? I believe it is because God wanted them known (and honored for their God-fearing ways) for all future generations.

It is after that second decree – the one where “all Israelite male newborns were to be cast into the river,” that Moses is born and God’s plan for His people’s rescue is set in motion. We will begin a comprehensive study of the events of Moses’ life beginning in Lesson 3, but first, I promised to show how we can know exactly to the year how long the Israelites were in Egypt. If the charts are correct, I think we can pretty confidently identify “Joseph’s Pharaoh” and perhaps even supply the identity of the “new king” of Exodus 1:8. The process for all this boils down to a simple math problem – but obtaining the correct numbers to insert into the problem has always been the trouble. One of the challenges is the lack of understanding of bible phraseology; the other is scarcity of secular historical records from the period, such as the list of Pharaohs I recently stumbled upon.



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First, we need an accurate method for tracing time. Fortunately, the book of Genesis provides an unbroken chronological account of the men in the lineage of Christ by giving ages of fathers when their sons were born. The chart in the introduction took us through Abraham, but this one extends through the death of Jacob. I created it so we might have all of this information in one place.

Do you know which dates on this chart have a direct bearing on our math problem? With them, we can determine exactly how long the Israelites were in Egypt, and when Moses led them out.

The two all important numbers are the birth of Abraham – **2056 BC**, and the date Jacob moved his family into Egypt – **1766 BC**, which we know because in Genesis 46 he told the pharaoh he was 130 years old. File those two dates in the “Things Not to Forget” folder you keep in your memory.

Years from Creation	B.C.	Patriarch	Generation
1	4004	Adam	1
130	3874	Adam and Eve receive a son, Seth	2
235	3769	Enosh is born	3
325	3679	Kenan is born	4
395	3609	Mahalaleel is born	5
460	3544	Jared is born	6
622	3382	Enoch is born	7
687	3317	Methuselah is born	8
874	3130	Lamech is born	9
930	3074	Adam dies, aged 930	
987	3017	Enoch taken up by God -- did not die (Gen 5:24) age 365	
1042	2962	Seth dies, aged 912	
1056	2948	Noah is born	10
1140	2864	Enosh dies, aged 905	
1235	2769	Kenan dies, aged 910	
1290	2714	Mahalaleel dies, aged 895	
1422	2582	Jared dies, aged 962	
1556	2448	Noah has three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth	11
1651	2353	Lamech, Noah's father dies Age 777	
1656	2348	Methuselah dies the same year as the flood comes, aged 969	
1658	2346	Arpachshad is born	12
1693	2311	Shelah is born	13
1723	2281	Eber is born	14
1757	2247	Peleg is born	15
1787	2217	Reu is born	16
1819	2185	Serug is born	17
1849	2155	Nahor is born	18
1878	2126	Terah is born	19
1948	2056	Abraham is born	20
1958	2046	Sarah, Abrahams wife, is born	
1996	2008	Peleg dies, aged 239	
1997	2007	Nahor dies, aged 148	
2006	1998	Noah, generation 10 after Adam, dies at the age of 950	
2026	1978	Reu dies, aged 239	
2034	1970	Ishmael is born	21
2048	1956	Isaac is born	21
2049	1955	Serug dies, aged 230	
2083	1921	Terah dies, aged 205	
2085	1919	Sarah dies, aged 127	
2088	1916	Isaac is married at the age of 40, to Rebecca	
2096	1908	Arpachshad dies, aged 438	
2108	1896	Jacob is born, with his twin Esau	22
2123	1881	Abraham dies, aged 175	
2126	1878	Shelah dies, aged 433	
2158	1846	Shem dies, aged 600	
2171	1833	Ishmael dies, aged 137	
2187	1817	Eber dies, aged 464	
2228	1776	Isaac dies, aged 180	
2238	1766	Jacob moves to Egypt at the age of 130	
2255	1749	Jacob dies in Egypt, aged 147	

There is another number we need for our math problem... It is found in Galatians 3:16-17. Paul writes: *“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. And this I say,*

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*that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.”*

Of course, Paul wrote these verses for the purpose of showing that the Law of Moses did not annul the promise made to Abraham, but in so doing he also provided us with two extremely significant pieces of information. For one, that the time between the promise that God made to Abraham regarding the coming Messiah and the establishment of the Law of Moses was 430 years! And there's more. Don't let your eyes slide right past the words ***“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made.”*** Take Abraham's birth date and Jacob's arrival date in Egypt out of your “Things Not to Forget” folder and let's compile the information we have so far for our math problem.

1. Abraham was born in **2056 BC**.
2. At some point, **God made a promise to Abraham**.
3. **The Law of Moses was given 430 years after that promise.** (*Our study will reveal that it was on Mt. Sinai, about 3 months after they left Egypt.*)
4. Jacob brought his people to Egypt in **1766 BC**.

The only thing left to figure out, is number 2 – the exact time when that particular promise was first made to Abraham, because actually, God made more than one promise to him. Three of them stand above the rest:

- **The land promise** – that Abraham's descendants would be given a land to call their own.
- **The seed promise** – that Abraham's descendants would be innumerable, like *“the sand on the seashore.”*
- **The blessed promise** – That through him *“all the nations of the earth would be blessed.”*

It is the last of those three that Paul references in the Galatians passage, because we know that all nations are blessed through Christ, the promised Messiah, and His lineage is traced through Abraham. So, when was that promise made? Let's take a look at Genesis 17: ***“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said... ‘I will make my***



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*covenant between Me and you'...*" It is in that same meeting, continuing into chapter 18, that God first makes the promise we are looking for. He says, ***"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."*** (Gen 18:18). Exactly one year to the day later: ***"Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him."*** (Genesis 21:5)

I mentioned in the introduction that this was a key piece of information, so I'm sure you already have this filed away in that "Things Not to Forget" folder: Abraham was 99 when he was told ***"all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."*** That promise is repeated just after Abraham is stopped from offering Isaac on the mountain (Gen 22) about 14 years later, and then it is given a third time to Isaac after Abraham's death (Gen 26:4). But since Paul was speaking of the time when the promise was first made to Abraham, we don't need to consider the two other instances, and now we have the final piece of our math puzzle! Let's put it all together:

Abraham was born in -----	<b>2056 BC</b>	1,948 Yrs. ( <u>a</u> fter <u>c</u> reation)
99 years went by before the promise	<u>- 99 Yrs.</u>	
Therefore, the promise was made in ---	<b>1957 BC</b>	2,057 Yrs. (ac)
 Then <b>430 years</b> pass -- <i>*Gal.3:16*</i> ----	 <u>- 430 yrs.</u>	
 So, The Israelites left Egypt in -----	 <b>1527 BC</b>	 2,498 Yrs. (ac)
<b>and were at Mt. Sinai where God gave the Law to Moses about 3 months later.</b> ( <i>As we will see as our study progresses.</i> )		
 Jacob arrived in Egypt (at age 130) -----	 <b>1766 BC</b>	 2,238 Yrs. (ac)

If the children of Israel arrived in Egypt (with Jacob) in -----	1766 BC
And Moses was given the law on Sinai after the exodus -----	- <u>1527 BC</u>
Then, the <u>total time spent in Egypt</u> was -----	<b>239 Years</b>

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Now we have enough information to not only name “Joseph’s Pharaoh,” but also the one who put them in bondage and the “Exodus Pharaoh” who hardened his heart before God.

Assuming the charts on page 4 of this lesson are correct, we can see from the left chart that Amenemhat IV reigned from 1772 BC - 1763 BC. So, he was “Joseph’s Pharaoh,” the one who welcomed Jacob and his family into Egypt in 1766 BC.

The exodus occurred in 1527 BC, and the right-hand chart shows Ahmose as the reigning Pharaoh from 1539 -1514 BC. That makes him the Pharaoh of the exodus.

But, who was that “*new king*” who didn’t know Joseph and wanted all the newborn Hebrew boys killed? Let’s see if we can’t figure it out. We know that Moses was 80 years old when he led the Israelites out of Egypt. The mysterious “new king” came into power just before Moses was born (around 1607 BC) and the chart makes clear that neither he nor anyone else on the list reigned for as many as 80 years, so it wasn’t Ahmose (the Pharaoh of the exodus). In fact, the average reign for Ahmose and the 12 Pharaohs below him is 24.2 years! If that average holds true beyond that, we can deduce that it was probably Antef VII or maybe Tao I.

Well, the truth is, we don’t know if the Pharaoh chart is completely correct and can therefore only make speculations based upon it. But, I assure you we can rely 100% on the accuracy of biblical text. So, while the name of the Pharaoh who would have killed all the newborn Hebrew males may be no more than an educated guess, there can be little doubt that the Israelites were in Egypt for a total of 239 years!

[Note: Did you notice how neatly the 239 year stay in Egypt, fits into that 240 year gap that we spoke of earlier in this lesson. I believe those two periods are actually the same period of time... if we just knew the months or days, instead of years.]

And, of these 239 years, the last 80-100 were spent in bondage. One of the purposes of this study is to correct false impressions about this period of time and, I think we have disproved

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one of the more pronounced incorrect teachings – the Israelites were in bondage for 500 - 1100 years.

I also hope you can now see how we arrive at the truth using information from the inspired text of the Holy Bible. And, as a bonus, we are treated to yet another example of how the Holy Scriptures mesh beautifully with secular history.

Do you think most of those involved in the exodus knew the story of the great famine that brought their forefathers to Egypt, or the part Joseph had played in making it a wealthy and great nation? I suspect so, because it was a custom then, at least once a year, for the fathers to repeat the story of their ancestors to their children. If we were to do the same, perhaps our children would understand and respect their history as well as I imagine the Israelites did.

Chapter two begins with the words *“And there went a man of the house of Levi and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bore a son: and when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.”* We know this to be Moses...his story begins in lesson 3.