

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 01

**Narrator:** Shiphrah

**Primary Scriptures:** Exodus 1:1-4:17

**Story Summary:** The birth of Moses; exile of Moses; the burning bush

**Location:** Egypt, Midian

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Exodus 1:12, 1:21; 2:24-25; 3:5, 3:14

Exodus 1:7 gives the first hint of how many Israelites existed at the time Moses was born: they were numerous and the land was filled with them. Using other Scriptures, scholars and linguists have wildly varying opinions as to the actual number. Some think there were tens of thousands, while others peg the number to be more than three million. In any event, there were a lot of them. So many that the Pharaoh feared they would rebel against him.

Pharaoh's first self-serving solution was simple: make slaves of the Israelites and take advantage of their free labor. Egyptians are well-known for their massive building projects, so the Israelites were a blessing in disguise. Apparently, Pharaoh was happy with the number of slaves he had and did not want more, so he embarked on the world's first birth-control project – have the Hebrew midwives kill the baby boys at birth. When that didn't work, he ordered all the baby boys to be thrown into the Nile.

Moses' mother devised a plan that not only saved her son, but resulted in him being raised as a prince of Egypt. Moses lived as an Egyptian, but remained an Israelite at heart. At forty,<sup>1</sup> he killed an Egyptian for harming an Israelite. This resulted in Pharaoh wanting to kill Moses, which forced him to go into exile.

For the next forty years,<sup>2</sup> Moses was a shepherd in Midian, an area most likely in the Arabian desert. He became the son-in-law of a priest and learned to endure hard times in the desert. His good relationship with his father-in-law becomes an important factor in future years.

At the end of that period, God heard the cries of the Israelites in slavery, and resolved to have Moses do something about it. God appeared to Moses from a burning bush and commanded him to bring the Israelites out of slavery.

As you read these passages, you can see that the Israelites had been in Egypt for four hundred years. They had forgotten God and his power. Moses knew his job was going to start with convincing them about God and his power.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 7:23

<sup>22</sup> Acts 7:30

### Discussion Questions:

1. Exodus 1:5 says that when Jacob and his family entered Egypt, he took seventy descendants. Exodus 1:7 says the family had become so numerous that the land was filled with them. What was the time span between those two verses?
2. Looking at Exodus 1:10, did the Egyptians worry about the Israelites starting a rebellion? What were the Egyptians worried about?
3. According to Exodus 2:10, Moses was raised as a prince of Egypt. What privileges would that have entailed? Who would he have met? How would he have been educated?
4. How do you interpret Exodus 2:24-25? Did God literally forget them, was he ignoring their plight, or was he waiting to execute his plan?

1. Exodus 12:40-41 says 430 years. Earlier, God had told Abraham it would be 400 years, as Stephen quoted in Acts 7:6, and seemingly confirmed by Paul in Acts 13:20. However, many scholars think it was a shorter period of time by using verses such as Matthew 1:17. 2. No. They were worried about the Israelites aiding an enemy, and leaving the country. Either would have been a big problem for the Egyptians.

### Application Questions:

1. Exodus 1:17 is an example of civil disobedience based on prioritizing God over government. Are there examples of current government regulations that you should consider disobeying or opposing because of your religious convictions? How would that square with Romans 13:1-3?
2. Exodus 2:21 says that Moses married a woman outside of his clan, a foreigner (confirmed in Numbers 12:1). What kinds of issues and risks arise when someone marries a person from a far different culture? What areas of growth and benefit arise? Can cultural differences be mitigated if both are dedicated Christians?
3. Exodus 3:13 indicates that the Israelites had been away from God for so long that they might not even remember or know who he is. What do you say to people who don't know who God is? What characteristics of his do you accent?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. In Exodus 2:12, Moses was overly zealous in protecting his own group. How do you determine the level to which you should protect your own group? Does it matter which kind of group it is?
2. Exodus 3:3 tells of a turning point in history. Apparently, Moses had the choice to go see the burning bush or not. How do you know which things you should pay attention to, and which to ignore? Do you think the Holy Spirit helps you make those choices?
3. In Exodus 4:13, Moses asked God to send someone else. Have you ever done that? Do you remember an event where you made a tough choice to act on God's behalf and someone received an obvious blessing as a result? What might have happened if you had made a different choice?