

EXPLORING EXODUS

BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

EXPLORING EXODUS

by

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Lovingly Dedicated

to

the staff, students, and alumni

of

**OZARK BIBLE COLLEGE
Joplin, Missouri**

PREFACE

EXPLORING EXODUS

FIVE LAYERS OF HELP FOR STUDY

EXPLORING EXODUS is a chapter-by-chapter study of Exodus. To guide you in the exploration of Exodus, five layers of help are provided:

1. A set of **QUESTIONS** on each chapter is provided. These may be used for group or individual study. Almost all the questions can be answered from the Bible.
2. Several **OUTLINES** on each chapter follow the questions. These are designed to help you in teaching the material, or to assist you in gaining quick comprehension of the chapters.
3. Extensive **NOTES** on the Bible text and related material are given. These notes are introduced by questions which should draw the mind to the point of the passages under consideration.

These notes are comprehensive. They have been prepared after consulting commentators with many points of view. The Hebrew and Greek texts of Exodus are referred to very often. The Bible text used is the quite-literal American Standard Version (1901).

4. Numerous photographs, charts, and original **MAPS** are included.
5. Several **SPECIAL STUDIES** on such topics as the Ten Commandments, the Red Sea, and the Sabbath Day are given in the introductory sections and at various places in the text.

We present this book with many prayers that it will help you to explore Exodus with joy and to discover its innumerable blessings.

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LET'S EXPLORE EXODUS!

INTRODUCTORY SECTION I

LET'S EXPLORE EXODUS!

Consider the greatness of Exodus.

“Nearly all the foundations of which JEWISH life is built—the Ten Commandments, the historic festivals, the leading principles of civil law—are contained in the book of Exodus.”¹

The importance of Exodus is not confined to the Jews alone. CHRISTIANS recognize the events in Exodus as having been written “by way of example” for *our* learning (I Cor. 10:11). The bondage in Egypt illustrates our former bondage in sin. Moses is like unto Jesus Christ in many respects (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22; 7:37). Israel’s deliverance across the Red Sea was a “baptism unto Moses” and illustrates our “baptism into Christ” (I Cor. 10:2; Gal. 3:27). Israel’s failures in their wilderness journey were recorded that we might not fall into the same example of disobedience (Heb. 4:11). The tabernacle, which is so prominent in Exodus 25-40, was a “figure for the time present” (Heb. 9:9).

The greatness of Exodus radiates benefits and life-changing truth to ALL HUMANKIND. From no other book have men learned so much of the character and work of the LORD God, a “God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth; . . . and that will by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34:6, 7). From no other book has mankind learned laws more beneficial, comprehensive, and succinct than the ten commandments in Exodus.

¹J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1969), p. 205.

INTRODUCTORY STUDY II

Themes of Exodus: REDEMPTION AND NATIONHOOD

A. The theme of REDEMPTION sums up much of the history and message of the book of Exodus. Numerous authors (e.g., Pink, Van Dooren) have felt that this term was a good one to express the theme of the book.

1. The theme of REDEMPTION, or redemption followed by God's leading, is stated in the book of Exodus itself:

"I will REDEEM you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgment: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God" (Ex. 6:6-7).

"Thou in thy lovingkindness hast LED the people that thou hast REDEEMED" (Ex. 15:13). (This statement strikes us as a key verse in Exodus.)

"He hath sent REDEMPTION unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and reverend is his name" (Psalm 111:9).

2. What does REDEMPTION mean?

The Hebrew verb (*ga'al*) translated *redeem* in Ex. 6:16 and 15:13 means to free by avenging or buying back.

The Greek word (*lutroo*) translated *redeem* in 15:13 in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint, or LXX) means to release on receipt of a ransom.

The Greek word (*ruomai*) translated *redeem* in 6:6 means to draw to one's self.

Thus, REDEMPTION basically means a buying back, but its meaning has been broadened to mean releasing or deliverance generally.

3. Christians have REDEMPTION in Christ from God (Eph. 1:7). To understand the way God REDEEMED Israel from Egypt will help us understand the nature of our redemption.

For example, though Israel was redeemed from Egypt with mighty miracles and God's special favor, still out in the wilderness they suffered countless hardships and tests and temptations. Similarly, though we have been wondrously and miraculously redeemed from sin and from

REDEMPTION AND NATIONHOOD

impossible burdens, still we must face many tribulations, tests, and temptations. We are not promised immediate deliverance from all difficulties.

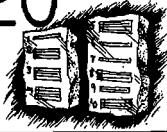
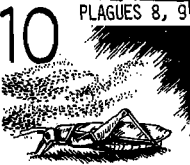
4. The development of the theme of REDEMPTION in Exodus can be outlined as follows:
 - a. Need for redemption (chs. 1—6)
 - b. Might of the redeemer (chs. 7—11)
 - c. Method of redemption (chs. 12—18)
 - d. Duties of the redeemed (chs. 19—24)
 - e. Provisions for the redeemed (chs. 25—40)(Adapted from Arthur Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus* [Chicago: Moody, n.d.] p. 8.)

B. NATIONHOOD


Various authors have selected the topic of Israel's becoming a nation as the theme of Exodus. They have worded it in various ways.

1. "The Making of a Holy Nation." See Ex. 19:6. We have used this heading on the end sheets of this book (the pictures inside the covers). Israel became God's holy nation when God provided them a leader (Ex. 1—6), liberation (Ex. 7—12), leading (Ex. 13—18), laws (Ex. 19—24), and divine worship (Greek, *latreia*) (Ex. 25—40).
2. "The commencement of Israel as a covenant nation." (G. L. Archer, *A Survey of O.T. Introduction* [Chicago: Moody, 1964] p. 209.)
3. "The beginning of a separate national existence." As Genesis records the beginning of religious life in Israel, so Exodus records the beginning of national life. (John Raven, *Old Testament Introduction* [New York: Revell, 1910], p. 136.)
4. "From a Family to a Nation." When Jacob Israel came into Egypt, he came only as a large family (Ex. 1:15). But in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2), Israel became a *nation*. This transformation was effected by stages: a. Population; b. Liberation; c. Legislation; d. Organization. All of these stages can be observed in Exodus.

EXODUS-CHAPTER TOPICS

| GOD'S MAN | PLAGUES | PATHWAY | COVENANT |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 NEED FOR GOD'S MAN (Transition) | 7 THE CONFLICT BEGINS ! (PLAGUE #1) | 13 DEMANDS AND DIRECTION TO THE REDEEMED | 19 PREPARATIONS TO RECEIVE COVENANT |
| 2 PREPARATION OF GOD'S MAN | 8 PLAGUES 2, 3, 4 | 14 BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES | 20  |
| 3 CALL OF GOD'S MAN  | 9 PLAGUES 5, 6, 7 | 15 FROM: SONG TO BITTERNESS | 21 |
| 4 HESITANCY OF GOD'S MAN | 10 PLAGUES 8, 9  | 16 BREAD FROM HEAVEN | 22 |
| 5 RESISTANCE TO GOD'S MAN | 11 THE LAST WARNING ! | 17 TWO TESTS: WATER AND WAR | 23 |
| 6 STRENGTHENING OF GOD'S MAN | 12 PLAGUE 10 OVER AND OUT | 18 JETHRO AND JUDGES | 24 COVENANT RATIFIED |

GOD'S COVENANT ORDINANCES

| TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS | GOLDEN CALF | TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION |
|---|--|--|
| 25 TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS (Ark, table, lampstand) | 32 RUPTURE OF COVENANT | 35 OFFERINGS AND WORKMEN |
| 26 ENCLOSINGS (curtains, boards, bars, veil, screen) | 33 GOD AND ISRAEL IN TENSION | 36 ENCLOSINGS |
| 27 ALTAR AND COURT | 34 RENEWAL OF COVENANT | 37 INSIDE FURNITURE |
| 28 PRIESTS GARMENTS |  | 38 OUTSIDE FURNITURE Total Cost |
| 29 PRIESTS CONSECRATION | | 39 PRIESTS' GARMENTS, FINISHED WORK PRESENTED |
| 30 INCENSE, etc. | | 40 ALL SET UP! GLORY OF LORD |
| 31 CRAFTSMEN, SABBATH | | |

EXPLORING EXODUS

INTRODUCTORY SECTION III

NAMES and OUTLINE of Exodus

The NAMES of the book of Exodus

1. In the Hebrew Bible it is called *Shemoth*, meaning *names*. This is taken from the opening words of the book, *We'elleh shemoth*, which mean "These are the names."
 2. In the Greek Bible (Septuagint, or LXX) it is called *Exodos*, meaning "going out" or "departure." This word actually appears in the Greek of 19:1: "In the third month of the departure (Gr., *exodos*) of the sons of Israel" This name applies more accurately to the first half of the book than to the second half.
 3. The Latin Bible used the title *Exodus*, a slightly-changed form of the Greek title. In our English Bibles we have used the Latin title.
-

OUTLINE(S) OF EXODUS

We can outline the book of Exodus according to the PLACES where the events occurred.

I. ISRAEL IN EGYPT; Chs. 1—13 (1:1—13:16)

1. Population growth and bondage; Ch. 1.
2. Preparation of Moses; Chs. 2—6.
3. Plagues; Chs. 7—11.
4. Passover and departure; Chs. 12—13.

II. ISRAEL FROM EGYPT TO SINAI; Chs. 13—18 (13:17—18:27).

1. Deliverance at the Red Sea; (13:17—15:21).
2. Journey to Sinai; (15:22—Ch. 17).
3. Visit of Jethro; Ch. 18.

III. ISRAEL AT SINAI; Chs. 19—40.

NAMES AND OUTLINE OF EXODUS

1. Law (covenant) given; Chs. 19—24.
 2. Tabernacle instructions; Chs. 25—31.
 3. Rebellion and renewal (golden calf); Chs. 32—34.
 4. Tabernacle construction; Chs. 35—40.
-

We can outline Exodus according to the EXPERIENCES shared by God's people Israel. Exodus itself emphasizes the theme of God's doings with His PEOPLE. (Note 3:7; 5:1; 6:7; 7:4; 15:13; 19:5, 6.)

- I. GOD'S PEOPLE DELIVERED; Chs. 1—13 (1:1—13:16)
 - II. GOD'S PEOPLE LED; Chs. 13—18 (13:17—18:27)
 - III. GOD'S PEOPLE MADE A COVENANT NATION;
Chs. 19—24.
 - IV. GOD'S PEOPLE RECEIVE TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS; Chs. 25—31.
 - V. GOD'S PEOPLE SIN (golden calf); Chs. 32—34.
 - VI. GOD'S PEOPLE CONSTRUCT THE TABERNACLE;
Chs. 35—40.
-

Detailed OUTLINE of EXODUS

- I. GOD'S PEOPLE DELIVERED; 1:1—13:16.
 1. Jacob's family in Egypt; 1:1-7.
 2. Afflictions upon the children of Israel; 1:8-22.
 - a. Labor; 1:8-14.
 - b. Genocide; 1:15-22.
 3. Early life of Moses; 2:1-25.
 - a. Birth and adoption; 2:1-10.
 - b. Rejection and flight; 2:11-15.
 - c. Moses in Midian; 2:16-22.
 - d. God's knowledge of Israel; 2:23-25.
 4. Call of Moses; 3:1—4:17.
 - a. The burning bush; 3:1-6.
 - b. God's commission to Moses; 3:7-10.

EXPLORING EXODUS

- c. Objections by Moses; 3:11—4:17.
 - (1) "Who am I?" 3:11, 12.
 - (2) "What is thy name?" 3:13-22.
 - (3) "They will not believe." 4:1-9.
 - (4) "I am not eloquent." 4:10-12.
 - (5) "Send someone else." 4:13-17.
- 5. Moses' return; 4:18-31.
 - a. Obedience tested during return; 4:18-26.
 - b. First meeting with Israel; 4:27-31.
- 6. Confrontation with Pharaoh; 5:1—11:10.
 - a. Failure of first request; 5:1-5.
 - (1) Pharaoh refuses; 5:1-5.
 - (2) Burdens increased; 5:6-14.
 - (3) Israelites' appeal rejected; 5:15-21.
 - (4) Moses' remonstrance and the Lord's reply; 5:22—6:1.
 - b. Prelude to successful action; 6:27-13.
 - (1) Reassurance for the people; 6:2-9.
 - (2) Command to return to Pharaoh; 6:10-13.
 - (3) Review of fathers' genealogies; 6:14-27.
 - (4) Commission to Moses renewed; 6:28—7:7.
 - (5) Second meeting with Pharaoh (rods to serpents); 7:8-13.
 - c. Plagues; 7:14—11:10.
 - (1) River to blood; 7:14-24.
 - (2) Frogs; 8:1-15.
 - (3) Lice (gnats); 8:16-19.
 - (4) Swarms (flies); 8:20-32.
 - (5) Death of animals; 9:1-7.
 - (6) Boils; 9:8-12.
 - (7) Hail; 9:13-35.
 - (8) Locusts; 10:21-29.
 - (9) Darkness; 10:21-29.
- 7. Passover; 11:1—12:33.
 - a. Warning of the last plague; 11:1-10.
 - b. Instructions for the passover in Egypt; 12:1-13.
 - c. Direction for passover in future; 12:14-20.

NAMES AND OUTLINE OF EXODUS

- d. The passover kept; 12:21-28.
- e. Death of firstborn; 12:29-33.
- 8. The departure (exodus); 12:34-42.
- 9. Three final directives; 12:43—13:16.
 - a. Who may eat the Passover; 12:43-50.
 - b. Keep the ordinance of unleavened bread; 13:3-10.
 - c. Sanctify the firstborn; 12:51—13:2, 11-16.

II. GOD'S PEOPLE LED: 13:17—18:27.

- 1. The route of the journey; 13:17-22.
- 2. Victory at the Red Sea; 14:1—15:21.
 - a. Encampment by the sea; 14:1-4.
 - b. Pursuit by the Egyptians; 14:5-9.
 - c. Fear and reassurance; 14:10-14.
 - d. The Lord's exhortation; 14:15-18.
 - e. The angel's protection; 14:19, 20.
 - f. Deliverance across the sea; 14:21, 22.
 - g. Destruction of the Egyptians; 14:23-31.
 - h. Song of triumph; 15:1-21.
 - (1) By Moses and Israel; 15:1-19.
 - (2) By Miriam; 15:20, 21.
- 3. Experiences in the journey; 15:22—18:27.
 - a. Bitter waters (Marah); 15:22-26.
 - b. Springs of Elim; 15:27.
 - c. Food (manna) provided; 16:1-36.
 - (1) Murmuring; 16:1-3.
 - (2) God's promise; 16:4-12.
 - (3) Quails sent; 16:13.
 - (4) Manna given; 16:14-21.
 - (5) Manna and Sabbath; 16:22-30.
 - (6) Memorial of the manna; 16:31-36.
 - d. Waters of Meribah; 17:1-7.
 - e. War with Amalek; 17:8-16.
 - f. Visit of Jethro; 18:1-27.
 - (1) Reunion with family; 18:1-12.
 - (2) Jethro's advice to appoint judges; 18:13-27.

III. GOD'S PEOPLE MADE A COVENANT NATION; Chs. 19—24.

1. Preparations for the covenant; 19:1-25.
 - a. Instructions to the people; 19:1-15.
 - b. Coming of the Lord upon Mt. Sinai; 19:16-25.
2. The Ten Words; 20:11-17.
3. The book of the covenant (rules for the covenant people); 20:18—23:33.
 - a. Ritual regulations; 20:18-26.
 - b. The covenant ordinances; 21:1—23:19.
 - (1) The Hebrew slave; 21:1-11.
 - (2) Capital offenses; 21:12-17.
 - (3) Injuries and non-capital offenses; 21:18-32.
 - (4) Property rights; 21:33—22:17.
 - (5) More capital offenses; 22:18-20.
 - (6) Care for the poor and needy; 22:21-27.
 - (7) Reverence to God and rulers; 22:28-31.
 - (8) Justice and goodness to all; 23:1-9.
 - (9) The sacred seasons; 23:10-19.
 - c. Promises about conquering the land; 23:20-33.
4. The covenant ratified; 24:1-18.
 - a. Call to worship; 24:1, 2.
 - b. Covenant sealed with blood; 24:3-8.
 - c. Leaders eat with God; 24:9-11.
 - d. Moses called onto the mount; 24:12-18.

IV. GOD'S PEOPLE RECEIVE TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS; Chs. 25—31.

1. An offering to be taken; 25:1-9.
2. Ark and mercy-seat; 25:10-22.
3. Table of showbread; 25:23-30.
4. The menorah (lampstand); 25:31-40.
5. Tabernacle curtains; 26:1-14.
6. Tabernacle boards (26:15-25) and bars (26:26-30).
7. Veil (26:31-35) and screen (26:36, 37).
8. The altar of burnt-offering; 27:1-8.
9. Court; 27:9-19.

NAMES AND OUTLINE OF EXODUS

10. Oil for lamp; 27:20, 21.
11. Garments of priests; 28:1-43.
 - a. First directions; 28:1-5.
 - b. Ephod; 28:6-14.
 - c. Breastplate; 28:15-30.
 - d. Robe of ephod; 28:31-35.
 - e. Golden plate; 28:36-38.
 - f. Coat; 28:39.
 - g. Coats, girdles, turbans; 28:40, 41.
 - h. Linen breeches; 28:42, 43.
12. Consecration of priests; 29:1-37.
13. The continual burnt-offering; 29:38-46.
14. Altar of incense; 20:1-10.
15. Atonement money with censuses; 30:11-16.
16. Laver; 30:17-21.
17. Anointing oil (30:22-33) and incense (30:34-38).
18. Tabernacle workmen; 31:1-11.
19. The Sabbath; 31:12-17.

IV. GOD'S PEOPLE SIN BUT ARE RENEWED; Chs. 32—34.

1. Sin; 31:18—32:29.
 - a. Calf made and worshipped; 31:18—32:6.
 - b. God's anger and Moses' prayer; 32:7-14.
 - c. Moses' anger; 32:15-20.
 - d. Moses and Aaron; 32:21-24.
 - e. Three thousand slain; 32:25-29.
2. God and Israel in tension; 32:30—33:23.
 - a. Moses' prayer for forgiveness; 32:30-35.
 - b. Jehovah withdraws His presence; 33:1-6.
 - c. Jehovah and Moses; 33:7-11.
 - d. Moses prays; 33:12-17.
 - (1) For God's acceptance of the nation; 33:12-17.
 - (2) To see God's glory; 33:18-23.
3. Renewal of covenant; 34:1—35:3.
 - a. New tablets; 34:1-4.
 - b. God proclaims Himself; 34:5-9.
 - c. Terms of the covenant; 34:10—35:3.

V. GOD'S PEOPLE CONSTRUCT THE TABERNACLE;
35:4—40:38.

1. Call for offering of materials; 35:4-8.
 2. Call for workmen; 35:10-19.
 3. Abundant offering; 35:20-29.
 4. Workmen commissioned; 35:30—36:7.
 5. Curtains made; 36:8-19.
 6. Boards (36:27-30) and bars (36:31-34) made.
 7. Veil (36:35, 36) and screen (36:37, 38) made.
 8. Ark and mercy-seat made; 37:1-9.
 9. Table made; 37:10-16.
 10. Menorah (lampstand) made; 37:17-23.
 11. Altar of incense made; 37:25-29.
 12. Altar of burnt-offering made; 38:1-7.
 13. Laver made; 38:8.
 14. Court made; 38:9-20.
 15. Sum of materials used; 38:21-31.
 16. Priests' garments made; 39:1-31.
 17. Work finished and presented to Moses; 39:32-43.
 18. Erection of tabernacle; 40:1-33.
 - a. Directions from God; 40:1-15.
 - b. Rearing up the tabernacle; 40:16-33.
 19. Glory cloud fills the tabernacle; 40:34-38.
-

WHO WROTE EXODUS?

INTRODUCTORY SECTION IV

WHO WROTE EXODUS?

We believe that Moses was the author of the entire book, except for possibly a few lines that may have been added by Joshua or someone else living shortly after Moses' time. (Note Ex. 16:35.)

I. EVIDENCE THAT MOSES WAS THE AUTHOR OF EXODUS:

A. Testimony in the book itself.

1. Ex. 17:8-16 (the story of the attack by Amalek) is said to have been written by Moses. See 17:14.
2. Ex. 20:22—23:32 (the book of covenant ordinances) is said to have been written by Moses. See 24:4.
3. Ex. 34:10-26 (the ordinances of the renewed covenant) was written by Moses. See 34:27.
4. Numbers 33:2 says that "Moses wrote their (Israel's) going out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah." While this may apply primarily to the brief record in Num. 33, it may also apply to the record of their journey in Ex. 12-19.
5. From these passages, which are the only ones specifically ascribed to Moses in the book, we can project (extrapolate) Mosaic authorship to the entire book, because the book is a unit and tells a continuous story.

B. Testimony in other parts of the Old Testament.

1. Joshua 8:31—"As it is written in the book of the law of Moses," (referring to Ex. 20:25).
2. Joshua 8:32—"He wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses."
3. Joshua 23:6—"Do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses."
4. Judges 3:4—"which he commanded their father by (Heb., by the hand of) Moses."

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5. I Kings 2:3—"Keep his testimonies, as it is *written* in the law of Moses."
 6. I Kings 8:56—"which he promised by (Heb., by the hand of) Moses."
 7. II Chron. 25:4—"As it is written in the law in the books of Moses."
 8. II Chron. 35:6—"According to the word of the Lord by (Heb., by the hand of) Moses" (concerning the Passover).
 9. Ezra 6:18—"As it is written in the book of Moses."
 10. Nehemiah 10:29—"which was given by Moses" (Heb., by the hand of Moses).
 11. Malachi 4:4—"Remember ye the law of Moses my servant."
- C. Testimony of the New Testament.
1. Mark 7:10—"Moses said, Honor thy father and mother."
 2. Mark 12:26—"Have ye not read in the book of Moses?" (referring to Ex. 3:6)
 3. Luke 24:44—"All things . . . which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." (By these expressions Jesus referred to the entire Old Testament.)
 4. John 1:17—"The law was given through Moses."
 5. John 5:46, 47—"For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me (Jesus); for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"
 6. Compare also these passages, which attribute other parts of the Pentateuch to Moses: Matt. 8:4; 19:7; 22:24; Mark 1:44; Luke 2:22; 16:29; 20:28; John 7:19; Acts 3:22; 26:22; Romans 10:5, 19; I Cor. 9:9.
- D. Testimony of ancient Jewish writers.
1. From the Jewish Talmudic tract *Baba Bathra*, 14b-15a:
"Who wrote the Scriptures? — Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam and Job. Joshua wrote the book which bears his name and [the last]

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eight verses of the Pentateuch." (The Talmud was put into writing in the second and third centuries after Christ.)

2. From the Jewish Talmudic tract *Aboth* (Fathers), chap. I:

"MISHNAH: 1. Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua." The commentary (Gemara) on the term "Torah" says, "Scripture and its complementary Oral Instruction, with special reference to the latter."

3. Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1,8.

(Of our books) "five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death." (Josephus wrote about 80 A.D.)

The view that Moses was author of Exodus was the unanimous view of Bible writers and the ancient Jews. So strong and consistent was this testimony that even those who do not accept Moses as the author of the whole book will credit him as being the author of parts.

There were very few men living in ancient times who had the knowledge, the training, the literary skill, the time, and the motivation to write such a marvelous book as Exodus. As a participant and eye-witness of the events, Moses had the necessary *knowledge*. Having been educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, he had adequate *training* and literary skill. Because he was with Israel for forty years during the wilderness wanderings, he had abundant *time* to write. Being a man fully dedicated to God and to the people of God, he had the *motivation* necessary for the big task of writing this book and also the other books of the Pentateuch. Most important of all, the Spirit of God motivated him and assisted him. How many other men of ancient times (or modern either!) possessed this combination of qualities needed by any author of a book like Exodus?

II. CRITICAL¹ THEORIES ABOUT THE AUTHORSHIP OF EXODUS:

1. Martin Noth expresses the view of the majority of Old Testament "critics" in the following statement:

The intensive work on the Pentateuch which has been carried on by scholars for many generations has shown that the completed Pentateuch, as it now stands in the Old Testament, cannot be explained as the work of one "author" and that the attribution of the Pentateuch to Moses as author, of which we find traces only after the Old Testament period, does not hold true.²

2. Those who reject the Mosaic authorship of Exodus and the rest of the Pentateuch maintain that at first the stories and other parts of these books were stories about real or imaginary people and events, which were transmitted orally over a long period.³
3. These oral (word-of-mouth) traditions were "shaped by usage in worship centers throughout the era of conquest and settlement."⁴

Supposedly the oral traditions clustered themselves into collections of traditions at different places—Shechem, Jerusalem, Hebron Gilgal, or other places, so that in time different sections of what we now have in Exodus were chiefly known primarily in specific areas. Thus (according to the theory) there developed a

¹The term "critical" has unfortunately come to have a bad connotation to many people. The term is derived from the Greek word meaning "to judge." All students of the Bible must form some judgments concerning the Biblical text; so in a way all Bible students are "critics." However, so many Biblical "critics" have expressed skeptical, negative, views about the Bible, that the very expression "Bible critic" has become synonymous to many with "destructive critic."

²Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Phila.: Westminster, 1962), p. 12.

³Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr., *Exodus*, in *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Broadman, 1969), p. 308. (This particular edition of the *Broadman Bible Commentary* was withdrawn from publication and sale by the Southern Baptist Convention because of the "liberalism" expressed by certain of its authors.)

⁴Honeycutt, *ibid.*

body of traditions at one place about the exodus event; at another place a group of traditions about the wilderness wanderings; at yet another area a collection of traditions about the Sinai events. The sections about the covenant (Ex. 20—23) and the tabernacle (25—31, 35—40) were also independently circulated.⁵

4. The first "author" who wrote some of the traditions down is commonly called "J." "The 'Jahwist,' i.e. the author of this particular narrative stratum in the Pentateuch, is probably to be dated in the time of David or Solomon."⁶ He is thought to have lived in the southern kingdom (Judah). Sections of Exodus attributed to J include 1:8-12; 4:1-16; and many others.
5. The next "author" is called "E," (because he used the Hebrews name '*elohim* for God, rather than Jehovah). He is usually placed after J in time, and located in the northern kingdom. "The question whether J or E is the earlier is disputed; E is usually taken to be the less ancient, but this cannot be proved for certain."⁷
6. Some time near the fall of the northern kingdom the writings of J and E were combined into a single work, often called JE.
7. Skeptical critics assume that the book of Deuteronomy was written during the latter years of the kingdom of Judah. It is often associated with the reformation of Josiah in 621 B.C., although many now date it back to the time of Hezekiah (about 700 B.C.) The "Deuteronomistic" writers supposedly also added many moralistic insertions into other books (Judges, Kings, Exodus, etc.). The initial "D" is often applied to the Deuteronomistic author(s).
8. During or after the Babylonian exile (586-536 B.C.) priestly writers added a great amount of written material

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 309-311.

⁶Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁷Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

to the JE and D material that came to them. The priestly writers specialized in ceremonial and ritualistic writings, in statistics, genealogies, and introductory expressions ("these are the generations of . . ."). Most of the book of Leviticus is attributed to P, as is the material about the tabernacle and related matters in Exodus. The priestly writers supposedly rewrote much of the history which they found in JE to promote their own priestly privileges and position.⁸

9. Some time after the Babylonian captivity JE, D, and P were combined into what we now know as the Pentateuch, or Torah. This leaves Moses out of the picture.
10. These separate "sources" only exist in the minds of the critics who believe in them. The oldest Bible manuscripts we have betray no trace of J, E, D, or P.
11. No two critics who dissect the Old Testament into these sources come up with quite the same analysis. They have broad agreement, but when it comes to assigning particular passages to particular sources, every critic has his own analysis.⁹
12. We do not accept the "source" theories about the origin of the Pentateuch. In our commentary we frequently refer to the critics' views of various passages. When these views are weighed, they are found to be unproven speculations based upon an unwillingness to accept the supernatural inspiration of the Bible.

For further study of the critical theories, see Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); or Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*

⁸See Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁹For examples of way that Exodus is divided up verse by verse (or in larger units) and attributed to J, E, or P, see S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian, 1958), pp. 22-42; and W. O. E. Oesterly and Theodore H. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian, 1958), pp. 36-37.

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(Chicago, Moody, 1964); or Merrill F. Unger, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951).

If you desire to check some books favoring the source (documentary) analysis of the Old Testament, see James King West, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962); S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian, reprinted 1958).



Head of Thutmose III, king of Egypt 1502-1448 B.C. From his mummy at the Cairo museum. He was probably pharaoh of the oppression. (Ex. 1:15; 2:15).



Head of Amenhotep II,* king of Egypt 1448-1422 B.C. He was probably pharaoh at the time of the exodus.

*From J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt* (New York: Scribner's, 1924), p. 326.

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INTRODUCTORY SECTION V

THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

By the date of the "exodus" we are referring to the date of Israel's departure from Egypt, rather than the date of composition of the book of Exodus.

I. THE EARLY DATE FOR THE EXODUS—1446 B.C.

1. The exodus from Egypt occurred 480 years before the start of Solomon's temple, in the fourth year of king Solomon. See I Kings 6:1. The reign of Solomon is dated 970-931 B.C. by Edwin R. Thiele,¹ and 961-922 by Wm. F. Albright.² Using Thiele's dates, Solomon's fourth year would be 966 B.C. Adding 480 years to this gives us 1446 B.C. This figure could be a year or two off, depending on whether a part of a year is to be regarded as a whole year when adding up the totals. But the 1446 B.C. figure should be regarded as extremely close to the date. It is the date adopted in this textbook.
2. According to Judges 11:26, three hundred years (which we accept as a round number) elapsed between Israel's conquest of the land east of Jordan and the time of Judge Jephthah. Between the time of Jephthah and the reign of King David (1010-970 B.C.), several events occurred: the judgeships of Samson, Eli, and Samuel, and the reign of King Saul. The time span of these events is somewhat uncertain, but it probably was sixty to eighty years. If we start at 1010 B.C. (David's reign), and go back sixty (or more) years to Jephthah, and then back 300 years to the conquest of the land east of Jordan, and then back forty more years for the wilderness wanderings, we have a total of 400 years, and are back to 1410 B.C. This is quite close to the statistic in

¹*Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 55.

²*The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra* (New York: Harper, 1963), p. 53.

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I Kings 6:1.

If we date the exodus as late as 1290 B.C. (which many do), there is simply not enough time between 1010 and the exodus for all the events to have occurred, if we take the scriptural statistics literally at all.

3. The 1446 B.C. exodus date allows time for the events in the period of judges. If we add up all the periods whose lengths are given in the book of Judges, we get a total of 410 years! All Bible students admit that there is some overlapping in the periods. The scripture itself indicates this. (See Judges 10:7; 15:20.) If we adopt the early date of the exodus, we find enough time for all of the events in the period of judges, when we have allowed for some overlapping. If we date the exodus as late as 1290, so much overlapping and telescoping of time is required that there is at least a fifty percent adjustment needed!
4. Queen Hatshepsut (1501-1480 B.C.)³ ruled at the correct time to be a possible candidate as the "daughter of Pharaoh" who saved the baby Moses. If the exodus was in 1446 B.C., Moses was born in 1526 B.C., eighty years before. Hatshepsut would then have been a youthful "daughter of Pharaoh," not yet queen. We feel that she was the woman referred to, but there is no way to be certain.
5. Thutmose III (1502-1448 B.C.) fits well as the Pharaoh of the oppression.
 - a. He came to power very near the time when Moses fled to Midian (about 1486 B.C.). Thutmose III was both step-son and son-in-law of Hatshepsut, and was a bitter rival to her during the latter part of her reign. He made seventeen military campaigns into Canaan and Syria.

³Using the dates of Siegfried J. Schwantes, *A Short History of the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965). His dates are used for all the Egyptian kings mentioned in this article.

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- b. His personality (militaristic and bragging) fits well as the "pharaoh of the oppression."
 - c. A model and a painting of slaves making bricks comes from the time of his reign.⁴ Compare Ex. 1:14.
 - d. He died shortly (one or two years) before Moses returned to Egypt from Midian. See Ex. 4:19; 2:23.
6. Amenhotep II (1448-1422 B.C.) fits well the Pharaoh at the time of the exodus.
- a. The dates agree. Amenhotep II seems to have been unable to carry out any invasions or extensive military operations after his fifth year.⁵ Perhaps this was caused by the Red Sea disaster.
 - b. His personality fits well. He was strong, athletic, and insufferably boastful.⁶ See pp. 132-133 in this book.
 - c. He was succeeded by a non-firstborn son, Thutmose IV.⁷ All the firstborn of Egypt died at the passover time.
 - d. The chief problem with adopting Amenhotep II as pharaoh of the exodus is that Ex. 14:28, Psalm 136:15, and other passages seem to say that the Pharaoh perished in the sea. This is a problem. See notes on 14:28.
7. The fact that there were eleven generations from Aaron (Israel's first high priest) to Zadok (a priest in the time of king David, about 1000 B.C.) surely places the date of Aaron (and therefore also the death of the exodus) back as far as 1400 B.C. Even in the time available after that date, there would have been hardly forty years available for each generation. See I Chronicles 6:3-8.

⁴Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), p. 122 (picture); D. J. Wiseman, *Illustrations from Biblical Archaeology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), pp. 42, 44, 45.

⁵G. L. Archer, Jr., *Survey of Old Testament Intro.* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), pp. 215, 217, 204-207.

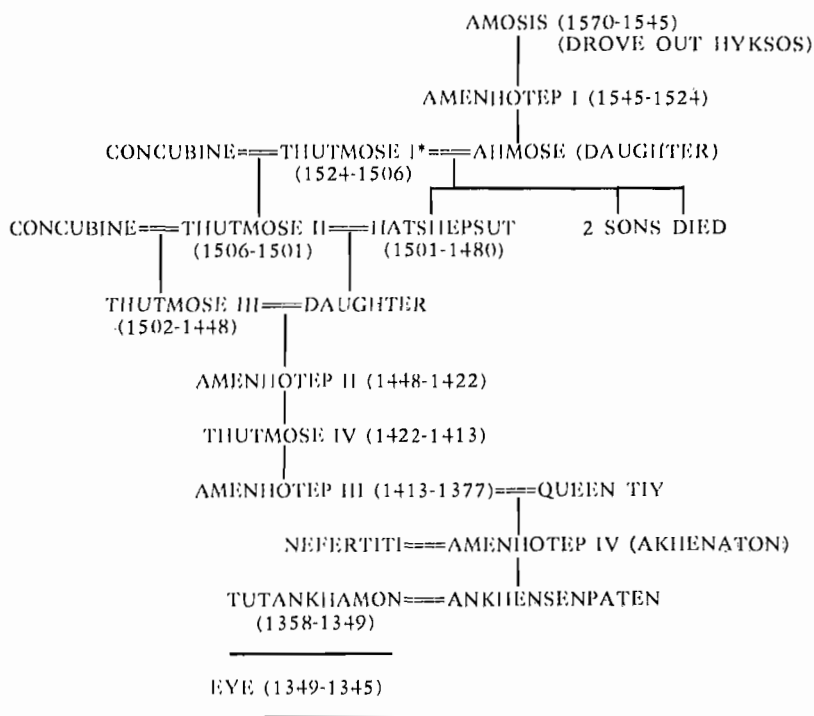
⁶*Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), p. 244.

⁷Schwantes, *op. cit.*, p. 86. G. L. Robinson, *Bearing of Archaeology on the Old Testament* (New York: American Tract Society, 1944), p. 54.

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CHART OF KINGS OF EGYPTIAN EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY

(Double lines indicate marriage.)



*Observe that neither Thutmose I, nor Thutmose II, nor Thutmose III actually had royal blood, but their wives and daughter did.

8. The fact that Israel could subdue almost all the land east of the Jordan river in only two battles (at Jahaz and Edrei; Num. 21:23, 24) shows that this area was sparsely populated at the time near the exodus. Archaeological surveys have shown that this was the case between 1850-1300 B.C.,⁸ which would include the time forty years after the exodus. After 1300 B.C. it became more heavily populated. (It is incorrect to allege, however, that this area had NO settled population before 1300 B.C. See p. 27.)
9. The Amarna letters (clay tablets sent from kings in Canaan to the Egyptian kings around 1400-1375 B.C.) tell of great alarm in Canaan because they were being invaded. Among the invading peoples, they mention the 'Apiri (also spelled Habiri, Habiru, 'Apiru, Hapiri, Khapiri). This name may very well refer to the Hebrews.⁹ If the 'Apiru invasion was, even in part, the Hebrew invasion, then we would need to date the exodus some forty-five or fifty years before the Amarna letters, which would give us a date quite close to 1446 B.C.

It is remarkable that among all the letters sent to the Egyptian king Akhenaton (at Amarna), there are no letters from Jericho, Shiloh, Mizpah, Gibeon, Hazor, or Shechem. These places had probably either been conquered already by the Habiri (as the Bible indicates), or had already allied themselves with them.¹⁰

One of the Amarna letters from the Egyptian envoy in north Palestine contains this note to the reigning Pharaoh: "Let my lord the king recall what *Hazor* and its king have already had to endure."¹¹ Hazor was one of the cities destroyed by Joshua. (Joshua 11:10-13)

⁸Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1959), pp. 10, 11.

⁹Wm. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, New York: Anchor, 1957), p. 240, says that the name *Hebrew* may "perfectly well reflect an adjectival form 'Apiru."

¹⁰G. L. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 58. John Garstang and J. B. E. Garstang, *The Story of Jericho* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1948), p. 126.

¹¹Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible is True* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), p. 145.

The king of Megiddo wrote one of the "Amarna letters," saying that he was being attacked by one Lab'ayu, ruler of Shechem. He asks for reinforcements. Lab'ayu also wrote, protesting his innocence. Lab'ayu is said (by his enemies) to have turned Shechem over to the 'Apiru.¹² This may explain how the Israelites could conduct their big mass meeting at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerezim without interference from the Canaanites.

The identification of the Habiri of the Amarna letters has caused much controversy. Some say they were the Hebrews. But the Habiri spoken of seem to have been a much more inclusive group of people than just the Hebrews, although the Hebrews were probably regarded as Habiri by the Canaanites. Consult the *Biblical Archaeologist*, Feb. 1960, for a detailed discussion. See also G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Phila.: Westminster, 1962), p. 75.

10. A destruction layer at Hazor in northern Israel is dated about 1400 B.C. (close of the Late Bronze I period). This is probably the debris of the destruction referred to in Joshua 11:11, 13. This would fit very well with the 1446 exodus date.¹³

At Hazor there are three destruction layers on the plateau (or enclosure) below the tell (acropolis). One is the 1400 B.C. destruction. The next above it is from the end of Late Bronze II A, and is probably the destruction by the Egyptian king Seti I, 1318 B.C. The third is LB II B (1300-1260/30 B.C.), and is possibly the destruction debris caused by the battle of Deborah and Barak (Judges 4:2, 24).

¹²Chas. F. Pfeiffer, *Tell El Amarna and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963), p. 50. *Biblical Archaeologist*, Feb. 1960, p. 19. G. E. Wright, *Shechem* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 18.

¹³*Bibliotheca Sacra* #129 (1972), pp. 42-46; (Reprinted in the *Bulletin of the Near East Archaeological Society*, #2, 1972, pp. 8-17). See Yigael Yadin (and others), *Hazor II* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1960), plate CXVI for many illustrations of LB I pottery from Hazor. See also *Hazor III-IV*, plates CCXL-CCLIII for similar material.

11. The discovery of a jar handle bearing three very ancient Hebrew letters (found at the ruins of Raddana, a site about ten miles north of Jerusalem) has led Dr. Y. Aharoni of Tel Aviv University to date the Hebrew occupation of this site as no later than 1300 B.C.¹⁴ The letters resemble the Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions found in the Mt. Sinai area, and dated approximately 1500 B.C.

If the Hebrews were at Raddana in 1300 B.C., this forces the exodus back to near 1400 (counting the years of wandering, the years of conquest, and the occupation during the period of judges). This is much nearer to the 1446 date we have proposed than it is to other suggested later dates.

The excavators of Raddana, Dr. Joseph Callaway and Dr. Robert E. Cooley, do not concur with Aharoni's conclusion, and maintain that the site of Raddana was first occupied about 1200 B.C., and that it was probably occupied by non-Israelites, who had a sophisticated architecture that was destroyed and later crudely rebuilt by Israelite invaders about 1100 B.C. (Information from personal correspondence with Robert E. Cooley.)

The Biblical information gives a rather definite date for the exodus. The archaeological data, though valuable, seems incomplete, inconclusive, and contradictory.

II. THE LATE DATE FOR THE EXODUS—1290 B.C.

1. Because of some conclusions from archaeology, most scholars do not accept the 1446 B.C. date that we have proposed for the exodus. Most date it around 1290 B.C.¹⁵

¹⁴Y. Aharoni, "Khirbet Raddana and its Inscription," *Israel Exploration Journal* #21, pp. 130-135.

¹⁵Many of the arguments for a late date or against the early date can be read in J. A. Thompson, *The Bible and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 55-63; Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 117-121; K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1966), pp. 52-72. Rebuttals to most of their arguments can be found in Gleason Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), pp. 214-223.

Some, like Joseph Callaway, have proposed dates as low as 1100 B.C.

2. Those dating the exodus late generally regard the great notorious king *Raamses II* (1301-1234) of the Egyptian nineteenth dynasty as the pharaoh of the oppression, and his son *Merneptah* (1234-1220 B.C.) as the pharaoh of the exodus. Others regard *Seti I* (1317-1301 B.C.) as the pharaoh of the oppression and *Raamses II* as the pharaoh of the exodus.

We feel that the very lack of certainty and unanimity among advocates of the later dates shows the weakness of the view.

Merneptah in his fifth year of reign prepared a stele (an upright inscribed stone monument), which contains boastings about his victories (real or unreal). In this stele he mentions Israel. (It is the only such stele known that actually names Israel. He writes (in part) . . .

Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;
Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;
Israel is laid waste, his seed is not.¹⁶

If Israel was in its land, and had suffered a raid by Merneptah in his fifth year (1230 B.C.), the exodus could not have been later than about 1280.¹⁷

3. One of the principal arguments for the later date of the exodus is the mention of *Raamses* in Ex. 1:11. This name of a city is thought to link the exodus to *Raamses II*, rather than to the XVIII dynasty kings like *Thutmose III*.¹⁸ Some authors have asserted that the name *Raamses*

¹⁶From *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (translation by John A. Wilson) (Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), p. 378.

¹⁷Some recent scholars have held that the word on the Merneptah stele usually translated "Israel" may not actually mean Israel, but refers to a town, possibly "Jez-reel." If so, then the Merneptah stele would not by itself prove Israel as a nation was settled in the land by that time. J. H. Hertz, *Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1969), p. 395.

¹⁸Finegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 118, 119.

just does not appear before the nineteenth dynasty of Egypt.

Admitted: We have no definite proof outside the Bible that the city which was called Raamses or Per-Raamses, or any other city in the area, was called by that name before the nineteenth dynasty. It was the royal residence city in the Egyptian delta during the XIX and XX dynasties, when eleven kings wore the name of Raamses.

Nonetheless, we now know that the name *Raamses* was certainly used before the XIX dynasty, and there is no conclusive proof that it was not used as a city name then, as the Bible says it was. Pierre Montet says that the founder of the XIX dynasty, Raamses I, belonged to a family of the eastern delta, where for generations all the men had been called Seti or Raamses.¹⁹ Gleason L. Archer, Jr. documents the appearance of the name Raamses (with the slightly variant spelling Ramose) as the name of a nobleman during the XVIII dynasty (time of Amenhotep III).²⁰ Also Donovan Courville gives the Sothis list of the kings of Egypt, which lists at least six kings that *preceded* the Hyksos who had the name Raamses in various forms.²¹

Genesis 47:11 says that the Israelites settled "in the land of *Rameses*" during the time of Jacob. The use of the name *Rameses* here might be a later name applied to the site before it was actually called that. But it could very possibly indicate that the area was called by that name way back in the time of Jacob, about 1875 B.C.

A problem for those who assume that Ex. 1:11 refers to a city called Raamses existing in the time of Raamses II is that Raamses II did his building right in Wadi Tumilat (Goshen), where the Israelites lived. But the

¹⁹*Lives of the Pharaohs* (Cleveland: World, 1968), p. 164.

²⁰Mimeographed article, Dec. 1973.

²¹*The Exodus Problem*, Vol. 1 (Loma Linda: Challenge, 1971), pp. 118-122.

Egyptians and the Israelites were not mixed together.²²

4. Another argument for the late date is the view that there were NO settled habitations east of Jordan in Moab, Ammon, Edom, or Gilead in the fourteenth century. Therefore the exodus could not have occurred near then, because the Bible relates that the Israelites encountered these peoples.²³

As stated in this article (I, 7), there were indeed very few residents east of Jordan in Moses' time. But the discovery of a small temple at Amman, Jordan, and large family tombs at Amman and Naur,²⁴ dated before 1400 B.C., shows that the area did have a population in the time of Moses, as the Bible indicates.

5. An argument against the early (1446 B.C.) date is that the capital of Egypt during the XVIII dynasty was at Thebes, and not up in the delta. Thutmose III did not build buildings in the delta area, where Israel lived, and therefore he could not be the pharaoh of the oppression.²⁵

Rebuttal: Though the capital was indeed at Thebes far to the south, Thutmose III calls himself Lord of Heliopolis (which was in the delta). His son Amenhotep II was born at Memphis, near the delta. Thutmose III erected two granite obelisks at Heliopolis.²⁶ It is hardly conceivable that the densely populated delta region would not be developed by the XVIII kings, since it was the gateway to their conquests in Canaan and Syria.

6. A frequently-used argument for the late exodus date is that the remains of Palestinian cities—Lachish, Debir, Jericho, Hazor, Ai—prove that the conquest

²²Archer, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

²³Nelson Glueck, *River Jordan* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 41, 101, 102, 104.

²⁴G. Lancaster Harding, *The Antiquities of Jordan* (New York: Crowell, 1959), p. 17. See also *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, p. 167.

²⁵Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

²⁶Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

was later than 1400 B.C., and hence the exodus was later than 1446.²⁷

a. *Lachish* was apparently destroyed about 1230 B.C. But this was not the work of Joshua, who destroyed the inhabitants of Lachish, but not the city itself. (Joshua 10:31, 32; 11:13). The 1230 destruction may be the work of Merneptah.²⁸

b. *Debir*. Tell Beit Mirsim, SW of Hebron, was formerly thought to be the site of Debir. It was destroyed about 1220 B.C. This could have been the result of Merneptah's raid, but was certainly not part of the Israelite conquest referred to in Josh. 10:38, 39 and Judges 1:11-13. No destruction of the site accompanied the Israelite slaughter of the inhabitants.

More recent researches have quite convincingly indicated that Tell Beit Mirsim was not the ancient site of Debir. More likely Debir was the site now known as Tell Rabud, five miles south of Hebron.²⁹

c. *Jericho*. The excavations of John Garstang at Jericho (1930-36) seemingly proved that City IV of Jericho was destroyed about 1400 B.C., which would confirm the Biblical exodus date. Double walls were found fallen, and these were thought to be the walls that fell in Joshua's time. However, subsequent excavations by Kathleen Kenyon indicate that the walls Garstang thought fell in 1400 B.C. were actually from the Early Bronze period five hundred years earlier; and the two walls were themselves not even contemporary.³⁰ There is an obvious destruction and burn layer at Jericho. This layer has usually been dated

²⁷J. A. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²⁸Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

²⁹A. F. Rainey, "The Location and History of Biblical Debir." *Newsletter of the Near East Archaeological Society*, Winter 1974.

³⁰See Charles Pfeiffer, *Biblical World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), pp. 308, 309.

about 1580 B.C., at the end of the Canaanite Middle Bronze II period, and attributed to an Egyptian attack in Palestine following the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt. But the evidence that the Egyptians destroyed Jericho or other Palestinian cities then is very weak. More probably the Middle Bronze culture in Palestine continued until Joshua conquered Canaan about 1400 B.C. The walls of Jericho that Joshua destroyed have probably been visible all along, but the remains have been dated wrongly.³¹

d. *Hazor*. The excavators of Hazor have maintained that the destruction layer there dated after 1300 was that of the Israelite conquest.³² This is an unnecessary conclusion, because there is at Hazor another destruction layer dated about 1400. (See p. 23.)

e. *Ai*. Excavations have been made at a large mound named Et-Tell located twelve miles north of Jerusalem since 1933 because this has generally been regarded as the location of Ai. But no remains have been found there that can be dated between 2300 and 1200 B.C.

At any place where people have ever lived in Palestine broken pieces of pottery can be found and dated by their forms. If Et Tell is the location of Ai, why are there no remains there datable to near 1400 B.C., when Joshua destroyed Ai?

The author of this book has been involved in excavations at a small mound named Khirbet Nisya ten miles north of Jerusalem. (The excavation director is Mr. David Livingston.) Khirbet Nisya lies on the east side of a high hill, just as the Bible says Ai did (Gen. 12:8). There pottery from the Canaanite period (Middle Bronze II), Israelite (Iron age), Persian, and other periods has been

³¹ John Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (Sheffield, England: Univ. of Sheffield, 1981), pp. 110-132.

³² Y. Yadin, and others, *Hazor II* (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 165.

³³ *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Sept. 1968, p. 314.

found, the very periods in which the Bible indicates Ai was inhabited. (Note Isa. 10:8; Ezra 2:28). No remains from these periods have been found at Et-Tell. We think Nisya will prove to be the true site of Ai, and the historical precision of the Bible will be demonstrated again.

7. Another objection is that the Habiri who captured(?) Jerusalem about 1400 B.C., and who are named in the Amarna letters, could not have been the Hebrews, since the Hebrews did not capture Jerusalem.³⁵

Rebuttal: Neither the Amarna letters nor the Bible declare that the Habiri/Hebrews captured Jerusalem, but only that they threatened it.³⁶ The fear of the king of Jerusalem, as indicated by Joshua 10:1, 2, is similar to that expressed by Abdi-Khepa, king of Jerusalem in the Amarna letters.

8. Yet another objection to the early date is that Joseph (son of Jacob) does not fit into the Hyksos period by the early dating.³⁷

There is absolutely no proof that Joseph lived during the Hyksos period. Joseph came into Egypt during the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (before the Hyksos), and the later Hyksos kings were probably persecutors of the Israelites, not allies.³⁸

9. Another argument against the 1446 B.C. exodus date is that the 480 years in I Kings 6:1 cannot be regarded as expressing the precisely literal chronology that we Western-world people expect our statistics to express.³⁹

Those holding this view allege that the authors of the

³⁴ *The Exodus Problem*, Vol. 1 (Loma Linda: Challenge, 1971), pp. 70-73, 77.

³⁵ Finegan, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

³⁶ Charles Pfeiffer, *The Biblical World* (Baker, 1966), p. 36.

³⁷ Finegan, *ibid.*

³⁸ Archer *op. cit.*, 215, 204-207.

³⁹ James Moyer, "Date of the Exodus" (Springfield, Mo.: Duplicated notes, 1974).

THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

Old Testament generally dealt in "round" numbers. For example, the "four hundred" years in Gen. 15:13 refers to the same period described as 430 years in Ex. 12:40. Also the number *forty* occurs seven times in the book of Judges (3:11; 5:31; et al); the number *twenty* appears three times (Judges 4:3; et al); *eighty* appears once (Judges 3:30).

It is further argued that the Israelites did not keep precise statistics up until the time of the monarchy (about 1000 B.C.), and neither did her neighboring nations.

The statistics and "generations" of the Old Testament are said to show "schematization" very often. This term means that in giving statistics and lists of names the authors often gave some approximate number that could be easily remembered or associated with another similar group. Thus in the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1), the generations are schematized into three groups of fourteen generations, although this required omission of some known names.

By this argument the 480 years of I Kings 6:1 could be interpreted to mean twelve generations (or tribes) of approximately forty years each, but it would not be the precise number.

In reply to these arguments we observe that the ancient Egyptians, as far back as 2500 B.C. were meticulous record keepers. At least seven very long genealogical lists are known, each spanning many generations.⁴⁰ One list covers about 600 years, and another some 1300 years, naming sixty generations of the family and at intervals giving the names of contemporary kings.

Inasmuch as Moses grew up in Egypt and was trained in the ways of the Egyptians, it is reasonable to assume

⁴⁰K. A. Kitchen, "Transmission of Family Records for Long Periods," *Tyndale House Bulletin*, April 1960, pp. 14-18.

that his approach to statistics and family records would be like that of the Egyptians.

As for the use of round numbers, it simply is not true that all Old Testament statistics are round numbers. Very many are obviously specific. For example, Judges 3:8 gives "eight"; Judges 3:14 has "eighteen"; Judges 6:1 reads "seven." Even the multiples of ten may be the actual numbers, and not approximations. We surely agree that the Old Testament gives some round numbers; but it is wrong to assume that all numbers are questionable because some are "round."

Likewise, schematization may have been employed in a few cases. But this is not adequate cause to assume that it was used in every list of names or every statistic. What may appear to us to have been schematized may have been a reality.

For generations scholars had difficulty trying to harmonize the numbers given in the books of Kings concerning the years the various kings reigned. Many gave it up as hopeless. When Edwin R. Thiele began his study of the numbers associated with the Hebrew kings, he began with the assumption that the numbers might be correct when they were understood as the ancient people wrote them.⁴¹ His investigations demonstrated that the numbers were correct. It was our lack of understanding of them that caused the problems. We should look upon the statistics in the scriptures with the same kind of respect that Jesus had for the scriptures generally.

⁴¹ *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, pp. v-vii.

ISRAEL'S ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

INTRODUCTORY SECTION VI

ISRAEL'S ROUTE (JOURNEY) FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

SEE NUMBERS 33:5-15; Ex. 12:38—19:1)

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES guiding us in our attempt to trace Israel's route:

MANY uncertainties confront anyone who tries to trace Israel's route precisely. A check of commentaries and atlases will show how extremely varied are the proposed routes. Several principles have helped us to decide what was their probable journey route.

1. All *Scriptural* information about Israel's travels must be accepted as accurate and final authority. Our Lord Jesus said that the scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35).
2. Israel's journeys had to be through places where they had LOTS of room. With 603,550 men (Num. 2:32) and a probable total population of over two million, their total encampment area would probably cover six miles square (36 square miles).¹ Even in this much area there would be over 50,000 people in every square mile.
3. The natural geographic features of the Red Sea and the Sinai peninsula are presently very similar to those that existed in the time of Moses. The wadies² between the granite mountains of Sinai are in the same places that they were long ago. The traffic routes in Moses' day passed through the same valleys that modern caravans follow.

The Red Sea, or Sea of Reeds, occupied in Moses'

¹J. W. McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.; Gospel Advocate, 1966), pp. 346-347.

²A *wady* is a usually-dry brook-valley. They flow with water during the occasional winter rains.

time almost exactly the same bed it now occupies. There is no indication that any neck of water once connected the Bitter Lakes with the north tip of the Gulf of Suez. Archaeologist Wm. F. Albright tells of finding an archaeological site inhabited in the fifteenth century B.C. (the very time of MOSES!) which lies only a little over a hundred meters from the Red Sea shore, and is less than five meters above the present average Red Sea level.³ Obviously the shore line of the Red Sea is now about where it has been for 3500 years. (See note, p. 43.)

4. We do not regard the encampments named in Num. 33:5-15 as necessarily all being just one day's journey apart. In fact, we are told that it was a three days' trip from Pihahairoth to Marah, although this trip is presented as just one stage (Num. 33:8). Probably the "encampments" are only the more prominent locations they passed through, or their longer stopover points.

II. SITES (or stages) IN ISRAEL'S JOURNEY

1. From *Rameses* to *Succoth* (Num. 33:5).

Most scholars now locate Rameses at Tanis in the northeast Nile delta area.⁴ Another site that has been proposed is at modern Qantir ("bridge"), which is fifteen miles south of Tanis.⁵ We have selected Qantir as the site of Rameses on our map, because it is nearer the Land of Goshen (Wadi Tumilat area), where Israel's main population lived, than Tanis is.

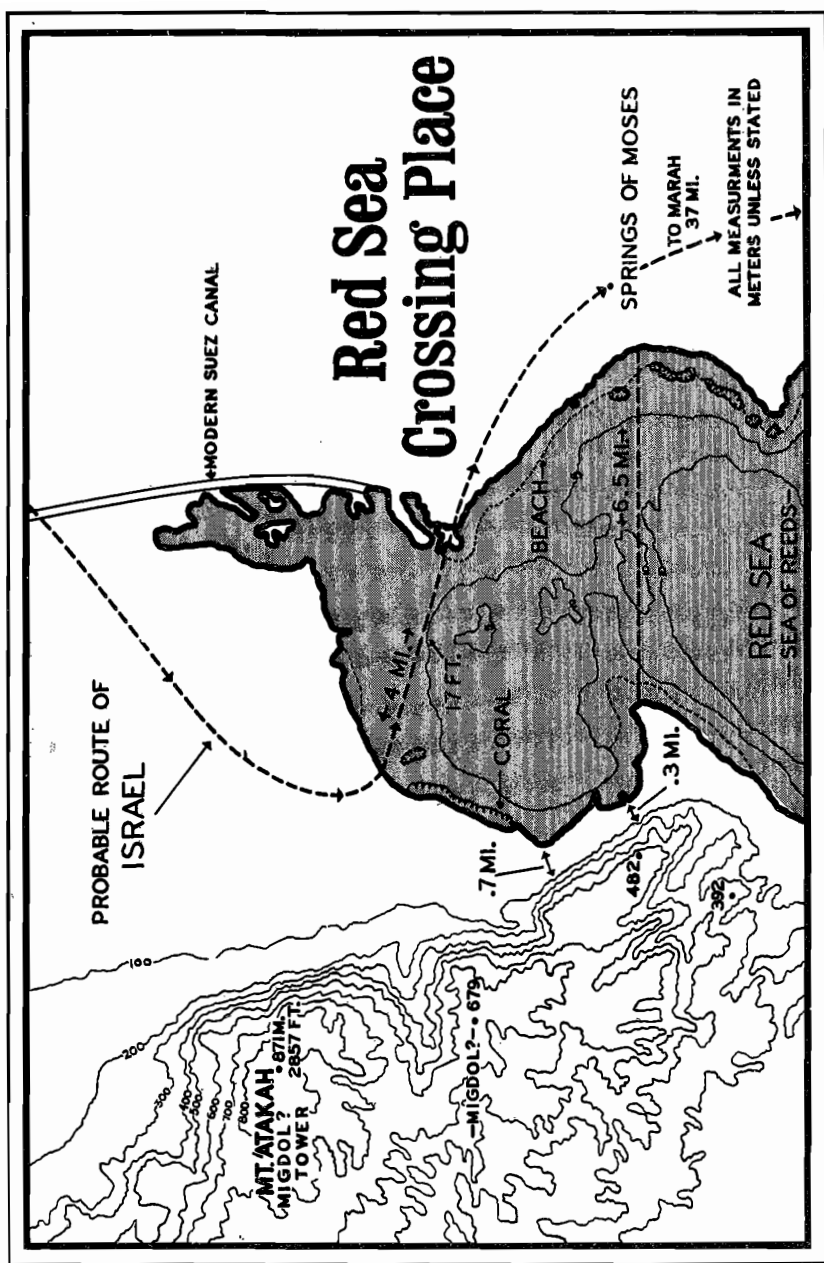
Succoth, meaning booths or temporary dwellings, is probably the hill ruin named Tell Maskhuta⁶ near the eastern end of Goshen, about ten miles west of Lake Timsah.

³"Exploring in Sinai with the Univ. of Calif. African Expedition," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 109 (Feb. 1948), p. 15.

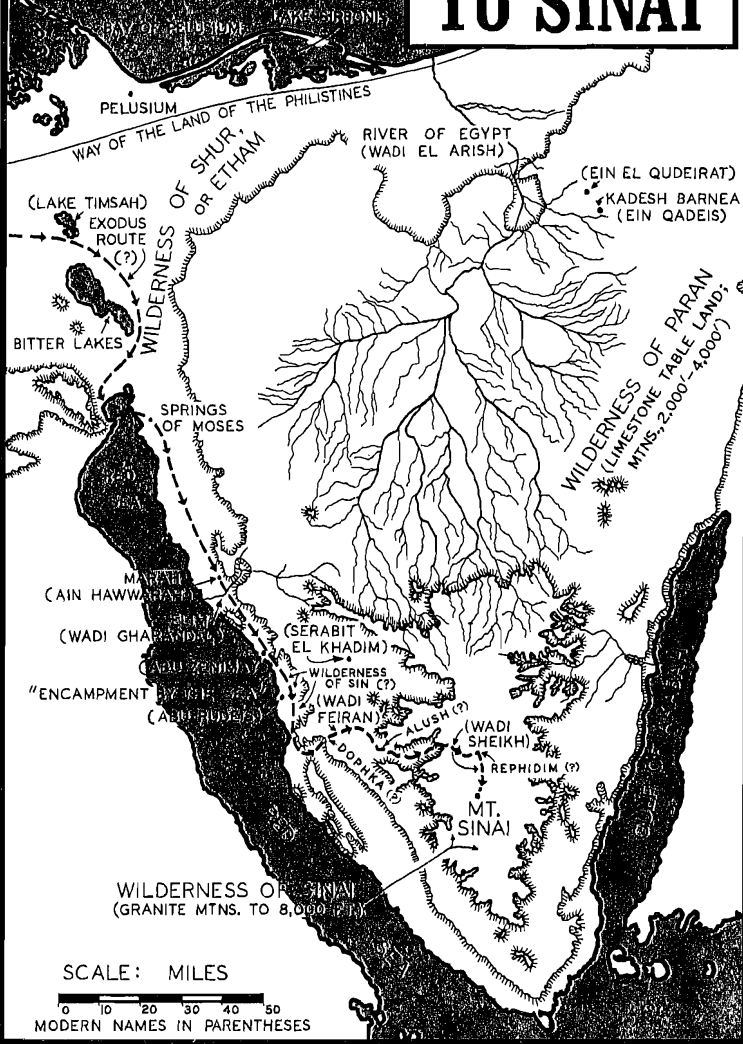
⁴"Rameses," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Phila.: Westminster, 1962), p. 61.



JOURNEY TO SINAI



EXPLORING EXODUS

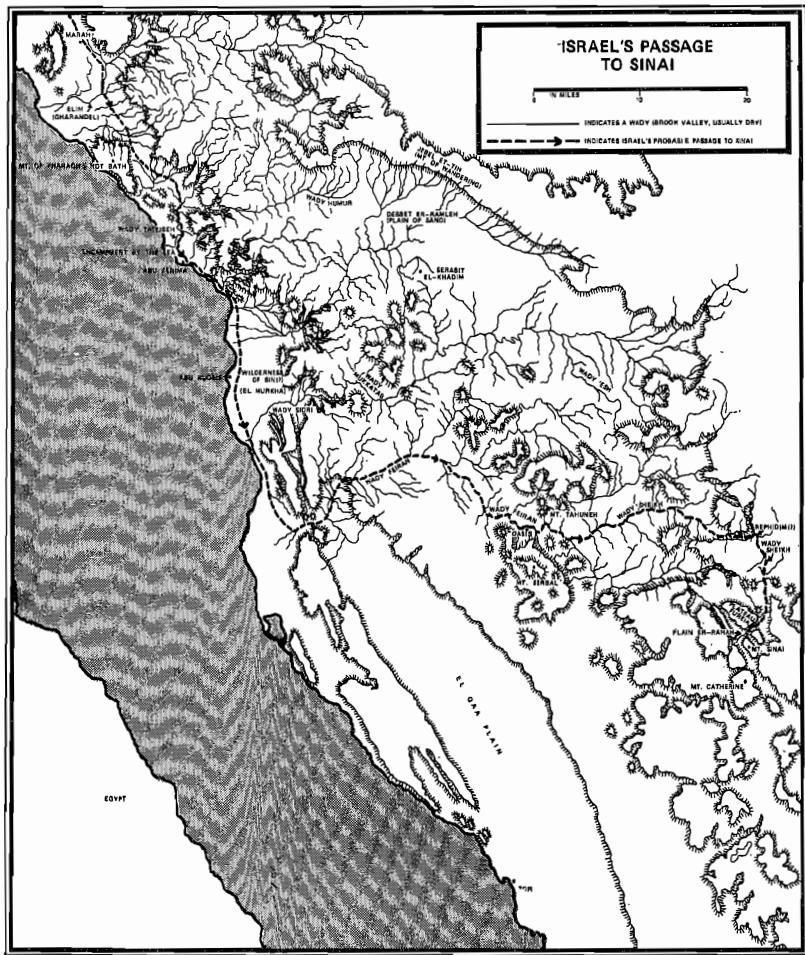


SINAI PENINSULA

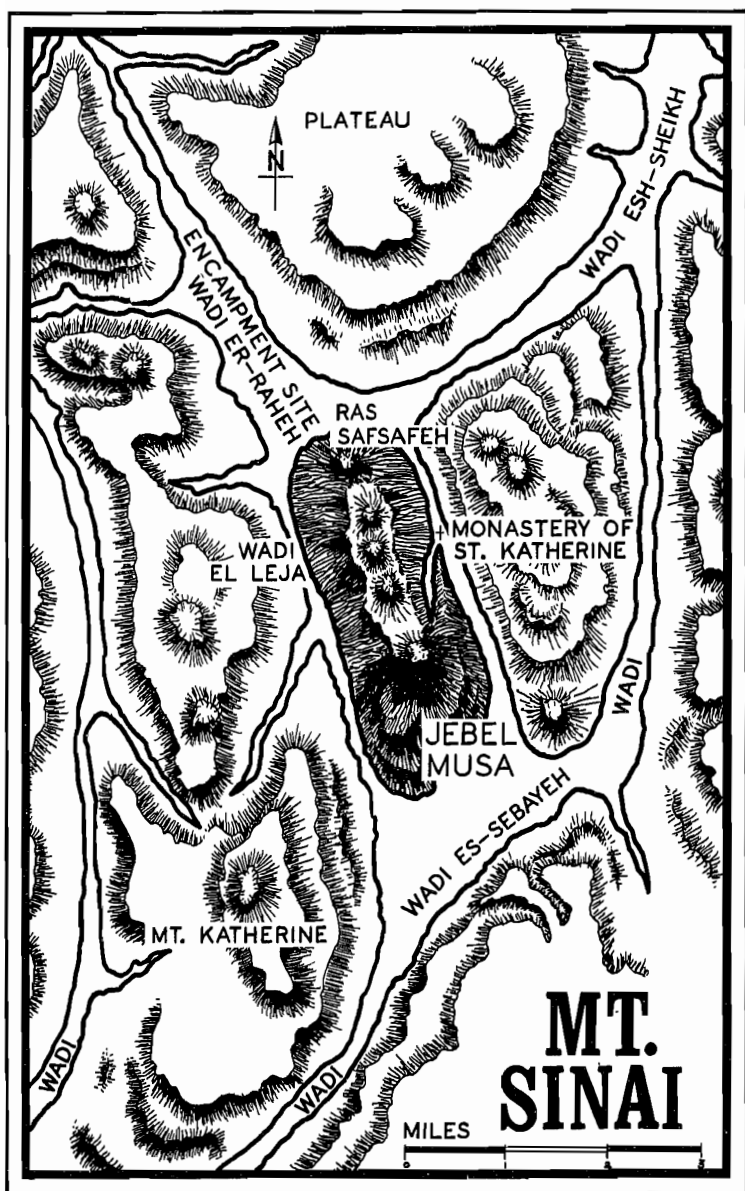


Sinai Peninsula (satellite view). (Picture courtesy NASA)

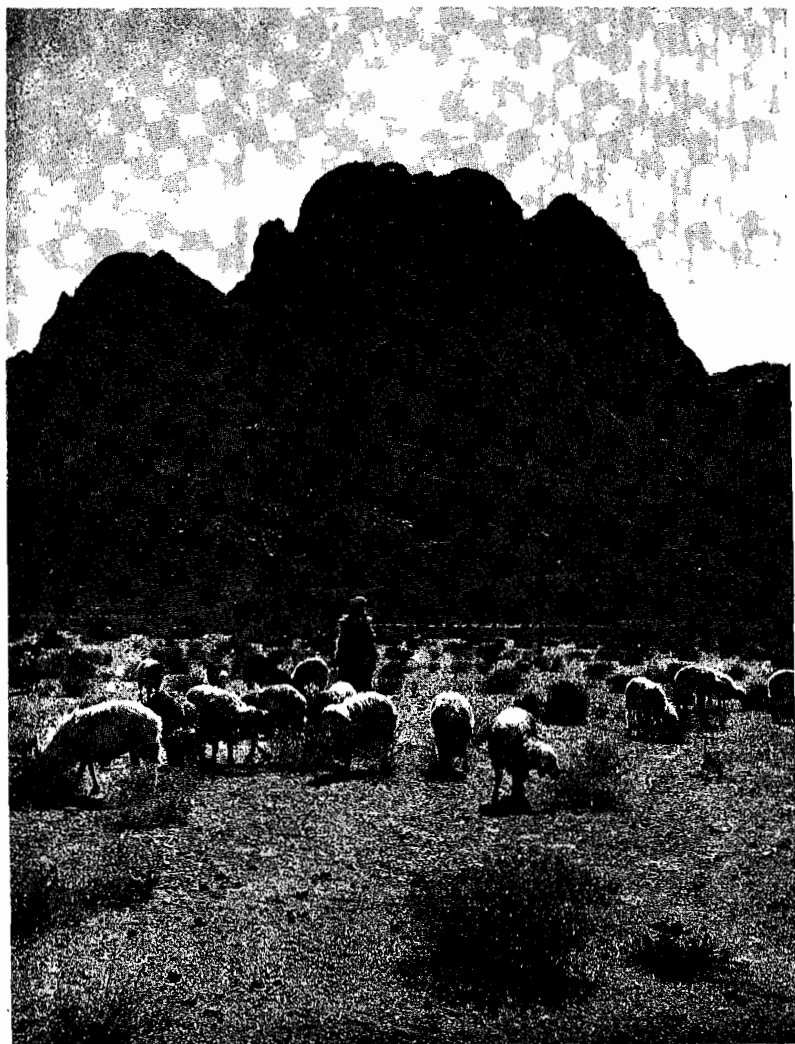
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MT. SINAI



EXPLORING EXODUS



Shepherd before Mt. Sinai. (Matson photo)

ISRAEL'S ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

2. From *Succoth* to *Etham* (Num. 33:6).

The site of *Etham* is not yet identified. Num. 33:6 says it is "in the edge of the wilderness." We therefore feel that to reach *Etham*, Israel must have travelled on eastward a few miles beyond Lake Timsah (probably passing just south of Timsah), going into the Sinai peninsula just east of the present Suez canal. The fact the Wilderness of *Etham* is the same area that is also called the Wilderness of *Shur* (Num. 33:8; Ex. 15:22), and that we know that *Shur* lay just east of the delta of Egypt in the Sinai wilderness, confirms our belief that *Etham* was somewhere southeast of Lake Timsah.

3. From *Etham* to *Pihahairoth* (Num. 33:7).

To reach *Pihahairoth* Israel had to "turn back." (The Hebrew verb may simply mean *turn*, as well as *turn back*.) Many interpreters seem to overlook this command about turning.⁷

We feel that Israel travelled southward after they entered into the Sinai desert, travelling along the east side of the Bitter Lakes, toward the Gulf of Suez. There is hardly room along the west side of the Bitter Lakes for a mass of people as great as Israel to have passed through, because mount *Shuberavith* and mount *Ginefah* lie only about three miles from the west shore of the Bitter Lakes.

Having gone on south of the Bitter Lakes, Israel was then instructed to "turn back and encamp before *Pihahairoth*" (Ex. 14:2). Since *back* to the Hebrews often meant *west*, a turn to the west would fulfill this command. A westward turn would bring them to the

⁷Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62, presents a map suggesting that Israel turned to the north, and there crossed the southern tip of Lake Menzaleh, which he identifies as the Reed Sea (Red Sea). This is much too far north for Israel to have reached Marah in three days (Ex. 15:22-23). Wright identifies Marah with 'Ain Hawwarah, as we do also. Wright's map of Israel's proposed travel route shows Israel travelling along the east side of the Bitter Lakes, as does ours.

northwest side of the Gulf of Suez tip.

Pihahairoth is said to have been between *Migdol* and the sea, and before (east of?) *Baal-zephon* (Ex. 14:2). The name *Migdol* means *tower*. We suggest that the tower may have been on one of the summits of Mt. Atakah, just west of the Gulf of Suez tip only four or five miles.⁸

Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible says that Pihahairoth cannot now be identified with any known town or city in the east *delta* region (emphasis ours). It seems to us that the obvious reason for this is that Pihahairoth was NOT in the Delta area, but at the north tip of the Suez Gulf. The meaning of *Pihahairoth* is not certain, but the Egyptologist A. H. Gardiner said that it may mean the "house of Hathor." Hathor was the Egyptain cow-goddess, the "mother" principle of deity, who provided nourishment for the soul in the other-world.

Baal-zephon means *Lord-of-the-North*. The name seems to refer to a Canaanite idol in Egypt, or one of the places which bore its name. The location of Baal-zephon is not known.⁹ G. E. Wright¹⁰ tells of a Phoenician letter which associates a place called Baal-zephon with Tahpanes (Jer. 43:7-9), also called Daphnae. This is located between Lake Menzaleh and Lake Timsah. Possibly one place called Baal-zephon was that far north of the Gulf of Suez, but the Biblical Baal-zephon seems to have been near the north tip of the Gulf of Suez, only three days' journey from Marah. See notes on 14:1, 2.

4. From *Pihahairoth* (Hahairoth) across the *sea* (Num. 33:8).

⁸*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 2936, says, "Migdol must be *Ras 'Atakah*, or some other high point. . . ." We agree.

⁹Baal-zephon is placed by Josephus (*Antiquities* II, xv, 1) on the Red Sea. We do not know what his authority was for doing this, but we feel he was correct.

¹⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 62.

ISRAEL'S ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

We are persuaded that Israel crossed the Red Sea, or Sea of Reeds (Weeds), near the north tip of the Gulf of Suez. See map. The distance across the sea there would be about four miles, and the greatest water depth about twenty feet. God may have blown the path dry across the sea a mile wide, or even wider. Concerning the problem of what sea is meant by the Red Sea, or Reed Sea, see the following Introductory Section VII. We feel that these are two names for the same body of water.

An alternate spot on the Gulf of Suez where Israel may have crossed lies about five miles south of our proposed crossing point. Here they would enter the sea from the sandy cape *Adabiya*. This is just south of the "hump" on the west coast of the Gulf of Suez' tip. This cape has features that would make it an ideal crossing place. The sea is about six and a half miles across at this point, and has a gently sloping sand bottom both into it and out of it on the east side. The greatest water depth there is about thirty feet.¹¹

However, it seems to us that the corridor to reach this cape is too narrow for all the Israelites to have passed through without requiring too much time and trouble. There is less than one-half mile between the sea and the steep slopes of *Mt. Atakah* to the west. This very narrow level passage between sea and mountain would really be a bottle-neck for Israel.

Near the place of Israel's exit on the east side of the sea are the '*Ayun Musa*, the Springs of Moses. This name was given long after Bible times to seven rather insignificant springs. A few palms grow near the water, which is brackish.¹² The scripture does not mention these springs.

5. From the sea to *Marah* (Num. 33:8).

¹¹This is the crossing-place proposed by J. W. McGarvey, *op. cit.*, p. 441ff.

¹²*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. V., p. 3066.

The way from the Springs of Moses to Marah is over hard compacted sand, sprinkled with gravel and small boulders. It took Israel three days to go from the Red Sea to Marah (Ex. 15:22), through the Wilderness of Shur (also called Etham). It is about thirty-seven miles from the Springs of Moses to Marah, which is generally considered to be *'Ain Hawwarah*, a spring now completely buried in sand. Only a cluster of date palms and a damp spot nearby tell of its existence.¹³ The water is still bitter. The spring Marah must have been much greater in Moses' time. (See notes on Ex. 15:23.)

If the Red Sea crossing place were farther north than the north end of the Gulf of Suez, it would have required more than three days travel to reach Marah, assuming that Israel could travel about twelve miles a day. John J. Davis admits this difficulty,¹⁴ even though he places the crossing of the sea at the south end of the Bitter Lakes.

6. From *Marah* to *Elim* (Num. 33:9)

Elim is generally considered to be the *Wady Gharandel*. It is about seven miles from Marah. It is a small brook fed by springs of water better than that of Marah.¹⁵ (See notes on Ex. 15:27.)

7. From *Elim* to the encampment by the *Red Sea* (Num. 33:10).

Mountains right up against the east shore of the Gulf of Suez separate the road south from Elim from the shore. (One of these mountains is now called *Jebel Hamman Far'aun*, the mountain of Pharaoh's Hot Bath.) But after going about twenty miles southeast from Elim, the shoreside mountains end and the roadway comes to the Red Sea shore, near modern Abu Zenima, near the mouth of the Wady et-Taiyibeh. It is

¹³Beno Rothenberg, *God's Wilderness* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), p. 94.

¹⁴*Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1971), p. 117. We recommend Davis' book very highly.

¹⁵*Inter. Stand. Bib. Ency.*, Vol. V, p. 3066.

ISRAEL'S ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

a comparatively long march of eight hours from Elim to this sea-side encampment.

8. From the Red Sea shore to the *Wilderness of Sin* (Num. 33:11)

The exact location of the Wilderness of Sin is uncertain. About six miles south of the sea-side encampment a large sandy plain begins. It is five miles wide and thirteen miles long (on its north-south axis), with the Red Sea shore on its west. Modern Abu Rudeis is in this area. This place seems to correspond well to the scriptural location of the Wilderness of Sin, which was the place where Israel first received the manna. (In this dry place manna surely could not have grown on trees or bushes!) The Arabs call this plain El Murkha.

9. From the Wilderness of Sin to *Dophka* (Num. 33:12).

We think that Israel travelled south out of the Wilderness of Sin about ten miles, traveling alongside mountains near the coast. Then they turned east up into the valley of *Wady Feiran*. We think that *Dophka* was an oasis on the Wady Feiran (there are several).

The Wady Feiran is one of the largest and most famous wadies in Sinai. It is a little over eighty miles long, and starts in the region of Mt. Sinai, where it is called the Wadi Esh-Sheikh.¹⁶ The Wady Esh-Sheikh is the upper (or northern) branch of the Wady Feiran.

E. H. Palmer in the *Desert of the Exodus* (1872)¹⁷ wrote:

From this plain [the Wilderness of Sin] it was necessary for Israel to ascend through the rugged granite mountains to the elevated plain in front of Sinai; and there is only one pass through and up by which it is practicable for such a caravan to make the ascent. This is Wady Feiran, . . . This wady is wide and smooth, washed in winter by a stream of

¹⁶Rothenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 167.

¹⁷Quoted in McGarvey, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

water, and possessing several beautiful oases very pleasant to a traveler who is wearied with the almost uninterrupted barrenness of the desert. It leads to a narrow and short pass, by which is reached the plain immediately in front of [N.W. of] Mt. Sinai, called by the Arabs Er-Rahah. Instead of reaching this plain by this pass, the Israelites might have gone a little farther east [via Wady Esh-Sheikh] and compassed the mountain on the left of the pass; but this is the only divergence that they can have made from the route which we have followed.

The name *Dophka* is thought by some to mean "smeltery," and to refer therefore to nearby copper smelting operations. But this is not certain. Some authorities (ISBE; Gesenius' *Hebrew Lexicon*) say *Dophka* means "overdriving of flocks" or "drovers."

Many modern writers have felt that *Dophka* is to be identified with *Serabit el-Khadim*, a site northeast of the plain which we have identified as the Wilderness of Sin. At *Serabit el-Khadim* are the ruins of an Egyptian temple to Hathor, ancient turquoise mines, and numerous inscriptions, some in an extremely ancient Hebrew-like alphabet.¹⁸

We feel that it is extremely unlikely that *Serabit el-Khadim* is the site of *Dophka*. Why should the Israelites travel toward a center of Egyptian idolatry? Egyptian troops were stationed at *Serabit* at various times before and after Moses' time. The wady leading to *Serabit* is a more difficult passage than the Wady Feiran, and is a somewhat longer route to Sinai. Even if the name *Dophka* does mean smeltery (and indeed there are remains of smelting works around *Serabit*), there are other copper-mining locations in the wilderness of Sinai besides those near *Serabit*.

¹⁸"*Serabit el-Khadim*," *Biblical World*, Chas. Pfeiffer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), p. 517.

ISRAEL'S ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

10. From *Dophka* to *Alush* (Num. 33:13).

Alush has not been identified. *Inter. Stan. Bible Ency.* says that according to the rabbis *Alush* means *crowding*, thus indicating the difficulties of the march. Our map positions *Alush* at one oasis in the Wady Feiran.

As Israel journeyed up the Wady Feiran, they would certainly get "strung-out." The wadies are narrow and often hemmed in by steep-sided mountains. The very large number of Israelites would form a long column in these wadies, perhaps ten to fifteen miles long. This explains how the Amalekites could readily attack the "hindmost" part of Israel's column without the rest of people being available to help them readily (Deut. 25:17-18).

11. From *Alush* to *Rephidim* (Num. 33:14).

Rephidim is an oasis of date palms with a running stream,¹⁹ located about eighteen miles from the plain Er-Rahah on the north side of Mt. Sinai. There seems to have been no water at this site in Moses' time, until he struck the rock (Ex. 17:1). Rephidim was the place where the Amalekites attacked Israel, and where Jethro was reunited with Moses.

12. From *Rephidim* to *Mt. Sinai* (Num. 33:15).

The Wady Esh-Sheikh goes around Rephidim on the north side, and then turns abruptly southward toward Mt. Sinai, and enters into the plain of Er-Rahah from the NE side of the plain. The Wadi Esh-Sheikh is the easiest approach to Er-Rahah, and is the one usually taken by baggage camels. We feel that it was probably Israel's approach route.

The plain of Er-Rahah is large enough to have accommodated the Israelite horde (1½ by 4 mi.). At the south side of this plain the impressive peak of *Ras Safsafeh* rises abruptly out of the level area, and towers 6739 feet

¹⁹*International Stand. Bib. Ency.*, p. 3067.

above sea level. We feel that Ras Safsafeh is the peak which (as part of Mt. Sinai) was the mountain from which God spoke the ten commandments to Israel.

Ras Safsafeh is the northern summit of a steep-sided rocky ridge about four miles long, running generally NW to SE. On the southern tip of this ridge is its second summit, a peak called *Jebel Musa* (a name meaning Mt. of Moses), connected to Ras Safsafeh by a saddle. *Jebel Musa* is 7519 feet high. Christian tradition has generally identified Mt. Sinai with *Jebel Musa* as Mt. Sinai, although to us it seems that Ras Safsafeh is by far the more probable choice.

Narrow steep-sided valleys go along both the east and west sides of the ridge, which has Ras Safsafeh on its north end and *Jebel Musa* on the south. In the valley along its east side is the famous monastery of St. Katherine, named after a martyred Christian maiden of Alexandria who died in A.D. 307. At this monastery the famous Sinaitic manuscript of the Bible was found.

By the south end of this ridge is a small plain commonly called Wadi Sebaiyeh, or the Site of (Israel's) Encampment, having *Jebel Musa* on its north. To reach this southern plain Israel would have needed to skirt along through the narrow valleys east or west of the Mt. Sinai ridge. This south plain is neither as large as Er-Rahah on the north, nor is it as accessible. It only covers 145 acres, and is very rocky.²⁰ We doubt that it was the true site of Israel's encampment.

III. DISTANCES IN ISRAEL'S JOURNEYS

(All distances approximate)

1. From Rameses (Qantir) to
Succoth (Tell el Maskhuta) 38 mi.

²⁰S. C. Bartlett, *From Egypt to Palestine* (New York: Harpers, 1879), pp. 270, 272.

ISRAEL'S ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO SINAI

2. From Succoth, travelling along east side of Bitter Lakes, Bitter Lakes, to north end of Gulf of Suez 55 mi.
3. North end of Gulf of Suez, across Red Sea, to Springs of Moses 20 mi.
4. Springs of Moses to Marah ('Ain Hawwarah) . . . 37 mi.
5. Marah to Elim (Wadi Gharandel) 7 mi.
6. Elim to encampment by the sea (near Abu Zenima) 20 mi.
7. Encampment by the sea to the Wilderness of Sin (near Abu Rudeis) 12 mi.
8. Wilderness of Sin, via Wadi Feiran and Wadi Sheikh, to Mt. Sinai 85 mi.

Total: Approx. 275 mi.

These statistics reveal two interesting facts:

(1) The first part of Israel's journey, from Egypt to the crossing of the Red Sea, was a surprisingly large part of the total journey to Sinai, being about 113 miles of their 275 mile trip. This would have required ten or twelve days of travel. Many people have the impression that Pharaoh began to pursue Israel almost the next day after their departure. But the scripture nowhere states exactly how much time elapsed between Israel's departure and Pharaoh's pursuit. During that time the Egyptians embalmed and buried their firstborn (Num. 33:4). Surely a few days of mourning and shock followed these mass burials.

(2) Assuming that Israel's journey from Egypt to Sinai took approximately fifty days, they would need only to have averaged a bit more than five miles a day of travel to have covered the 275 miles in that time.

Between the Bitter Lakes and the Red Sea, just south of the Bitter Lakes, lies an elevated area called the Heights of Chaloof. This rises for a short distance twenty feet or more above sea level. These heights are of the same geological character as Mt. Gineifah west of the Bitter Lakes. This geological feature makes it almost impossible for the Red Sea to have ever been joined to the Bitter Lakes. See S. C. Bartlett, *From Egypt to Palestine*, pp. 158-162.

EXPLORING EXODUS

INTRODUCTORY SECTION VII

RED SEA or REED SEA?

(Ex. 13:18; 15:4, 22)

What sea was it that the Israelites triumphantly crossed when they departed from Egypt? The name given in almost all English translations is *Red Sea*. The *Jerusalem Bible* (1966) calls it the *Sea of Reeds*. When we hear the words *Red Sea*, we at once think of that extension of the Indian Ocean lying between Arabia and east Africa, having a V-shaped northern tip, formed by the Gulfs of Suez and Akabah. We feel that THIS was the sea that the Israelites crossed, crossing it at the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez. See the preceding Introductory Section VI.

Older writers almost unanimously held this view. Modern writers have almost unanimously (but wrongly, it seems to us) taken another view. They assert that the sea which the Israelites crossed should not be called the Red Sea, but the SEA OF REEDS (or weeds). Furthermore, they affirm that this Sea of Reeds is not the Red Sea, but is another body of water somewhere between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, possibly the Bitter Lakes, or Lake Timsah, or Lake Balah (now disappeared since the digging of the Suez Canal), or Lake Menzaleh, or even Lake Sirbonis on the Mediterranean coast. There is no certainty or general agreement as to what body of water is referred to by the name Sea of Reeds.

We have no objection to the fact that the Hebrew words *Yam Suph* (usually translated *Red Sea*) actually mean *Sea of Reeds*, or Weeds. The word *suph* is translated *weeds* in Jonah 2:5, where it refers to seaweeds; and it is translated *flags* in Ex. 2:3, 5 and Isa. 19:6. (A *flag* is a water plant like a cattail.)

When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek (about 275 B.C.), the translators rendered the Hebrew *Yam Suph* as *Eruthre Thalassa*, which is Greek for *Red Sea*. These translators did their work in Egypt, and would probably be familiar with Egypt's geography.

In classical Greek usage, the term *Red Sea* was applied to the

entire Indian Ocean,¹ including what we call the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf, and the adjoining ocean areas. In the *Histories* by Herodotus (about 450 B.C.) we read that the Persian king "Cyrus on his way to Babylon came to the bank of the river Gyndes, a stream which . . . empties into the river Tigris. The Tigris, . . . discharges its waters into the *Erythraean* [Red] Sea."² This would refer to the Persian Gulf.

Why did the *Red Sea* come to be called by that name? No one really knows. Some have guessed that it is derived from the name *Edom*, which means red. The mountains of Edom that lie along part of the east side of the Red Sea have a reddish color in part. Classical writers say that the name came from that of Erythras, a king who ruled in western Asia Minor.³ Others say it is derived from the red coral which lines its shores and covers the floor of the sea.

But the big question is this: Can the Hebrew *Yam Suph* actually refer to the sea we know as the Red Sea? We think it can and does, though many modern writers deny this. They argue that there are no reeds in the Red Sea, and that it cannot therefore be the Sea of Reeds. They affirm further that for Israel to have reached even the most northerly tip of the Gulf of Suez, they would have had to cross a long tract of desert to reach it. [It would be approximately 65 miles.] And that this would have been impossible for them to accomplish before the pursuing Egyptian chariots would have been upon them.⁴ Also it is argued that one of the two bodies of water said in Egyptian writings to be near the city of Rameses (which was far north of the Red Sea) was called "Papyrus Lake." Papyrus in Egyptian was called *thuf*, a word similar to the Hebrew *suph*.

These arguments sound impressive, but we feel they have some weaknesses.

¹Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (abridged), Definition of *ERUTHROS*,

²I, 189. Translated by George Rawlinson. (London: Dent, 1964), Vol. I, p. 96.

³*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4 (New York: Abingdon, 1962), pp. 19-20.

⁴*Ibid.*

For example, we need not seek a shallow reedy lake as the place that corresponds to the name SEA OF REEDS. The word *reeds* also may be translated *WEEDS*, as in Jonah 2:5, where it refers to *seaweeds* in the Mediterranean Sea, not to cattails or swamp weeds. The Red Sea has seaweeds in it, like other seas. Because of this the name *Yam Suph* could refer to the Red Sea.

Furthermore, if we assume (as many modern writers do) that Israel travelled *northward* from Succoth (lying west of Lake Timsah) to the southern tip of Lake Menzaleh⁵ (which is thought by many to be the Sea of Reeds), Israel would have been much closer to Egypt and far more exposed to the pursuing Egyptian chariots than they were in going by our proposed route. A journey from Succoth to Lake Menzaleh would be about fifty miles, a four-days' journey.

Yet further, the term *Sea of Reeds* (*Yam Suph*) is actually applied in several scriptures to the sea which we call the Red Sea. Thus in Numbers 21:4 it refers to a place on the north end of the Gulf of Akabah, near Elath and Ezion-Geber. In Numbers 33:10 there is a reference to an encampment on the shores of the *Yam Suph*, which almost certainly refers to a place on the shores of the Gulf of Suez. In I Kings 9:26 the term *Yam Suph* refers to the place where king Solomon had his fleet of ships at Ezion-Geber, which was on the north tip of the Red Sea Gulf of Akabah.

If the term *Yam Suph* means the Red Sea in these passages, why does it not refer to the same body of water in Ex. 13:18 and 15:4? Where is there any hint that the term refers to a different body of water in Ex. 15:4 than it refers to elsewhere?

Finally, we are told in Ex. 15:22 and Num. 33:8 that Israel travelled *three days'* journey from their place of crossing the sea to Marah. This is a distance of thirty-seven miles (assuming, as we do, that Marah is to be identified with 'Ain Hawwarah. This identification is widely accepted.⁶). If the Sea of Reeds were

⁵G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), p. 61. *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Broadman, 1969), p. 380.

⁶Wright, *Ibid.*, suggests on his map that this is the "probable" location of Marah.

RED SEA OR REED SEA?

some body of water north of the tip of the Gulf of Suez, it would be too far north for the Israelite horde to have made the trip to Marah in three days. From Bitter Lakes to Marah is at least sixty miles. From Lake Timsah to Marah is over eighty miles. From Lake Menzaleh (where Wright locates the Sea of Reeds) it is almost 150 miles! Even the thirty-seven mile trip from the Springs of Moses (just east of Gulf of Suez tip) to Marah required the Israelites to travel twelve miles a day. This is about as far as a large group could travel each day.

We have the uncomfortable feeling that the reason for locating the Sea of Reeds elsewhere than the Red Sea is the desire (deliberate or unconscious) to downgrade the great miracle of crossing the Red Sea into puny near-miracle of blowing a dry path across a shallow swamp area.



The Papyrus reed. The papyrus plant has an angular stem from 3 to 6 feet high, though occasionally it grows to a height of 14 feet. The basket for the baby Moses was made of papyrus stems.

EXPLORING EXODUS



Egyptian Brickmakers and Brickmaking.

The drawing* shown above was made from a wall painting on the tomb of Rekh-mire at Thebes, from the time of Thutmose III (probable pharaoh of the oppression), about 1450 B.C.

At the upper left two slaves fetch water from a pool surrounded by trees. The water-softened Nile clay is lifted with mattocks, and placed in baskets borne on workmen's shoulders. The man in the center top is pressing the mud into a wooden frame to form bricks. In the lower drawing three piles of bricks dry in the sun. The dry bricks are carried by slaves using poles over their shoulders. Two overseers with sticks urge the workers on. Part of the inscription quotes the overseer: "The rod is in my hand; be not idle." The Israelites were involved in work like this.

*From E. A. Wallis Budge. *The Dwellers on the Nile* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1888), p. 91.

ONE HUNDRED FACTS ABOUT GOD

INTRODUCTORY SECTION VIII

ONE HUNDRED FACTS ABOUT GOD THAT ARE MADE KNOWN IN EXODUS

One of the great purposes for God's works that are recorded in the book of Exodus was that men might **KNOW HIM**. For us this is one of the great purposes of the book itself.

Ex. 6:7: "I will take you to me for a people, . . . and ye shall **KNOW** that I am Jehovah your God."

Ex. 7:5: "The Egyptians shall **KNOW** that I am Jehovah, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

Many other verses in the book assert that it is God's purpose to make himself **KNOWN** to all men. Note Ex. 7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 14:4, 18; 16:6, 12; 29:46; 31:13.

God is eternally the same. He changes not. "I, Jehovah, change not." (Malachi 3:6) If we learn the facts about God's nature as revealed in Exodus, we shall gain a broad understanding of God, for Exodus says very much about God.

In the following statements about God we list many of the qualities and works of God that are revealed in Exodus. Generally we have listed them in the order in which they are presented in the Biblical text.

1. God is a *personal* God, not an abstract force.
2. God knows our names. He knows us personally. (1:1-4)
3. God allows His children to suffer. (1:11, 13)
4. God rewards those who protect His people. (1:21)
5. God is the unseen controller of all history. (1:20, 21)
6. God directs the activities of people so that they may be present to do His will when necessity requires. (2:5)
7. God permits His servants to suffer rejection. (2:14; 5:2, 9, 21, 22)
8. God seems in no hurry, if judged by men's views of time. (2:23; Acts 7:30)
9. God hears His people's cries. (2:23, 24)
10. God remembers His covenants of old. (2:24)

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11. God sees and God knows. (2:25)
12. God is a miracle-worker. (3:2)
13. God *speaks* to men. (3:4; 25:22)
14. God is *holy*. His presence is holy and must be revered. (3:5; 20:12-15)
15. God is still the God of His people even after they are long dead. (3:6; Matt. 22:31, 32)
16. God is a *deliverer*. (3:8)
17. God *sends men* to accomplish His will. (3:10)
18. God is *with us*. (3:12)
19. God is the eternal I AM. (3:14)
20. God knows the outcome of events before they occur. (3:19-21; 8:2, 21)
21. God will not permit His will to be thwarted. (3:20)
22. God *makes spoil* of those who resist Him. (3:21)
23. God *desires faith* in His people. (4:5)
24. God becomes *angry* when His servants are unwilling to obey. (4:14)
25. God lets others share the glory of serving Him if those first chosen are hesitant. (4:14, 15)
26. God *smites* His servants to teach them full obedience. (4:24)
27. God wants His NAME to be known, and to be associated with His acts of deliverance. (6:7)
28. God *redeems* (rescues) His people. (6:6; 15:13)
29. God desires to take His people unto Him and be their God. (6:7)
30. God *pushes* and *pushes* to force an issue. (6:11)
31. God *hardens* the hearts of those who oppose Him. (7:3; 9:12; 10:20; 14:4)
32. God works great judgments upon opposers. (7:4)
33. God has *power* to overcome men's magic. (7:11, 12; 8:18)
34. God makes His works obvious and undeniable. (7:20; 8:19; 17:5, 6)
35. God *hears* His servant's *prayers*. (8:12, 31; 9:33)
36. God makes distinction between His people and others. (9:4, 7, 26)

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37. God permits some wicked men to live because He can show His power through them. (9:15, 16)
38. God gives repeated deliverances, even to those who have opposed Him. (10:18, 19)
39. God gives favor to His people in the sight of their enemies. (11:3)
40. God *gives* sinners *warning* of coming doom. (11:4, 5)
41. God saves His people by the *blood*. (12:6, 7, 13; 24:8)
42. God desires that His acts of deliverance be remembered by appropriate ceremonies. (12:14, 24; 20:11)
43. God's judgments on evil men are utter and total. (12:29)
44. God fulfills His promises. (12:33-36; 13:19)
45. God takes note of numbers and years. (12:37, 41)
46. God claims His redeemed ones as His. (13:2, 12; 34:19, 20)
47. God wants His deeds to be remembered. (13:14; 12:26, 27; 16:34)
48. God *directs* His people. (13:17; 15:13)
49. God gives light and guidance. (13:21, 22)
50. God does GREAT works. (14:31; 15:11)
51. God is our strength, song, and salvation. (15:2)
52. God is a man of war. (15:3; 17:16)
53. God is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises." (15:11)
54. God *proves* (tests) His people. (15:25; 16:4; 20:20)
55. God is our healer. (15:26)
56. God hears our murmurings. (16:12)
57. God is our "banner" under whom we fight victoriously. (17:15)
58. God blots out even the remembrance of evil men. (17:14, 16)
59. God likes efficient government. (18:23)
60. God *deals* with men *through covenants*. (19:5; 24:8; 34:10)
61. God accepts His people upon the condition of *obedience*. (19:5, 6)
62. God shows His presence in clouds, lightning, etc. (19:16, 18)
63. God works in history. (20:2)
64. God is a *jealous* God. (20:5; 34:14)

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65. God heaps up punishments for many generations of sinners upon later generations that walk in the sins. (20:5)
66. God is a God of *lovingkindness*. (20:6)
67. God is *creator* of all. (20:11)
68. God retains final authority over life and death. (20:13; 21:12-17)
69. God is concerned about our hearts and their desires. He knows our hearts. (20:17)
70. God respects property rights. (21:33-36; 20:15)
71. God requires truth. (20:16; 22:11)
72. God cares about men's freedom. (21:2)
73. God protects the weak and afflicted. (22:22-27)
74. God is gracious. (22:27)
75. God *requires worship* from His people. (23:14-17)
76. God's appearance is glorious. (24:9, 10, 17)
77. God asks voluntary offerings from His people. (25:2; 35:5)
78. God desires to dwell among His people. (25:8)
79. God requires conformity to His directions. (25:9, 40; 26:30)
80. God gives detailed instructions about many things. (26:1ff)
81. God is associated with *light*. (27:20, 21)
82. God selects the men who perform His service. (28:1)
83. God desires glory and beauty. (28:2)
84. God is a revealer of secrets. (28:30)
85. God desires *modesty* in His servants. (28:42; 20:26)
86. God must be approached through sacrifices. (29:14, 18, 25)
87. God provides the material needs of His servants. (29:28; 16:4)
88. God *meets* with His people. (29:42, 43)
89. God does not forget our need of atonement (covering). (30:16)
90. God's ministers must minister in cleanliness. (30:19, 20)
91. God fills men with His Spirit for various services. (31:3-5)
92. God *sanctifies* us (makes us holy). (31:13)
93. God has wrath against idolatry. (32:10, 35)

ONE HUNDRED FACTS ABOUT GOD

94. God *repents* of "evil" threats when His servants pray. (32:14)
 95. God places distance between Himself and transgressors. (33:2, 5)
 96. God is *too glorious* for men to see and live. (33:20)
 97. God is merciful, gracious, and slow to anger. (34:6, 7)
 98. God will make all people to see His works. (34:10)
 99. God commands destruction of reprobate peoples. (34:11)
 100. God makes His presence obvious and dominant. (40:34, 38)
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THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

1 Now these are the names of the sons of Is-ra-el, who came into E-gypt (every man and his household came with Jacob): (2) Reu-ben, Sim-e-on, Le-vi, and Ju-dah, (3) Is-sa-char, Zebu-lun, and Ben-ja-min, (4) Dan and Naph-ta-li, Gad and Ash-er. (5) And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in E-gypt already. (6) And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. (7) And the children of Is-ra-el were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

(8) Now there arose a new king over E-gypt, who knew not Joseph. (9) And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Is-ra-el are more and mightier than we: (10) come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. (11) Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pha-ra-oh store-cities, Pi-thom and Ra-am-ses. (12) But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Is-ra-el. (13) And the E-gyp-tians made the children of Is-ra-el to serve the rigor: (14) and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

(15) And the king of E-gypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiph-rah, and the name of the other Pu-ah: (16) and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth-stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. (17) But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of E-gypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive. (18) And the king of E-gypt

called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive? (19) And the midwives said unto Pha-raoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the E-gyp-tian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them. (20) And God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. (21) And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them households. (22) And Pha-raoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER ONE QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the entire chapter, propose a one- or two-word topic for the entire chapter.
2. Who is the person referred to as *Israel* in 1:1?
3. Who came with every one of the children (sons) of Jacob? (1:1)
4. Who were the mothers of each of the men named in 1:2-4? Are the names grouped according to their mothers? (Compare Gen. 29:31—30:24; 35:16-18)
5. Propose some reason(s) for listing the names of the sons of Jacob here at the beginning of Exodus.
6. How many descendants of Jacob came into Egypt? (1:5)
7. What does the word *soul(s)* mean in 1:5?
8. Ex. 1:6, 8 suggests that considerable time elapsed in Egypt before the Israelites' situation changed. Can you obtain any information as to how much time? (Compare Gen. 15:13; 41:46; 50:22; Ex. 7:7; 12:40; Acts 7:23, 30.)
9. What promises did Israel's increase in population fulfill? (Gen. 12:2; 22:17; 25:4; 28:14; 46:3)
10. What is the name of the *land* referred to in 1:7? (Gen.

47:4; Ex. 9:26)

11. What change occurred in the government of Egypt? (1:9)
12. What disturbed the new king of Egypt? (1:9)
13. Exactly how numerous were the children of Israel? (1:9; 12:37; Numbers 1:46)
14. What did the king really mean when he said, "Let us *deal wisely* with them"? (1:10)
15. What two possible actions by the Israelites did the king seek to prevent? (1:10)
16. Why was the king, on the one hand, afraid of the number of the Israelites, and, at the same time, unwilling to let them leave Egypt? (1:10)
17. Who was set over the Israelites? Why? (1:11)
18. What two cities were built? What was the purpose (or use, or function) of these cities?
19. What was the effect of affliction on the Israelite population? (1:12)
20. What emotional effect upon the Egyptians was caused by Israel's multiplication? (1:12)
21. How severe was Israel's forced labor and service? (1:13-14)
22. What particular types of labor did the Israelites do? (1:14)
23. What is a midwife? (1:15)
24. What were the names of the two midwives? (1:15)
25. What instructions did the king give to the midwives?
26. Why kill the boys and save the daughters? (1:16)
27. What is the *stool* referred to in 1:16?
28. Why did the midwives not obey the king? (1:17)
29. What excuse did the midwives give for saving the boy babies? (1:19)
30. Was this excuse the real reason? (1:17, 19). Was their lie justifiable?
31. Did the midwives escape punishment from the king for their disobedience? (1:20)
32. Did God deal well with the midwives for lying, or for some other reason? (1:20)
33. How strong did the Israelites become? (1:20)
34. What does it mean by saying, "God made them (the

midwives) houses"? (1:21)

35. What cruel order did Pharaoh (king of Egypt) give? (1:22)

36. Who are the people referred to in 1:22 as "his people"?

Exodus 1: TRANSITION!

1. From few to many; 1:1-7
2. From remembrance to rejection; 1:8
3. From harmony to hostility; 1:9-10
4. From freedom to slavery; 1:11-14
5. From peace to peril; 1:15-16
6. From bad to worse; 1:22

Life is filled with great transitions.
God still rules in all conditions.

Exodus 1: GOD KNOWS!

1. He knows our names; 1:1-5
2. He knows our journeys; 1:5
3. He knows our deaths; 1:6
4. He knows our enemies; 1:8-10
5. He knows our sufferings; 1:11-14
6. He knows our dangers; 1:15-22

Bondage in Egypt/Bondage in Sin

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Enslaving; (Ex. 1:11-12) | 1. Enslaving; (John 8:34) |
| 2. Painful; (Ex. 1:13-14) | 2. Painful; (Prov. 13:15) |
| 3. Pharaoh = leader | 3. Satan = leader (II Tim. 2:26) |
| 4. Motivated by hatred; (Ex. 1:8, 12) | 4. Motivated by hatred; (Rev. 12:12) |
| 5. Death = sole prospect | 5. Death = sole prospect; (Rom. 6:16) |
| 6. Some viewed it as liberty! (Ex. 16:3; Num. 11:5) | 6. Some view it as liberty! (II Pet. 2:19) |

7. God could deliver
(Ex. 3:7-8)

7. God can deliver
(Col. 1:12-13)

The Ways of Wickedness (Ex. 1:8-22)

1. Unthankful; 1:8
2. Unremembering; 1:8
3. Unprincipled; 1:10
4. Unfeeling; 1:13-14
5. Unrevealed; 1:16 (sneaky!)
6. Unconcealed; 1:22 (blatant!)
7. Unsuccessful; 1:12, 20

Exodus 1: NEED FOR GOD'S MAN

1. Death of previous generation and leadership; 1:1-6
2. Multiplication of God's people; 1:7
3. Oppression of God's people; 1:8-14
4. Peril of God's people; 1:15-22

EXPLORING EXODUS: Notes on Chapter One

1. *What is the title of the book, and what does the title mean?*

The title *Exodus* is the title given in the Latin Bible (Vulgate). It is derived from the title in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint, or LXX), *Exodos*, which means a "going out," or "departure." The word *exodos* actually is found in Ex. 19:1 of the LXX. As a title it would be more applicable to the first fifteen chapters of the book than to the whole book.

The Hebrew Bible simply titles the book by its opening words, *We-elleh shemoth*, meaning "and these are the names"; or, more simply, just *shemoth*, meaning "names."

2. *What is the significance of the first words ("Now these") in Exodus?*

In the Hebrew Bible the first words of Exodus are literally

"And these" These words indicate a close connection between Exodus and the Genesis story which precedes it. Genesis and Exodus are one continuous narrative, by one author. Indeed, the whole Torah is a continuous narrative. (*Torah* is a Hebrew word for *law*, or *instruction*; and it refers to the five books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy.)

3. *How old was Jacob when he came into Egypt?*

He was 130 years old (Gen. 47:9). There is considerable sadness in seeing an old man leaving his home of many years. But, like Abraham and Isaac, Jacob viewed this life as a pilgrimage, and this world as a temporary residence (Heb. 11:9-10).

The Jewish *Midrash* (Interpretation) on Exodus says that though Jacob was an old man, the children came *with Jacob*, and not Jacob with his children.¹ He was not dependent on the children, but the children upon him. Such respect for parents is very befitting.

4. *Did ALL of Jacob's descendants come into Egypt with Jacob?*

The scripture says they did. See Ex. 1:1-5. In fact, the whole question would seem needless, if it was not for the fact that many modern critics argue that some of the descendants of Jacob remained in Canaan, and only part of them (especially the Joseph tribes and also Levi) went to Egypt.²

5. *Is there any significance in the order of the names of the sons of Jacob as given in 1:2-4?*

Probably not. The order of their names here is the same as in Gen. 35 (a list given at the close of Jacob's main life-story). It differs somewhat from the order of their births (See Gen. 30), and that given in Gen. 46. The lack of a consistent order for the names suggests that the order did not matter. The sons of Jacob's handmaids were accepted as fully as those of Rachel and Leah. Ancestry matters little;

¹Amos W. Miller, *Understanding the Midrash* (New York: Jonathan David, 1965), p. 16.

²See *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman, 1969), p. 322; Also Gabriel Hebert, *When Israel Came Out of Egypt* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1961), pp. 51-52, 63-64, 83-84.

faith is crucial.

6. *Why does Stephen say in Acts 7:14 that seventy-five souls came into Egypt, when Ex. 1:5 says seventy souls?*

Stephen quoted the Greek Old Testament, which reads “seventy-five souls” in Ex. 1:5.* This is consistent with the LXX rendering of Gen. 46:27, which differs from the Hebrew text in three key expressions:

And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt, were *nine* (Heb. two) souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob *who came with Joseph* (italicized words omitted in Hebrew) were *seventy-five* souls. (Gen. 46:27, LXX)

Evidently the LXX counted as “sons” of Joseph some of his grandsons or other descendants, who are named in I Chron. 7:14, 20-21. Anyway, the LXX makes it clear how it arrived at the total of seventy-five. We do not know how or when this variant reading was first introduced, but it does not discredit the reliability of our common Hebrew text.

7. *Why mention the deaths of Joseph and his generation in 1:6?*

Possibly it is only to reveal the passage of considerable time. Joseph was thirty years of age when he stood before Pharaoh the first time (Gen. 41:46), and 110 at his death (Gen. 50:22).

Nonetheless, we are reminded by the verse that God notices the deaths of his children. If he notes the fall of a sparrow (Matt. 10:29), will he not notice our deaths?

A whole family died, even a big family! It is appointed unto all men once to die (Heb. 9:27).

8. *How did the population of Israel develop in Egypt?*

It increased tremendously. See Ex. 1:7. From a family of seventy men at the time Jacob came to Egypt, it multiplied until the men over twenty numbered 603,550 at their departure 430 years later (Ex. 12:37, 40; Num. 1:45-46).

This amazing growth fulfilled God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would make them become a “great nation.” See Gen. 12:12; 15:5; 26:4; 28:14; 35:11.

* The LXX contradicts itself by giving the number as seventy in Deut. 10:22.

Israel's increase in population in Egypt was a matter of praise to God in later centuries. Psalm 105:12, 23-24. Children and large families are to be considered a blessing and not a curse.

There is a progression of ideas in the four verbs expressing Israel's multiplication: They were (1) "fruitful," (2) "brought forth," (3) "multiplied," and (4) "became very exceedingly strong."

9. *What is the "land" in which Israel dwelt?* (See 1:7).

It was the land of Goshen, probably the Wadi Tumilat, a broad valley stretching from the Nile to the line of the present Suez canal, near Lake Timsah. Israel did not fill the whole land of Egypt, only the land of Goshen (see Ex. 9:26).

10. *What change occurred in the government of Egypt?* (See 1:8)

A new king or ruling family (dynasty) came to power in Egypt. This new king had not known Joseph nor how Joseph saved Egypt. Possibly he did not want to know. Like Eli's sons, who knew the Lord Yahweh (Jehovah) by name, but still "knew not the Lord" (I Sam. 2:12), he may have wilfully disregarded Joseph and the true history about the past.

11. *Who was this new king over Egypt?*

This is a much disputed question. Evidently God did not consider his name significant enough to state it. We must not be as concerned over historical details, as we are over God's acts in history.

Some say the new king was Seti I (1317-1301 B.C.). Some say he was Rameses II (1301-1234). We think it was the new line or foreign rulers called the Hyksos who took over Egypt about 1670 B.C.

It is a common view that Joseph came into Egypt in the time of the Hyksos and was accepted into Pharaoh's court partly because the Hyksos kings were non-Egyptian Asiatics, racially similar to Joseph the Hebrew.

This idea contradicts the plain indications in the scripture that the king in Joseph's time really was an Egyptian. According to the Bible record the Egyptians in those times would not eat at the same table with Hebrews (Gen. 43:32).

Also during those times "Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34). This presumably would not have been true under the Hyksos, who are thought to have had a shepherd (nomadic) ancestry.

Probably the expression "There arose a new king *over* Egypt" means that there arose a new king *against* Egypt.³ If so, this would fit well with the Hyksos conquest at this time.

Because the Israelites and the Egyptians had been friends for a long time following Joseph's life, the Hyksos, who conquered Egypt, regarded them as potential allies of the Egyptians in the case any war arose, and therefore a threat to them.⁴

12. *How could the Israelites be "more and mightier" than the Egyptians?* (See Ex. 1:10)

This statement would more likely be true if it was spoken by the Hyksos conquerors than by native Egyptians. It is hard to see how the Israelites could outnumber the Egyptians. Israel had only about a half-million men eighty years later (Ex. 12:37), and these were loosely organized and poorly armed.

The Hyksos rulers, however, may well have been fewer in number than the Israelites. They took over Egypt by having superior weapons, such as the war horse and the composite bow. In a similar way centuries later, a few Spaniards under Cortez took over Mexico.

Note that the king expressed his fears about the Israelites to "his people," presumably to a limited circle of trusted associates.

13. *Why was the king so fearful Israel would escape from the land?* (Ex. 1:10)

He had learned that Israel was a foreign people in Egypt,

³See John Rea, "The Time of the Oppression and the Exodus," *Grace Journal*, II, No. 1 (Winter 1961), pp. 7 ff; Quoted in John Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), p. 45.

⁴For an excellent study on the Hyksos as the persecutors referred to in Ex. 1:8 ff, see Gleason Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), pp. 204-208.

and therefore a return to their own land was always a possibility, especially since Israel's homeland of Canaan was near to Egypt. The rulers absolutely had to have slave labor available, if there was to be food produced and buildings were to be built (see 1:14).

14. *What was the purpose of setting taskmasters over the Israelites?* (See 1:11)

The Bible says it was "to afflict them." This indicates a basic cruelty in the rulers of Egypt. Without doubt, they hoped also that the hard slave labor would hold down Israel's birth rate and weaken their ability and desire to resist. The bondage utterly failed to do either.

15. *What does the title Pharaoh mean?*

This title (it was not really a name) used by most Egyptian kings basically meant "great house," an expression used figuratively to suggest their greatness.

16. *How did Israel's bondage serve God's purposes?*

The bondage began to take the love of Egypt out of the people. Egypt had been their only home for nearly four hundred years. They had to be weaned from Egypt. They had become so thoroughly Egyptianized that most of them had forgotten the religious practices and traditions of their forefathers. The Jewish *Midrash* of Exodus says that the Hebrews had said among themselves, "Let us become like the Egyptians."⁵ Even after Moses led Israel out of Egypt, periodically the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt (Num. 14:3; Ex. 16:3; 17:3). Egypt had always been a comfortable land, where abundant food and water were usually available.

Psalms 119:67 says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept thy word." It is through affliction that God teaches his people what true values are.

The benefits to Israel that came through their Egyptian oppression were not forgotten. Later Israelites preserved the memory of those harsh experiences by reciting about them when they presented their first fruits unto the Lord (Deut. 26:6).

⁵Amos W. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

17. *Where were the cities of Pithom and Raamses?*

The locations of these places are still in dispute. Most scholars locate Pithom at the hill-ruin of Tell er-Ratebah in eastern Goshen, or at the nearby site of Tell Maskhutah.⁶ We have located it at Tell Ratebah on our map (p. 34A).

As for Raamses, there is now fairly general agreement that it is to be identified with the city in the N.E. delta area also called Avaris, or Tanis, or Zoan.⁷ This location places Raamses quite far north to have been the starting point of Israel's journey, if we accept the traditional southward route of Israel's exodus across the Red Sea.

Others place Raamses at modern Qantir ("Bridge") on the eastern arm of the Nile Delta.⁸ This would locate it nearer to the traditional route of Israel across the Red Sea. We have located Raamses at Qantir on our map.

18. *Does the city name Raamses (1:11) date the bondage of Israel in the time of king Rameses II?*

We think not. Rameses II, a great builder and warrior, ruled 1301-1234 B.C. If we accept rather literally the scriptural information about the date of the exodus given in I Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 (and we do take it rather literally), we must date the exodus about 1446 B.C., long before the time of Rameses II. See the Introductory section on The Date of the Exodus.

19. *How did the Egyptian rulers feel toward Israel when oppression did not decrease them? (See 1:12)*

They were grieved. They were "in dread" (Revised Stand. Vers.). The Hebrew word is very strong: it means "to have a disgust, to feel horror, or fear." Psalm 105:25 says that the Egyptians actually came to *hate* God's people.

20. *Are the "Egyptians" of 1:13 the same people as the oppressors of 1:8ff.?*

⁶Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 22; *New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 1001.

⁷Merrill C. Tenney, gen. ed., *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, 1964), p. 702.

⁸R. Alan Cole, *Exodus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1973), p. 54.

Probably not. Ex. 1:8-12 spoke of a "new king" over Egypt and of "his people." We have suggested that these oppressors were probably the Hyksos rulers (approx. 1670-1570 B.C.)⁹ Beginning in 1:13 the text plainly says that the *Egyptians* oppressed them. Probably 1:13ff. refers to the Egyptian princes who drove out the Hyksos about 1570 B.C., and started the powerful XVIII dynasty in Egypt, the New Kingdom. If so, these Egyptian rulers continued the oppressions upon the Israelites that had been going on under the Hyksos. It seems obvious to us that Exodus Ch. 1 deals with the passage of considerable time, all the way from Jacob's coming to Egypt, to the time near Moses' birth, a period of over 300 years.

21. *How severe was Israel's bondage?*

It was extremely severe (1:14). Psalm 81:6 praises God for removing the burden from Israel's shoulder, and delivering his hands from the pots, or baskets. This refers to the vessels used in making mud bricks. Deut. 4:20 describes the Israelites' experience as an "iron furnace." Exodus 5:7-8 indicates that specific quotas of bricks had to be made each day, but that at the first the materials were all supplied.

Making bricks involved carrying water; digging earth; mixing earth, water, and straw; filling moulds with the mud; removing dried bricks from the mould; and transporting bricks by unaided manpower.

Israel's bondage is an illustration of the bondage of sin. "The way of transgressors is hard." (Prov. 13:15)

22. *Why did the king of Egypt enlist the help of the midwives?* (See Ex. 1:15-16.)

He sought their help because his previous scheme to suppress Israel by slave labor had failed. So he asked the midwives to kill male babies whenever they assisted a Hebrew woman in giving birth. It would not be too difficult for the midwife to make the death of the baby look accidental.

⁹Dates from Siegfried J. Schwantes, *A Short History of the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), p. 8.

Using the midwives concealed the king as the murderer.

23. *Were the midwives Hebrews or Egyptians?*

Commentators differ on whether the midwives were Hebrews or Egyptian women who served as midwives to the Hebrews. It is hard to imagine that the king would have expected the Hebrew women to slay the children of their own people. Nonetheless, the midwives had names of Semitic character (Hebrew-like); and they feared God, like good Hebrews. *Shiphrah* means "Beauty" and *Puah* means "splendor."¹⁰

Perhaps these women were part of the "mixed multitude" (Ex. 12:38) that came out of Egypt with the Israelites. We know that immigrants of various Semitic (Shem-ite) tribes had come into Egypt throughout its history. In fact, the Hyksos had been such people.

24. *Were there only two midwives for the Hebrews?*

Only two are named (Ex. 1:15). These would not seem to be enough, since there were probably nearly half a million Hebrew women, and the birth rate was quite high. Maybe *Shiphrah* and *Puah* were heads of the midwives guild (union), and had other women working under them. Maybe Pharaoh did not contact all the midwives, just these two. He was desperate.

The work of the midwives is partly indicated in Ex. 1:16. In birth the women often crouched down upon a pair of bricks or stones, or upon a birth stool built in a pattern of two stones.¹¹ The "birth-stool" of Ex. 1:16 literally means "two stones." After delivery, the midwives cut the infant's umbilical cord, washed the baby, salted and swaddled the body (Ezek. 16:4).

25. *Why save the girls (1:16)?*

Because the women did (and still do!) much of the hard labor, labor in fields and homes, spinning, needle work, cooking. Also girls would be saved for future harems, for

¹⁰Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹¹Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

the Egyptians were steeped in immorality. See Gen. 12: 11-12. Also the boys might become soldiers of guerillas.

26. *What caused the midwives to spare the babies?* (See 1:17.)

They feared God more than they feared men. See Prov. 16:6. The expression *feared God* is used several times of feelings and actions of non-Jews, which humanized their actions even when their national or personal interests were at stake. See Gen. 42:18; 20:11. The opposite behavior is to "fear not God"¹² (Deut. 25:18).

We wonder where these midwives learned this fear of God. We really do not know. Perhaps from some Godly Hebrews. Some knowledge of God has pervaded the entire human race since creation. See Gen. 14:18; Ex. 2:16.

27. *Is it right to disobey civil authorities, as the midwives did?*

On those rare occasions when civil authorities issue orders in clear contradiction to God's words, it is better to obey God than men. See Acts 5:29; Daniel 3:16-18.

28. *Should the midwives have lied about why they spared the boys?*

See Ex. 1:17-18. Probably not. God probably would have saved them without their lying, as he saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who boldly stated the truth about their intentions (Dan. 3:13-18).

It might appear from Ex. 1:20 that God rewarded the midwives for lying. However, we feel that he rewarded them for sparing the male children rather than for their untruths.

We must never forget that the Bible accurately records many words and deeds that it does not necessarily approve. Even the Bible's heroes, like Abraham, David, Moses, and Simon Peter have their transgressions glaringly recorded in the holy book. We can be thankful that God has always dealt with people on the basis of grace, rather than solely on the basis of what they justly deserve. Were it not so, we would all be doomed.

29. *Were the Israelite women actually delivering their babies*

¹²J. H. Hertz, ed., *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1969), p. 208.

very quickly?

We are not plainly told whether this was a fact or an excuse by the midwives. We do not know that quick easy delivery of babies was a common physical ability of Hebrew women. Certainly Rachel had a hard delivery (Gen. 35:16-18; Compare I Sam. 4:19-20).

30. *What reward did God give to the midwives (1:21)?*

He made for them houses, or households. They married Israelites and raised families. In some periods of history children have been looked upon as a curse, but they are actually one of God's greatest favors. To die childless was to a Hebrew one of God's direst punishments (Lev. 20:20; Jer. 22:30).

When we consider things like abortion, we should consider the high value God placed upon saving children's lives and having households, as related in Exodus chap. 1.

31. *What is revealed about the character of the Egyptian people by Pharaoh's command to "his people"? (See 1:22)*

The fact that Pharaoh could enlist the cooperation of his people in the work of throwing all boy babies into the river shows that very many of the Egyptians were as bad as their king.

At first Pharaoh had been secret and subtle in his murder attempts on the male Israelite babies. Now he becomes open, blatant, and God-defying. If anyone should feel sympathy for Pharaoh because God later hardened his heart during the ten plagues, he may well recall that Pharaoh had tried both secretly and openly to slaughter the innocent. If it be objected that it was a different Pharaoh whose heart was hardened, we reply that the same merciless disposition existed in both pharaohs.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

2 And there went a man of the house of Le-vi, and took to wife a daughter of Le-vi. (2) And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. (3) And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. (4) And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. (5) And the daughter of Pha-raoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. (6) And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. (7) Then said his sister to Pha-raoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? (8) And Pha-raoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. (9) And Pha-raoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. (10) And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pha-raoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Mo-ses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.

(11) And it came to pass in those days, when Mo-ses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an E-gyp-tian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. (12) And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the E-gyp-tian, and hid him in the sand. (13) And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? (14) And he said, who made thee a prince and a judge over us? thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the E-gyp-tian? And Mo-ses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. (15) Now

when Pha-raoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Mo-ses. But Mo-ses fled from the face of Pha-raoh, and dwelt in the land of Mid-l-an: and sat down by a well.

(16) Now the priest of Mid-l-an had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. (17) And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Mo-ses stood up and helped them, and water their flock. (18) And when they came to Reu-el their father, he said, How is it that yea re come so soon to-day? (19) And they said, An E-gyp-tian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and more-over he drew water for us, and watered the flock. (20) And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. (21) And Mo-ses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Mo-ses Zip-po-rah his daughter. (22) And she bare a son, and he called his name Ger-shom; for he said, I have seen a sojourner in a forelgn land.

And it came to pass in the course of those many days, that the king of E-gypt died: and the children of Is-ra-el sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. (24) And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with I-saac, and with Jacob. (25) And God saw the children of Is-ra-el, and God took knowledge *of them*.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TWO

QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. Of what tribe were Moses' parents? (2:1)
2. What were the names of Moses' father and mother? (6:20)
3. Did Moses' mother hide her baby only because he was a goodly child? (Ex. 2:2. Compare Hebrews 11:23; Acts 7:20)
4. How long was Moses hidden at home? (2:2)
5. Where was the baby Moses placed? (2:3)
6. How was the "ark" made watertight? (2:3)
7. Who watched over the babe in the basket? (Ex. 2:4; Num. 26:59)

8. Who saw the ark among the flags? (2:5)
9. Who actually fetched the ark? (2:5)
10. What did the baby do when the ark was opened? (2:6)
11. What was the reaction of Pharaoh's daughter when she saw the child? (2:6)
12. What did the baby's sister offer to get for Pharaoh's daughter? (2:7)
13. How could Exodus 2:7-8 illustrate Romans 8:28?
14. Where did Moses' mother bring the boy after she raised him past infancy? (2:10)
15. Who called his name *Moses*? (2:10)
16. Why was his name called *Moses*? What does that name mean? (2:10)
17. How old was Moses when he went unto his brethren? (2:11; Acts 7:23)
18. What did Moses look upon when he went out unto his brethren? (2:11)
19. What did Moses see that grieved him? (2:11)
20. Was slaying the Egyptian necessary? (2:12)
21. What did Moses suppose that his Hebrew brethren would understand when he killed the Egyptian? (Acts 7:24-25)
22. What was done with the Egyptian's body? (2:12)
23. When two Hebrews fought, was just one at fault, or were both at fault? (2:13)
24. How quickly had the Egyptian's death become known? By what means had it become known? (2:14)
25. How did Pharaoh react to the news of the Egyptian's death? (2:15)
26. To what land did Moses flee? Where is this land? (2:15)
27. Where did Moses sit down in this land? (2:15)
28. How many daughters did the priest of Midian have? (2:16)
29. What was the name of the priest of Midian? (2:18; 3:1)
30. What was the labor of the priest's daughters? (2:17)
31. How did Moses help the priest's daughters? (2:17)
32. What surprised the priest of Midian about his daughters' return? (2:18)
33. Why did the daughters refer to Moses as an "Egyptian"?

(2:19)

34. Who drew the water from the well? (2:16, 19)
35. What invitation was extended to Moses? (2:20)
36. What was Moses content to do? (2:21)
37. What change in Moses' manner of life took place when he settled in Midian? (Compare Ex. 3:1 and Acts 7:22)
38. Who became Moses' wife? (2:21)
39. What was the name of Moses' son? (2:22)
40. What does the name of the son of Moses mean? (2:22)
41. Who was Moses' second son? What does his name mean? (Ex. 18:2-4)
42. Was it a long time or a short time before the king who sought Moses' life died? (2:23)
43. Did the death of the king of Egypt ease Israel's bondage? (2:23)
44. What sound effects came from the children of Israel in Egypt? Why? (2:23-24)
45. Did Israel's crying have any effect? (2:23-24)
46. What did God remember? (2:24)
47. What connection is there between Israel's groaning and God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (Ex. 2:24; Compare Gen. 15:13-14)
48. Tell four things God did when Israel cried and groaned. (2:24-25).

Exodus 2: THE MAKING OF GOD'S MAN

Things needed in the making of God's man:

1. God-fearing parents; 2:1-2
2. Divine direction and providence; 2:3-9
3. Training; Acts 7:22
4. Personal decision; 2:11; Heb. 11:24
5. Courage to act; 2:11-13, 17
6. God's chastening; 2:14-15, 21-22
7. Patient endurance; Heb. 11:27; Ex. 18:4

Exodus 2: MOSES' DECISION IN EGYPT

I. *He refused . . .*

1. To be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Heb. 11:24).
2. To enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25).
3. To cherish the treasures of Egypt (Heb. 11:26).

II. *He decided . . .*

1. To stand with Israel, the people of God (Heb. 11:25).
2. To deliver his people (Acts 7:24).
3. To suffer ill treatment.
4. To share the reproach of the Messiah (Christ) (Heb. 11:26).

EXPLORING EXODUS: Notes on Chapter Two

1. *Who were Moses' parents?*

His father was Amram, a man of the house (or tribe) of Levi. He was a grandson or later descendant of Levi. The genealogy in Ex. 6:16-20 almost certainly has some names omitted. (See notes on Ex. 6:16-20.) It appears from Ex. 2:1 that Amram himself went out and took a wife of his own choosing, a somewhat unusual act in a time when fathers usually arranged marriages for children.

Moses' mother was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi (possibly a first generation descendant of Levi, and maybe his only daughter). She was born to Levi in Egypt (Numbers 26:59). She would have been Amram's aunt, but was not necessarily older than he.

2. *Was Moses the firstborn son in his family?*

No. He had a brother, Aaron, three years older than he (Ex. 7:7). Also he had a sister, Miriam (= Mary), several years older yet. Some interpreters have proposed that since Miriam is called the "sister of Aaron" in Ex. 15:20, that perhaps she and Aaron were children of Amram by another wife. But Numbers 26:59 says plainly that Jochebed bore all three children.

3. *What was noticeable in the appearance of the infant Moses?*

He was incredibly beautiful. The Hebrew Bible says he was a "good" (*tov*) or "goodly" child. Acts 7:20 says he was "exceeding fair" (literally "fair to God," or "fair like God"). "The very beauty of the child seemed to be a particular token of divine approval, and a sign that God had some special design concerning him."¹

This statement about his beauty does not really suggest that the parents would have been less willing to save his life if he had been an ordinary baby.

4. *Why was the baby Moses hidden?*

Because of the king's commandment to slay all baby boys. But his parents (both of them!) were not afraid of the king's commandment, and hid him for three months (Heb. 10:23).

5. *Why could not the parents continue to hide the baby?*

Any parents of a normal strong-lunged, three-months-old baby know why such a one would be hard to hide. (The clothesline would betray you!)

The Jewish *Midrash* (Interpretation) of Exodus says that the Egyptians would go from house to house where they suspected a Hebrew child might have been born. This is possibly true.

Later Jewish tradition preserved or invented many traditions about Moses' infancy and youth. We read them in Josephus, the *Midrash*, and other Jewish sources. They are often very interesting. In the same way in later centuries Roman Catholic traditions about the infant Jesus and his mother Mary were brought forth in addition to the simple brief Biblical stories about Jesus' childhood.

6. *How was Moses hidden "by faith"?* (Hebrews 11:23).

Since "faith cometh by hearing," maybe God had given some revelation to the parents about the future of the child and what they should do. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that Amram foretold how Moses would deliver Israel, while his wife was still expecting.²

¹C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 427.

²*Antiquities*, II, 9, 3.

Such traditions are unverifiable. The faith of Moses' parents may have simply been based only on their knowledge of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed (descendants). This knowledge could have been learned from their parents or grandparents. They had faith in what had been told to them, and dared to risk their safety because of this faith.

7. *How important was the child Moses?*

No words can tell how important he was. Through this child God was preparing the emancipation of Israel at the very time when Pharaoh was planning their extermination! This Moses would become the greatest personage of history prior to Jesus.

How important the birth of any child may be! No one could have foreseen Moses' influence. What if Moses or some other child destined for greatness had been murderously aborted by his mother?

8. *What preparations were made for placing Moses upon the water? (2:3-4)*

His mother took an ark of bulrushes, a basket or chest made of papyrus.³ (The scripture does not say that she *made* it.) The Hebrew word translated ark (*tebah*) is used in the scripture only in reference to Moses' basket and Noah's ark. Perhaps that is significant, since both were means of deliverance, and possibly symbols of our deliverance.

Moses' mother coated the ark with slime (bitumen, or asphalt) and pitch (tar), making it watertight. She put the child in the basket, and placed it among the flags, or reeds,⁴ by the Nile river (probably one of the arms of the eastern Nile delta).

All of these acts seem deliberately and calmly done. Surely

³Papyrus was the plant whose stems could be made into paper. It grew in water or swamps and attained a height of 10-15 feet. Boats were sometimes made of it (Isaiah 18:2).

⁴The word for *reeds* in 2:3 is *suph*, the same term used to describe the Reed Sea, or Red Sea, in Ex. 13:18. This, however, does not prove that there were reeds growing in the Red Sea. The term *suph* also refers to seaweeds. Note its use in Jonah 2:5.

Moses' mother knew what time and place that Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe at the river. Placing the sister (Miriam) at a distance from the basket to observe suggests that they expected someone to come. We imagine that a spot used for royal bathing would be off limits to the general public.

9. *Where did Moses' mother stay while her babe was in the river?*

Apparently she went home, leaving her child in the care of Miriam and of God (Ex. 2:4, 8). Her confidence in both was beautiful.

10. *Who was the daughter of Pharaoh who found Moses?*

We really do not know. The princess who later became queen Hatshepsut was probably then a young woman; but this does not prove that she was the daughter of Pharaoh referred to in the Bible. We favor the idea that she was the one, but we do not know. R. K. Harrison suggests that the woman was only one of the daughters in one of the numerous royal harems scattered about Egypt.⁵

11. *Why should the daughter of Pharaoh go to the river to bathe?*

Probably this was a religious ceremonial washing of some kind. The Nile river was the lifestream of Egypt. The ancient Egyptians regarded the river as worthy of divine honors. They wrote hymns to it.⁶ They felt that its waters imparted fruitfulness and long life. Note that Pharaoh made frequent trips out to the water (Ex. 7:17; 8:20).

12. *Why did Pharaoh's daughter have compassion on the babe?* (Ex. 2:6)

Three reasons may be suggested: (1) natural female tenderness (which is a beautiful, needed gift from God!); (2) religious teaching among the Egyptians which required tenderness toward the suckling infant;⁷ (3) the providential

⁵Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 575.

⁶"Hymn to the Nile," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (hereafter referred to as ANET), edited by James B. Pritchard (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1955), pp. 372, 373.

⁷F. C. Cook, ed., *The Bible Commentary*, Exodus-Ruth, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), p. 9.

control of God.

13. *What care was given to the infant Moses by his mother after she got him back?*

Every possible care. He received physical care. The term "nurse" in 2:7, 9 means to "suckle." Both Josephus⁸ and the Jewish *Midrash*⁹ say that the infant Moses rejected the breasts of Egyptian women before being turned back to his mother. This seems like a superstitious yarn.

But we can be completely sure that the child Moses grew up with spiritual care also, hearing songs and words about God and his people Israel. As far as we know the only training Moses could have received about God was that which he received at home as a very young child. But the earliest impressions upon a child often stick with him all his life. This certainly proved true in the case of Moses.

A wise teacher was asked, "When should a child's education begin?" He replied, "In the life of his great-grandmother." Observe the effects of Eunice and Lois upon Timothy (II Tim. 1:5).

Observe how the faith of Moses' mother was rewarded. Previously she cared for Moses at great peril; now under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter. Previously she cared for him at her own expense; now she gets royal wages for doing it.

Observe also how important the women were in the life of Moses. His mother, his sister, Pharaoh's daughter—all played vital roles in his career. All honor to the wonderful women of all ages who fear the Lord! Moses' wise mother knew what some "emancipated" women of our times do not know, namely that service at home to her family will have more powerful influence on the world than competing with men for authority. Who had a more lasting powerful influence on the world, the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut or Moses' mother?

⁸*Antiquities*, II, ix, 5.

⁹Amos W. Miller, *Understanding the Midrash* (New York: Jonathan David, 1965), pp. 56-57.

14. *What was Moses' youth in Egypt like?*

At an unspecified age (3-5?) Moses' mother turned him over to Pharaoh's daughter, who nourished him for her own son (Acts 7:21). He was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22). This would include languages, such as Egyptian hieroglyphic, Babylonian cuneiform,¹⁰ and possibly the early Semitic alphabetic writing, such as was then in use down in the Sinaitic peninsula at Serabit El Khadim.¹¹ The Egyptians were also skillful in architecture, astronomy, and medicine.

Moses became "mighty in word and deed" as a young man (Acts 7:22). Josephus¹² tells of Moses' leading a victorious war against the Ethiopians, and consummating marriage with an Ethiopian princess. Could she have been the Cushite woman of Numbers 12:1? We can neither accept nor reject this information with complete certainty.

15. *Who gave Moses his name? Why? (Ex. 2:10)*

Pharaoh's daughter gave him his name. In Egyptian his name means "son of" (the water). The *-mose* in Moses is found in Egyptian names such as Ahmose, Thutmose, etc.¹³

In Hebrew, Moses' name is *Moshe*, derived from the verb *masha*, meaning "to draw out." It is remarkable that Moses' name would have meanings that related to his life in both the Egyptian and Hebrew languages.

16. *What great decision did Moses make in Egypt? (Ex. 2:11)*

¹⁰The so-called Amarna letters, written from petty kings in Canaan and Syria to Egyptian kings Amenhotep III (1413-1377) and Amenhotep IV (1377-1358), were written in Babylonian cuneiform writing. Apparently it was the international language of government and business at that time. See "Amarna Letters," in *Biblical World*, Chas. Pfeiffer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), p. 36.

¹¹Serabit el Khadim was a site in western Sinai where there were turquoise mines and a temple and a shrine to the Egyptian goddess Hathor. On these ruins, dated about 1500 B.C., are inscriptions in a very ancient alphabetic writing related to Hebrew. See Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible is True* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoods, 1937), p. 191; "Serabit el Khadim" in *Biblical World*, Chas. Pfeiffer, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), p. 191.

¹²*Antiquities*, II, x, 1-2.

¹³Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), p. 211.

Moses chose to stand with his people, the Hebrews. Heb. 11:24 says that by faith he REFUSED to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The very fact that he *refused* implies that some offer was made to him.¹⁴ Moses' decision involved a complete severance from Egypt.

He made the decision when he was grown, at age forty (Acts 7:22). The decision may never have been publicly declared in the palace in Egypt, but Moses' deeds soon made clear whose side he was on.

Heb. 11:26 says that Moses chose to share the "reproach of Christ" (the Messiah). This reveals to us that Moses had some knowledge of the Messianic hope in Israel, a fact that we would not have learned from the book of Exodus alone.

17. *How did Moses demonstrate his decision?*

He "went out unto his brethren" (2:11) and "looked upon their burdens," supposing that his brothers (the Hebrews) would understand that God was by his hand giving them deliverance (Acts 7:25).

Observe that Moses "went out" to his brethren. He had not up till then lived among his fellow countrymen, and had not shared their hard lot.

Moses had to learn that God would give Israel deliverance by HIS own hand, rather than by Moses' hand. This lesson required forty years of sheep-herding in humiliation.

We must not, however, find fault with Moses' impulsiveness. At least he tried to do *something*. Simon Peter was also impulsive, and in an act of questionable violence he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (Mark 14:47). God used both Peter and Moses to do great things. Their decisiveness showed their potential for leadership, once they were properly disciplined. God does not get much service from those who know all the right things to do, but do not do anything.

18. *Was Moses' fearful when he broke with Egypt?*

No. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king" (Heb. 11:27). This refers to Moses' leaving

¹⁴Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus* (Chicago: Moody, n.d.), p. 19.

Pharaoh's house, not to his flight to Midian, for then he feared (Ex. 2:14).¹⁵

The "king" from whom Moses fled was probably the great Thutmose III (1502-1448 B.C.), who made seventeen military campaigns into Palestine and Syria, including a famous frontal attack on the city of Megiddo through a narrow mountain pass.¹⁶ Thutmose III was just at this time (about 1486 B.C.) coming to full power, having been a rival to Hatshepsut for many years. (Hatshepsut was both his mother-in-law and step-mother!)

19. *Why did Moses kill the Egyptian? (2:12)*

The Egyptian (probably one of the taskmasters) was smiting (beating) one of the Hebrews. The verb *smite* (*nakah*) in Ex. 2:11 is the same verb used in 2:12 to tell how Moses "slew" (smote, struck down) the Egyptian. This hints that the Egyptian was beating, or nearly beating, the Hebrew to death.

It is easy to question Moses' act. Why did he do it only when he saw no one was looking? Could he not have ordered the Egyptian to leave the Hebrew alone, since Moses was a prince? But such questions can never diminish the greatness of Moses.

20. *When two Hebrews fought, were both at fault? (2:13)*

No. One of them was bullying the other, then probably using the resistance of his victim as an excuse to fight him more. How true this is to human psychology! It is not always true that it takes two to make a fight. One who is oppressed by others may be equally oppressive himself if given an opportunity. Only the death of Christ and his love dwelling in us can reconcile men to God and to one another (Col. 1:21).

21. *How had Moses' deed become known?*

The slaying of the Egyptian could only have been made known by the Israelite whom Moses had saved the day

¹⁵Keil and Delitzsch, *op cit.*, 432.

¹⁶ANET, 234-237.

before. Imagine how fast and far the gossip grape-vine carried this news!

22. *Did Moses seek to become a prince and a judge over the Hebrews? (2:14)*

Not really. He made no threatening gestures toward the Israelites striving together. He merely asked the one man, "Why are you striking your companion?" The wrong-doer's reply to Moses resembles the words used by the Sodomites against Lot (Gen. 19:9).

23. *What does Moses' FEAR suggest to us? (2:14)*

It suggests the very human quality in an extraordinary man. Moses is not so different from us that we cannot identify with him.

It also suggests the truthfulness of the story in Exodus. A fictionalized narrative glorifying Moses might omit such a fact.

24. *Where was the land of Midian to which Moses fled? (2:15)*

Moses fled to an area in the southeast part of the Sinai peninsula, west of the Gulf of Akabah. The Midianites mainly lived east of the Gulf of Akabah; but some lived on the west side. It was there where Moses fled, going perhaps 250 miles from Egypt.

Two facts confirm the view that the land of Midian where Moses fled was west of the Gulf of Akabah: (1) In that area Moses later rejoined his Midianite father-in-law Jethro (Ex. 18:1, 5); (2) also Moses was herding sheep for Jethro near Mt. Horeb (Sinai), which is certainly west of the Gulf of Akabah. Sheep could hardly have been driven from the area east of the Gulf all the way to Sinai. The distance is too great and the terrain is too rugged and barren.

25. *Who were the Midianites?*

The Midianites were descendants of Abraham through his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:2, 4). They were thus remotely related to the Israelites.

R. Alan Cole comments that since later Israelites were bitter foes of the Midianites (Num. 25:17-18; Judges 6), it is unthinkable that the story of the Midianite sojourn of

Moses would have been invented by a later Israelite author.¹⁷ This is true; and it is a significant statement, since many Bible critics hold that Exodus was written by several authors living in the tenth or fifth centuries before Christ (long after Moses).

26. *What were the three main periods in Moses' life?*

THREE 40-YEAR PERIODS IN MOSES' LIFE

1. In Egypt, as a prince.
2. In Midian, as a shepherd.
3. In the wilderness (desert), as leader of Israel.

27. *Why did Moses sit down at a well? (2:15)*

Literally, He sat down by *the* well, probably the only one in the vicinity. Perhaps he sat down there because he was weary or thirsty, or because he hoped to meet someone. Wells were common meeting places in any area. Jacob met Rachel at a well (Gen. 29:10; Compare Gen. 24:11); and Christ met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4).

28. *What is indicated about the Midianites' religion?*

The Midianites knew God by the name *El* (Pl. *elohim*), a name which means "mighty one." This is indicated by the name *Reuel* (2:18), which means friend of God, or perhaps shepherd of God.

The Midianites had a priest (2:16). However, the extent of his knowledge of God seems very limited (Ex. 18:8-11). He did offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices (Ex. 18:12), although the exact way these sacrifices were made is not known.

The conduct of the shepherds toward Jethro's daughters (2:17) may indicate that his person and office were lightly regarded by the idolatrous and irreligious citizens of his immediate neighborhood.

29. *Describe Reuel's (Jethro's) family.*

He had a large family with seven daughters (some of marriageable age), and apparently a son, Hobab (Num. 10:29). A large Godly family is good. Jethro's daughters were industrious. No mention is made of Reuel's wife.

¹⁷Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Part of Reuel's family is later referred to as the Kenites (Judges 4:11; 1:16). The name *Kenite* in Aramaic means smith, or metal worker.¹⁸ It is a known fact that copper mines existed in the Sinai peninsula (near Ezion-Geber at the north end of the Gulf of Akabah) and turquoise mines near Serabit el-Khadim. Just possibly some members of the family were involved in mining, as well as shepherding.

30. *What were Reuel's other names?*

(1) *Raguel*. This form of his name is given in the King James version of Numbers 10:29, although the Hebrew form of the name there is identical to that which is spelled *Reuel* in Ex. 2:18.

(2) *Jethro*. (Heb. *Yithro*). This alternate name for Reuel is given in Ex. 3:1 and 18:1. *Jethro* may mean "his excellence." Ex. 4:18 gives a variant form of the name *Jethro*, *Jether* (Heb. *Yether*). We do not know why Reuel was also called *Jethro*. Several Biblical people had two names. Examples are Gideon-Jerubbaal (Judges 6:27, 32), Bartholemew-Nathanael, Solomon-Jedidiah (II Sam. 12:25), Simon-Peter (John 1:42), Jehoiachin-Jeconiah (II Kings 24:15; Jer. 24:1). Reuel's having an alternate name need not therefore surprise us.

31. *What is shown about Moses by his driving the shepherds away? (2:17)*

It shows that he was undaunted by his failures in Egypt to reconcile the fighting Hebrews and to deliver his people. He still had spunk to stand up against wrongdoing. His impulses led to immediate action.

It shows he was kind and courteous. The sisters were surprised that he drew water for them. Usually this was exclusively a woman's job.

The behavior of the shepherds was rotten and rank. They had apparently been imposing on the daughters for a long time, because when the girls were not delayed by the

¹⁸G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 65. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 834.

shepherds taking over the water they had drawn, they got home so much sooner than usual that their father was surprised. It is interesting to ponder whether Jethro knew of this regular water-well larceny, and if so why he had not stopped it.

32. *Why call Moses an Egyptian? (2:19)*

Culturally he was an Egyptian — in dress, in speech, and every outward aspect. But inwardly he was NOT an Egyptian; and it is from the heart that the expressions of life come forth.

33. *What is shown about Jethro by his having his daughters call in Moses?*

Hospitality, gratitude, recognition of good personal qualities.

Jethro rather scolds the daughters for leaving Moses at the well. "Why have you left the man? Is it because you have not been taught better? Is it because you are selfish? Is it because you did not understand or believe the man?" (*Preacher's Homiletic Commentary*). Parents should teach their children hospitality, especially when kindnesses have been extended to them.

34. *What significance is there to Moses "eating bread" with Jethro? (2:20)*

Eating bread in those lands means more than casual hospitality. It involves a personal pledge of friendship and protection.

35. *Was Moses happy to remain with Jethro?*

The expression "content" in 2:21 has no idea of satisfaction or of concession about it. Moses simply agreed to dwell with the man. Perhaps he felt he had nowhere else to go. The fact that he could stay forty years with Jethro suggests that Jethro must have been congenial. Ex. 18:14ff suggests that Jethro was wise.

36. *What do we know about Zipporah? (2:21)*

Very little. Her name meant "Bird" (perhaps "warbler" "twitterer").¹⁹ She wasn't loyal enough to the Abrahamic

¹⁹Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

convenant to see to it that her son was circumcised (Ex. 4:25). Moses sent her back to her father's house when he went back to Egypt to lead Israel out. She rejoined Moses at Rephidim near Sinai (Ex. 18:1-2). Unless she is the Cushite woman of Num. 12:1, we hear nothing more about her. The feeling strikes us that Zipporah was never really very sympathetic to Moses.

37. *What do the names of Moses' sons suggest? (2:22)*

Gershom means "a stranger there" (from Hebrew *ger*, stranger). Though Moses had safety and a wife and children, the name *Gershom* suggests that he felt a feeling of banishment in Midian.

A second son named *Eliezer* was born. See Ex. 18:4. His name means "My God is a help." This name suggests that as time passed Moses came to be more content, and to rely more fully on God. He did not lose his faith.

38. *What possible results came to Moses through his sojourn in Midian?*

(1) He learned to trust less in his own abilities. See 3:11. Such a lesson is good if it does not completely destroy our self-confidence, and if it causes us to depend the more on God.

(2) He learned patience, at least more patience than he had before.

(3) He learned many details about the land, its trails, oases, etc. He was later to lead the Israelites through part of the very territory wherein he labored as a shepherd.

(4) Possibly Jethro, as priest, may have had written documents that came into Moses' possession. The book of Job was probably written in patriarchal times (time of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob) in Arabia, which lay next to Midian. If this came to Moses' attention or he acquired it, this would help account for its presence in the group of books accepted as scripture (the canon).²⁰

²⁰The tract *Baba Bathra* from the Jewish *Talmud* (probably second century after Christ) says, "Who wrote the Scriptures? — Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam (Num. 23-24) and Job." *Baba Bathra* 14b-15a.

(5) One result sometimes credited to Moses' sojourn in Midian can be seriously questioned. This is the idea that Moses got the name of YAHWEH (Jehovah) from the Midianites (or Kenites), and some of his ideas about God's nature and laws. This is called the "Kenite theory."

According to the so-called Kenite hypothesis, Yahweh was originally the tribal god of the clan of Kenites headed by Moses' father-in-law Jethro. From them Moses allegedly first learned of the name and worship of Yahweh.²¹

The Scriptures do not indicate that the Midianites knew the name Jehovah. Moses was reminded of it by God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:13-16). Jehovah declared that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How could the Israelites have been induced to leave Egypt under the guidance of a God with whom they had had no previous association, and about whom they knew absolutely nothing?

Moses learned about God at the burning bush, and in the later experiences of leading Israel out of Egypt, and at Mt. Sinai. This knowledge was relayed to Jethro and accepted by him only after it was validated by the events of the exodus (Ex. 18:11). Jethro learned of Jehovah from Moses and not Moses from Jethro.

39. *What king of Egypt is referred to in Ex. 2:23?*

Probably the one who died was Thutmose III (1502-1448 B.C.). He was succeeded by his son Amenhotep II (1448-1422), who was probably the pharaoh at the time of the exodus. Amenhotep II continued the earlier oppression of the Israelites.

40. *What sound effects came from oppressed Israel? (2:23-24)*

(1) *Sighing*, which is often an expression of grief. Psalm 12:5.

(2) *Cry*. Compare Ex. 3:9 and James 5:4.

(3) *Groaning*. Compare Ex. 6:5.

²¹James King West, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 125. Compare H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua* (London: Oxford U. Press, 1951), pp. 149-160.

The fact that the Israelites cried unto God shows that they retained some faith in the God of their fathers. When the old oppressing king died, they prayed in hope. But the bondage continued for a time.

41. *How important was God's covenant? (2:24)*

A *covenant* has always been the cornerstone of God's dealings with mankind. A covenant is variously defined as a commitment, bargain, agreement, arrangement, or will. God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others. God is unfailing in remembering his covenants.

Regarding God's covenant with Abraham, see Genesis 15. This covenant involved promises of Israel's increase in population, its enslavement in a foreign country, its deliverance, and the possession of the land of Canaan.

42. *What four actions are ascribed to God in 2:24-25?*

God heard . . . remembered . . . saw . . . knew. Ex. 2:25, when translated very literally, says, "And God looked upon the sons of Israel, and God knew." How beautiful! What more could anyone ask than that God would see us and know? To *know* means to know meaningfully, by experience. It often has the idea of intimacy, of approval, and acceptance.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

3 Now Mo-ses was keeping the flock of Je-thro his father-in-law, the priest of Mid-i-an: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Ho-reb. (2) And the angel of Je-ho-vah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. (3) And Mo-ses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (4) And when Je-ho-vah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Mo-ses, Mo-ses. And he said, Here am I.

(5) And he said , Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. (6) Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob. And Mo-ses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (7) And Je-ho-vah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in E-gypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; (8) and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the E-gyp-tians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Ca-na-an-ite, and the Hit-tite, and the Am-or-ite, and the Per-iz-zite, and the Hi-vite, and the Jeb-u-site. (9) And now, behold, the cry of the children of Is-ra-el is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the E-gyp-tians oppress them. (10) Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pha-raoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Is-ra-el out of E-gypt. (11) And Mo-ses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Is-ra-el out of E-gypt? (12) And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee; that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of E-gypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. (13) And Mo-ses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Is-ra-el and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? (14) And God said unto Mo-ses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is-ra-el, I AM hath sent me unto you. (15) And God said moreover unto Mo-ses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is-ra-el, Je-ho-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. (16) Go, and gather the elders of Is-ra-el together, and say unto them, Je-ho-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of I-saac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in E-gypt: (17)

and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of E-gypt unto the land of the Ca-naan-ite, and the Hlt-tite, and the Am-or-ite, and the Per-lz-zite, and the Hl-vite, and the Jeb-u-site, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. (18) And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Is-ra-el, unto the king of E-gypt, and ye shall say unto him, Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Je-ho-vah our God. (19) And I know that the king of E-gypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty hand. (20) And I will put forth my hand, and smite E-gypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go (21) And I will give this people favor in the sight of the E-gyp-tians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: (22) but every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall despoil the E-gyptians.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER THREE
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After careful reading of Exodus 3, propose a topic or theme (1-3 words) for the entire chapter.
2. What work did Moses do in Midian? (3:1)
3. Who was Moses' father-in-law? What other names are given to him (Compare Ex. 2:18; 4:18; 18:1)
4. Which side of an area is the "backside"? (3:1; 26:12, 22)
5. What mountain is Horeb? (3:1; 19:20; 33:6; 34:2). Why is it called the "mountain of God"? (Compare Deut. 4:10-13; Ex. 19:20—20:3).
6. What appeared unto Moses? (3:2) What was unusual about the sight? At what place was this appearance?
7. Who was the *angel* of the LORD? (3:2, 6; Compare Gen. 22: 11-18; 31:11-13; Judges 6:11-16).
8. What was Moses' reaction upon seeing the burning bush? (3:3)

9. Who called out of the midst of the bush? (3:4)
10. With what words did God call to Moses? (3:4)
11. What two preliminary commands did God give Moses from the bush? (3:5)
12. What significance is there in removing the sandals? (Compare Josh. 5:15)
13. What made this spot "holy ground"? (3:5)
14. Why did God introduce himself to Moses as "the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, . . ."? (3:6; Gen. 15:13-18)
15. What does 3:6 reveal about the faith of Moses' father? What was the name of Moses' father? (6:20)
16. What argument did the Lord Jesus draw from Ex. 3:6? (Luke 20:37-38)
17. How did Moses feel about looking upon God? How did he show his feelings? (3:6)
18. What had the LORD seen and heard? (3:7, 9)
19. By what term did the Lord refer to the Israelites in 3:7?
20. What was God's purpose in "coming down"? (3:8). Why does God need to "come down"? Isn't He everywhere? (Compare Jer. 23:23-24)
21. What is meant by saying that the land was "flowing with milk and honey"? (3:8; Compare Deut. 8:7-8).
22. How many nations occupied the land that God was bringing the Israelites into? (3:8; Compare Deut. 7:1).
23. To whom was Moses sent? (3:10)
24. What was Moses' mission? (3:10)
25. What was Moses' first excuse when God told him to lead Israel out? (3:11)
26. What were Moses' four other excuses that he later gave? (3:13; 4:1, 10, 13)
27. What reassurance did God give to encourage Moses to do his job? (3:12)
28. What was the *token*, or sign, that God promised to Moses, to verify that God had indeed sent him on this mission? (3:12)
29. How could this be a sign to reassure Moses during the

performance of his work, when Moses could not possibly see the fulfillment of the sign until his work was done? (3:12; Compare John 2:18-22).

30. How and when did Israel serve God "upon this mountain"? (3:12; 19:1-3)
31. What question did Moses assume that Israel would ask him when he told them that God had sent him to them? (3:13)
32. What does the question concerning God's name suggest about Israel's religious knowledge and faithfulness in Egypt?
33. What was the name God gave for Himself? (3:14)
34. What significance and implications can you perceive in this name for God? (Compare Isa. 57:15; Rev. 1:4; John 8:58).
35. Why the repeated stress on the fact that God was the God of their fathers? (3:15)
36. What had God promised to Abraham that made Abraham so important and prominent? (3:15; Gen. 15:13-14; 22:18).
37. What name for God is solemnly given in 3:15?
38. What is indicated by God's calling His name "my memorial"? (3:15; Compare Psalm 97:2; 102:12; 135:13).
39. How long was the memorial to be known? (3:15)
40. Whom was Moses to go and gather together? (3:16)
41. What is the significance of God "visiting" them? (Compare other passages on "visiting," such as Gen. 21:1; 50:24; Ruth 1:6; Psalm 106:4; Luke 1:68).
42. What promise of God was to be declared unto Israel? (3:17)
43. How would the Israelites respond to God's promise? (3:18)
44. Who was to go with Moses unto the king of Egypt? (3:18). Did it work out that way? (5:1-2)
45. What request was Moses to make to the king? (3:18; Compare 5:1-2)
46. What did God predict about the king's response to Moses' request? (3:19)
47. Explain "No, not by a mighty hand." (3:19)
48. What did God promise (or threaten) to do to Egypt? (3:20)
49. How did God fulfill the threat stated in Ex. 3:20? See Ex. 7:3ff.
50. What would Egypt do after all God's wonders had been done

in its midst? (3:20)

51. What would God give to the Israelites in the sight of the Egyptians? (3:21)
 52. What does "Ye shall not go out empty" mean? (3:21; 12:35-36)
 53. From whom were the women to ask (borrow) valuables? (3:22)
 54. What did these valuables consist of? (3:22)
 55. Where were the valuables to be placed? (3:22)
 56. How extensively were the Israelites to take valuables from the Egyptians? (3:22)
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EXODUS THREE: THE CALL OF GOD'S MAN

Facts About God's Call:

1. Comes in unexpected ways; 3:2
2. Comes in keeping with past revelations; 3:6
3. Must be heard with reverence; 3:5
4. Given to help man; 3:7-8
5. Sends us to BIG jobs; 3:8.
6. Comes to the fearful; 3:11.
7. Comes with God's directions; 3:16.
8. Comes with reassurance; 3:17.
9. Sends us against human opposition; 3:19.
10. Comes with divine help; 3:20.

EXODUS THREE: AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

I. Preparations for an encounter with God

1. Awareness; 3:3.
2. Humility; 3:5-6.

II. Purposes of an encounter with God

1. To deliver the afflicted; 3:8-10.
2. To bless the afflicted; 3:8, 17.

III. Power of an encounter with God

1. Power to answer objections; 3:13-17.
2. Power to overcome resistance; 3:18-20.

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1. *What was Moses' main occupation in Midian?* (3:1)

He kept the flock (sheep, goats, small cattle) of Jethro, his father-in-law. Literally, he "was keeping" the flock, indicating the continuance of this occupation. Often this work was considered the work of women or children, and men would not do it. What a contrast this was to Moses' previous life-style in Egypt!

2. *Who was Jethro?* (3:1)

He was Moses' father-in-law, the same person called *Reuel* in 2:18. See notes on 2:16-18. The name *Jethro* also occurs in 4:18 and 18:1ff. Critics like Martin Noth assume that the use of the two names Jethro and Reuel indicate separate sources and traditions lying behind our exodus narrative.¹ But even he admits that it is impossible to discover the origin of the different names given to the priest at a "later date." It seems to us that there is no solid evidence for the existence of any sources, and that we can confidently hold to the clear Biblical assertions that Moses gave us all the law (John 7:19; Neh. 10:29).

3. *Which side is the back side of the desert?* (3:1)

To the Hebrews the *backside* of anything was the west side. (Americans have a different idiom, and say "back east.") It appears that Jethro lived in the S.E. part of the Sinai peninsula. Moses drove the sheep westward (or north-westward) through a wilderness to the patchy pasture areas around Horeb.

4. *What is the "mountain of God"?*

The expression may mean only "the great mountain." Tradition reaching back many centuries identifies this mountain as Mt. Sinai, or Jebel Musa (meaning, Mt. of

¹Exodus, p. 37.

Moses), in the southern Sinaitic peninsula. We see no cause to reject this view.

Perhaps the mountain was called the mount of God because God here afterwards came down and gave the ten commandments and other laws (Exodus 19-24). Moses wrote Exodus after the law was given at Sinai. Therefore, Sinai was indeed the "mount of God" to those who first read Exodus.

Josephus² says that men had the opinion that God dwelt at that mountain, and therefore shepherds had not before pastured there before Moses came. It is possible that the mountain was regarded as a holy mountain by the superstitious residents even before God called Moses there. But such superstitions are neither certain nor significant.

The term "mount of God" (or similar terms) is also found in Ex. 4:27; 18:5; 24:13; Num. 10:33; I Kings 19:18.

5. *What does Horeb mean?*

The name *Horeb* comes from a verb meaning "to be dry." This well describes much of the rugged, granitic, mountainous, desert area around Sinai. The name refers to Mt. Sinai, or, more probably, the entire region thereabout. The name *Horeb* is found in Ex. 33:6; 17:6; I Kings 8:9; 19:8; and numerous other passages.

6. *Who appeared to Moses at Horeb? (3:2)*

The angel of the LORD appeared to Moses. The word *angel* means messenger. But this messenger was none other than God himself. See 3:4, 6. Deut. 33:16 speaks of God's blessings as coming from the "good will of him that dwelt in the bush." The angel of the Lord was the same personality that later came into the world as Jesus of Nazareth, the one whom John calls the WORD (John 1:1). "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10).

Keil and Delitzsch³ make the helpful comment that the transition from the *angel of Jehovah* (vs. 2) to *Jehovah* (vs. 4)

²*Antiquities*, II, xii, 1; III, v, 1.

³*Op. Cit.*, p. 439.

proves the identity of the two; and the interchange of the names *Jehovah* (LORD) and *Elohim* (the Hebrew word for God) in vs. 4 precludes the idea of Jehovah's being merely a national God of the Hebrews.

7. *Was the bush really burning?*

Certainly it was. Ex. 3:2 says that the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed. This bush was a kind of thorn bush (Heb., *seneh*) common in that district.

We ask this question only because some modern commentators seek to do away with the miraculous feature of the burning bush. They suggest that it had brilliant flowers that looked like flame; or sunlight was falling on it so as to produce an effect of flame.⁴ And even more radical idea is that the vision was only an inner experience in Moses' mind, and that one standing next to Moses would have seen nothing unusual.⁵ Noth supposes it was some manifestation similar to St. Elmo's fire.⁶

8. *How did God address Moses at the bush? (3:4)*

He called his name twice, "Moses, Moses," in a way reminding us of God's call to Abraham in Gen. 22:11: "Abraham, Abraham."

Note the interchange of divine names in 3:4: The LORD (*Jehovah*) saw, but God (*Elohim*) called. *Jehovah* is God's covenant name with his people. *Elohim* is the general term for God as the mighty one, creator, and ruler.

9. *Why take off the shoes? (3:5)*

This was an act of reverence and humbleness before God. The special manifestation of God's presence made the spot "holy ground." Removing the shoes is still practiced in the East. Moslems remove their shoes upon entering any of their holy places. Joshua put off his shoes when he stood before the captain of the Lord's host (Josh. 5:15).

10. *How did God describe himself to Moses? (3:6)*

⁴Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁵The Broadman Bible Commentary, Vol. 1 (Nashville; Broadman, 1969), p. 328.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 39.

As the God of thy father (Amram?), of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. This verse implies Moses had some knowledge of the patriarchal history in Genesis.

God described himself as one who remembers, sees, hears, and helps his people.

The word *father* (singular) may refer to Moses' father, Amram, about whom we know almost nothing. Or it may be a collective use of the term, and refer to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are named in the second part of the verse. Moses receives communication from no new or unknown God, but only a fuller of revelation from Him whom his people had known before.

Our Lord Jesus presented this passage as a proof of the resurrection of the dead to the Sadducees (Matt. 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37). God said to Moses, "I AM the God of Abraham (not, "I was"). When God spoke to Moses, Abraham had been dead over five hundred years. But Abraham was not dead to God; for all live unto Him. On the basis of this assertion of the continued existence of Abraham's soul after his physical death, Jesus said that ultimately soul and body will be reunited by a resurrection of the body.

11. *Why did Moses hide his face?* (3:6)

People are always fearful to look on God when they really see His holiness and glory. (Isaiah 6:1, 5; Judges 13:22; Luke 5:8; I Kings 19:13)

12. *Why was God now coming down to deliver Israel?* (3:7-8)

Because He had seen their affliction, and heard their cry, and knew their sorrow. God is a God of personal feelings and tenderness.

Also the time of which God had foretold to Abraham was nearly fulfilled. "They shall afflict thy seed four hundred years" (Gen. 15:13). God keeps His promises, and keeps His schedule.

13. *To what kind of a land would God bring Israel?* (3:8).

To a *broad*, or large, land. This is indicated by the enumeration of the six (or seven) tribes which then inhabited the country.

To a *good* land, a land flowing (oozing) with milk and honey. This means that it was a land of pastures, where flocks giving milk could be raised. It would be a land of flowers, from which bees would make honey. The phrase "flowing with milk and honey" is repeated in 3:17; 13:5; Jer. 11:5. The goodness of the land is also described in Deut. 8:7-8.

Sinuhe, an Egyptian fugitive who fled into the land of Canaan, or a nearby area, about 1960 B.C., described the land in a way similar to that by which God described it to Moses:

It was a good land, named Yaa. Figs were in it, and grapes. It had more wine than water. Plentiful was its honey, abundant its olives. Every (kind of) fruit was on its trees. Barley was there, and emmer. There was no limit to any (kind of) cattle.⁷

14. *What peoples would be displaced from the promised land by Israel? (3:8)*

Six "nations" are named. This is the first reference to these since God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 15:18-21. They are named frequently after this. See 3:17; 13:5; Deut. 7:1; Josh. 24:11. Each of these nations is said to be "greater and mightier than thou" (Deut. 7:1).

This group of "nations" is often said to number seven. Collectively they are called the Canaanites, even though one tribe called Canaanites was a distinct group among the seven. Gen. 10:15-19 reveals that six of them (the Perizzites are not mentioned) were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. While they were distantly related by blood, these nations were not a United Nation or a United States. They had wars between themselves. Their society was based on a city-state system. Prominent among the city-states in Canaan were Hazor, Jericho, Gezer, Megiddo, Jerusalem, Shechem, and Hebron. Cities such as these ruled as much territory as

⁷"The Story of Sinuhe," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1955), p. 19. Used by permission.

they could control. The Egyptians had general control over all of Palestine at this time, but when the Egyptian troops were absent, the Canaanite city-states were not very loyal subjects.

Morally, the Canaanites had become very degenerate. Their cup of iniquity had become full and running over (Gen. 15:16). They offered their children as sacrifices (Deut. 9:5; 18:9-10). Sometimes fornication was part of their religious ritual (Numbers 25:1-2).

Here are a few facts about these seven Canaanite nations: (1) The *Canaanites* (the separate tribe) settled into the land about 1900 B.C.⁸ They gave their name to the whole land, which included Phoenicia and the Mediterranean coastal area of Syria. Their areas included Jericho, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos (in Phoenicia).

(2) The *Hittites* were immigrant peoples from the Old Hittite empire (1800-1450 B.C.) in Asia Minor to the north. See Gen. 23:10.

(3) The *Amorites* were the most numerous and dominant of the "Canaanites." They had settled into Canaan and nearby lands about 2300 B.C., probably from the Syrian and Arabian deserts. They destroyed most of the urban settlements which had existed in the land before their arrival.⁹ They occupied the Northern part of Moab, north of the Arnon river, among other areas (Num. 21:26).

(4) The *Perizzites* are not identifiable. The term may mean *villagers*.

(5) The *Hivites* dwelt around Gibeon (about five miles NW of Jerusalem) and around Shechem. See Josh. 11:19; 9:3-7; Gen. 34:2. They may be the same people as the Horites, or Hurrians, who were people from the mountains north of Mesopotamia, who settled into Palestine about 2000 B.C.

(6) The *Jebusites* occupied Jerusalem. (Judges 1:21; II Sam.

⁸Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, Second Ed. (New York: Praeger, 1956), pp. 160-161.

⁹Kenyon, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-137.

5:6; Josh. 15:63)

(7) The *Girgashites* (Josh. 24:11; Deut. 7:1) are obscure.

15. *Could Moses have disobeyed God's call to deliver Israel?*

Certainly. See Ex. 3:10. But, like Paul, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19).

16. *Why was Moses hesitant to go and bring forth Israel?* (3:11)

Why should he say, "Who am I?" Undoubtedly, any human would have been frightened by such a commission. Especially would this have been true of Moses, who is said to have been meek above all men on earth (Num. 12:3). Whatever may have been Moses' reason for hesitancy, the scripture does not criticize him at this point, and we shall certainly not do so either.

17. *What were Moses' five excuses to God?*

1. "Who Am I?" (3:11)

2. "What shall I say when they ask, 'What is his (God's) name?' " (3:13)

3. "They will not believe" (4:1).

4. "I am not eloquent" (4:10).

5. "Send someone else" (4:13).

18. *What was God's reassurance to Moses?* (3:12)

"Certainly I will be with thee." Years later Moses gave the same reassurance to Israel and to his successor Joshua (Deut. 31:8, 23).

The Hebrew word translated "I will be" is *ehyeh*. This word is the very word which God gave for Himself as His name in 3:14 ("I Am . . ."). God's name thus means that he is the existing one, the being one, the eternal.

19. *What was God's token of assurance that he had sent Moses?* (3:12)

The token, or sign, was that Israel and Moses would serve God upon that very mountain before which Moses then stood, after God had brought them forth from Egypt! Moses was being called from the burning bush before Mt. Horeb; he would return to Horeb with Israel.

This token required faith to accept. We might feel it took more faith to believe the promise of the sign than it would

take to go and attempt to lead Israel out. But the sign itself was such a daring and confident assertion that it would inspire confidence and courage. Compare II Kings 19:29.

This token to Moses reminds us of the sign Jesus offered in John 2:18-19: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise IT [my body] up." Such a daring challenge demonstrates confidence within the one saying it, and inspires confidence in those who hear.

20. *Why would the Israelites ask Moses about God's name?* (3:13)

Probably because they had forgotten God's name Jehovah, or the LORD, or Yahweh (YHWH). The name had been used in Abraham's time (Gen. 15:2; 22:14), and long before then (Gen. 4:26). But it had been neglected in Egypt.

In patriarchal times, new revelations of the ancestral God were sometimes accompanied or illustrated by a new title for God (Gen. 16:13; 22:14; 35:7). Thus Israel might be conditioned to expect to hear a new name for God. But they received only the old name with new power and events associated with its meaning.

It is not surprising that Israel wanted to know God's name. Can you conceive of *knowing* someone without knowing a name for that person? Manoah wanted to know God's name so that he could render him honor (Judges 13:17). Jacob wanted to know the angel's name (Gen. 32:29).

21. *What is God's name?* (3:14-15)

His name is I AM THAT I AM. This probably is better translated, "I will be who (or what) I will be," since the verbs express future or continuing action. The Greek O.T. translated it, "I am the being one" (*ego eimi ho on*). The famous archaeologist Wm. F. Albright rendered the name, "I am he who causes (things) to be."¹⁰ Certainly Jehovah is the one who makes all things happen, but most scholars feel that this translation is too abstract and subtle to be the only meaning.

¹⁰Wm. F. Albright, *From The Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 259-261.



The name LORD (Jehovah, or Yahweh) in Ex. 3:15 is derived from the verb translated "be" or "am." Thus the name points God out as he who is, and was, and is to come. See Rev. 1:4, 8; Isa. 57:15. The possible implications in this name are as infinite as God himself. See notes on Ex. 6:3.

In the same way that God is Father is the eternal I AM, Jesus is also called "I Am" (John 8:58). Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). In fact, the very one who was speaking to Moses at the bush later came unto us in human form as Jesus of Nazareth.

Interestingly, the Jewish historian Josephus would not tell his Roman readers what God's name which God told Moses was.¹¹ Modern Jews still will not utter aloud the name Yahweh (Jehovah, the LORD). They avoid it so that they may not possibly use God's name in vain. But God expressly told Moses to say the name to the children of Israel. Ex. 4:1 says that the Israelites would utter the name. Nowhere does the O.T. hint that the name dare not be spoken by our lips. Of course, it should be used reverently or not at all.

22. *What is God's memorial? (3:15)*

His name YAHWEH (Jehovah, or LORD) is his memorial. "Sing praises unto Jehovah, O ye saints of his. And give thanks unto his holy memorial name" (Ps. 30:4; A.S.V.). See also Psalm 97:12; 100:12; 135:13; Hosea 12:5. By that name His person, nature, and works are to be recalled. Alan Cole says that the name YHWH ultimately came to mean to the Jews what the name Jesus has come to mean to Christians, a shorthand for all God's dealings of grace.¹²

Surely if God's name YAHWEH is to be remembered throughout all generations, the Jews perverted this truth in refusing to utter it.

23. *Whom was Moses to gather and speak to? (3:16)*

He was to gather and speak to the elders of Israel. The Israelites had very little formal governmental organization.

¹¹*Antiquities*, II, xii, 4.

¹²*Op. cit.*, p. 70.

The older men ruled in each location and family to the extent that their personalities and situations made possible.

24. *What does "visit" mean?* (3:16)

This word is often used in the Bible of some particular saving act of God toward his people. See Luke 1:68; Gen. 21:1; Ruth 1:6; Ex. 4:31.

Joseph had prophesied before his death that God would visit Israel, and they would go up from Egypt (Gen. 50:25). Moses' words about God's visiting them surely point to a fulfillment of Joseph's words, even though Joseph had been dead over three hundred and fifty years.

For notes on 3:17, see under 3:8.

25. *Would Israel believe Moses' words?* (3:18)

Yes. Ex. 4:29-31 reports that Moses and Aaron did gather the elders and spoke to them, and they did believe, at least at first.

26. *Who was to go in and speak to Pharaoh?* (3:18)

Moses, with the elders. As it worked out, only Moses and Aaron went. See 5:1, 3.

27. *What would Pharaoh understand the words "God . . . hath met with us" to imply?*

The words almost suggest hostile confrontation: "Our God has confronted us, and said to worship him, or else . . .!" Ex. 5:3 tends to confirm this idea. Also 4:24.

28. *Where would the three-days' journey lead them?* (3:18)

The place is not specified. Certainly all of the proposed locations for Mt. Sinai are much farther than three days' journey from Egypt. Probably no specific place was in mind. God foreknew Pharaoh was not going to release Israel, whether the request was for a brief or a long trip. By making the request small, the refusal of Pharaoh would display the hardness of his heart. Moses later enlarged his demand, for Pharaoh to grant them entire departure from the land (6:10). From the outset of this confrontation, nothing was stated positively about Israel's coming back after three days.

The request to Pharaoh was politely worded: "Let us go, we pray thee." Actually Pharaoh had no right to detain

them. Israel had entered Egypt by invitation, and surely had the right to leave when they wished.

29. *What did God predict about Pharaoh's response?* (3:19)

Pharaoh would refuse to let Israel go, and would never grant it unless compelled by a mighty overpowering hand.

This is the first reference to Pharaoh's responses to Israel's request for departure. And right here at the outset the blame and the root of the trouble is placed where it belongs, on Pharaoh, not on God.

That Pharaoh expected Israel would never return is suggested by his insolent response.

30. *How did God stretch out his hand?* (3:20)

This figure of speech compares God to a warrior extending his arm in readiness for combat. The record of God's stretching out his hand to deliver Israel is the story of the ten plagues in Ex. 7-13. "By strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place" (Ex. 13:3; 7:4; 6:1).

31. *Why were the Israelites to collect jewels from the Egyptians?* (3:21-22)

The use of the word *spoil* in 3:22 suggests it was an act of triumph over Egypt, taking as it were the spoils of battle from the vanquished.

The jewelry could be looked upon as payment by the Egyptians for unpaid wages to the Israelites for many years of slave labor. However, the scripture does not suggest this as a justification for the act.

Note in 3:22 that some Egyptian women sojourned in the houses of the Hebrews. Not all the Egyptians shared the hateful feelings of their king toward Israelites.

"Borrow" in 3:22 simply means "ask." No hint of returning the items is implied.

The promise to give the Israelites favor in the eyes of the Egyptians was fulfilled. See Ex. 11:2-3; 12:35-36.

It is interesting to note that the Israelites placed these jewels upon their sons and daughters. While the Egyptians were burying their dead first born, the Israelites were adorning their children with Egyptian jewelry.

The jewelry was partly used later in making the vessels of the tabernacle (Ex. 35:22). Alas, some of it went into the golden calf (32:2).

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

4 And Mo-ses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Je-ho-vah hath not appeared unto thee. (2) And Je-ho-vah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. (3) And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Mo-ses fled from before it. (4) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand); (5) that they may believe that Je-ho-vah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. (6) And Je-ho-vah said furthermore unto him; Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. (7) And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.) (8) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. (9) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the river shall become blood upon the dry land. (10) And Mo-ses said unto Je-ho-vah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. (11) And Je-ho-vah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Je-ho-vah? (12) Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. (13) And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. (14) And the anger of Je-ho-vah

was kindled against Mo-ses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Le-vite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. (15) And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. (16) And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God. (17) And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs. (18) And Mo-ses went and returned to Je-thro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren that are in E-gypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Je-thro said to Mo-ses, Go in peace. (19) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses in Mid-i-an, Go, return into E-gypt; for all the men are dead that sought thy life. (20) And Mo-ses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of E-gypt: and Mo-ses took the rod of God in his hand. (21) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses. When thou goest back into E-gypt, see that thou do before Pha-raoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go. (22) And thou shalt say unto Pha-raoh, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, Is-ra-el is my son, my first-born: (23) and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born. (24) And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that Je-ho-vah met him, and sought to kill him. (25) Then Zip-po-rah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me. (26) So he let him alone. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood *art thou*, because of the circumcision.

(27) And Je-ho-vah said to Aar-on, Go into the wilderness to meet Mo-ses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. (28) And Mo-ses told Aar-on all the words of Je-ho-vah wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs wherewith he had charged him. (29) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Is-ra-el: (30)

and Aar-on spake all the words which Je-ho-vah had spoken unto Mo-ses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. (31) And the people believed: and when they heard that Je-ho-vah had visited the children of Is-ra-el, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER FOUR
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the chapter carefully, propose a short topic or theme for it.
2. How did Moses think the Israelites would respond to his message (4:1)? How did God say they would respond (3:18)? How did they finally respond (4:31)?
3. What did Moses have in his hand? (4:2)
4. Can you name other Bible characters who used for God the things that they had in their hands?
5. What happened to Moses' rod? How did Moses react? (4:3)
6. How was the rod restored? (4:4)
7. List the references in chapters three and four where God refers to Himself as the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."
8. What was the second miracle Moses was empowered to do? (4:6)
9. What color was leprosy? (4:6) Check the cross references in your Bible on this.
10. How was Moses' leprosy removed? (4:7)
11. What miracle would certainly convince the people? (4:8)
12. What third miracle was Moses empowered to do? (4:9)
13. Was this third miracle ever used? Compare Ex. 7:18-19.
14. What excuse did Moses give pertaining to his voice? (4:10)
15. Was Moses really NOT able to speak well? Compare Ex. 20:19-20; 24:7; 32:26-28; Deut. 1:1ff.
16. Who makes every man's mouth, and men's other abilities? (4:11)
17. What is the application of the questions in 4:11 to Moses?
18. How would Moses know what to say? (4:12)
19. When God inspired men to reveal His will, did God give them words or just general ideas? (4:12, 15; Compare Num. 22:38)

20. Putting 4:13 into blunt modern English, what did Moses ask God to do?
21. How did God react to Moses' unwillingness? (4:14)
22. Who was Moses' brother?
23. What ability did Moses' brother have?
24. What feelings would Aàron have upon seeing Moses?
25. How long had it been since Aaron had seen Moses? (See Acts 7:23, 30)
26. What was Aaron to be for Moses? (4:16; 7:1)
27. How could Moses be a *God* to Aaron? (4:16)
28. How significant was the rod in Moses' later deeds? (4:17, 20; 7:15; 14:16)
29. From who did Moses ask permission to leave? (4:18)
30. Was this permission granted?
31. What possible reason was there for God's repeating his commission to Moses in Midian? (4:19)
32. Which direction was Midian from Mt. Horeb (Sinai)?
33. Who had once sought Moses' life? (4:19; 2:15). What had happened since then?
34. How many sons did Moses have? (See 18:2-4)
35. How many rode on one ass? (4:20)
36. How is Moses' rod described? (4:20)
37. What was Moses to be sure to do in Egypt? (4:21)
38. What would God do to Pharaoh? (4:21)
39. Was it fair for God to harden Pharaoh's heart? (Compare Rom. 9:14-24)
40. What relationship did Israel bear unto God? (4:22; Ex. 6:7; Compare II Cor. 6:18). How did this relationship come to exist? (See Deut. 4:37, 20; Ex. 19:5-6)
41. What threat was to be made unto Pharaoh? (4:23)
42. When was this threat carried out? (12:27, 29)
43. Where did the Lord "meet" Moses and his family? (4:24)
44. What did the Lord seek to do to Moses? By what means was the Lord doing this? (4:24-25)
45. Why was the Lord so extreme in his treatment of Moses just because Moses' son had not been circumcised? (Compare Gen. 17:10-14)

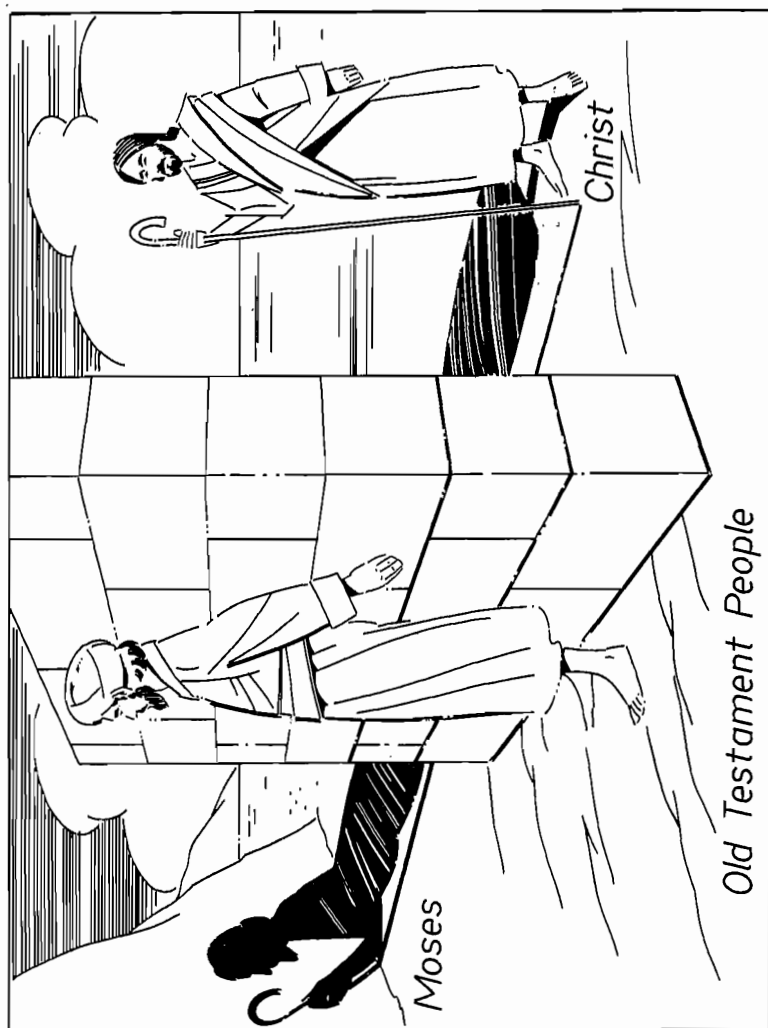
46. How did Moses and his family discover that the uncircumcision of the son was the cause of Moses' trouble? (4:25). (At least propose some answer.)
 47. Who circumcised the son?
 48. How did she like this job? Explain the meaning of "A bloody husband . . . because of the circumcision."
 49. Did Zipporah and the sons accompany Moses on to Egypt? (4:29; 18:1-3)
 50. Why did Aaron go out into the wilderness of Sinai? (Ex. 4:27)
 51. Where did Aaron and Moses meet? (4:27)
 52. With what act did Aaron greet Moses? (4:27)
 53. What did Moses tell Aaron about? (4:28)
 54. Did Moses show Aaron the signs (miracles)? (4:28)
 55. What did Moses and Aaron gather together in Egypt? (4:29; 3:16)
 56. Who did the talking to the Israelites? (4:28)
 57. Who did the signs before the people? (4:30)
 58. How did the people react when they heard the words and saw the signs? (Give two answers; 4:31)
 59. What is the significance of the verb *visited* in 4:31?
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EXODUS FOUR: HESITANCY OF GOD'S MAN

- A. Fear the people would not believe; 4:1ff.
- B. Fear of his slow speech; 4:10ff.
- C. In need of having his commission repeated; 4:19.
- D. Personal failure to obey God's covenant; 4:24ff.
- E. Victory when hesitancy is overcome; 4:27-31.

MOSES, A TYPE OF CHRIST

(A *type* is some person, thing or event in the Old Testament age which resembled and foreshadowed a similar person, thing, or event in the New Testament. The *antitype* is that person, thing, or event in the New Testament which was foreshadowed by



PEOPLE LIVING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SIDE OF THE WALL OF TIME
COULD SEE IN MOSES AND SUCH LEADERS A FORESHADOWING, OR TYPE,
OF CHRIST, THE GREATER ONE WHO WAS TO COME.

ISRAEL, A TYPE OF THE CHURCH (I Cor. 10:1-11)

ISRAEL

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bondage in Egypt | R E D | Freedom from Egypt | J O R D A N | C A N A A N |
| Deliverer (Moses) | | Heavenly food provided | | |
| Moses believed | S E A | Law of Moses | | |
| Egypt forsaken | | Tabernacle worship | | |
| Passover | | Unfaithful perished | | |
| | | Faithful entered | | |

CHURCH

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Bondage in sin | B A P T I S M | Freedom from sin | D E A T H | H E A V E N |
| Deliverer (Christ) | | Heavenly food provided | | |
| Christ believed | | Law of Christ | | |
| Sin forsaken | | Church worship | | |
| Death of Christ | | Unfaithful to perish | | |
| | | Faithful enter | | |

the Old Testament type.)

People on the Old Testament side of the wall of time could see only the shadow. We see both the shadow (Moses) and the substance (Christ) that cast the shadow.

Moses said that God would raise up a prophet, *like unto me*. (Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).

1. Christ, like Moses, was a prophet. (Matt. 13:57; Deut. 34:10)
2. Christ, like Moses, was a lawgiver. (John 1:17; Gal. 6:2)
3. Christ, like Moses, was saved as a babe.
4. Christ, like Moses, came as a peacemaker. (Luke 19:42; Ex. 2:13)
5. Christ, like Moses, was commissioned by God. (John 5:30; Ex. 3:10)
6. Christ, like Moses, came working miracles. (John 12:37)
7. Christ, like Moses, came preaching deliverance. (Luke 4:18; Ex. 4:29-30)
8. Christ, like Moses, was rejected by many. (Acts 7:23-39, 51-52)
9. Christ, like Moses, put His brethren (the church!) before his own interests (Heb. 2:14-15; Ex. 32:31-32).

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. *Why was Moses so sure that Israel would not believe him?* (4:1).

a. There was no reason why thou should believe a long-absent, sheep-herding, fugitive, who had already failed in one attempt to deliver them.

b. It had been 430 years since God had spoken directly to any Israelite.

They were not accustomed to communications from God.

2. *Did Moses' excuse (in 4:1) indicate that he lacked faith?*

It is easy to think that he did. God had said that Israel would hearken (3:18). Moses said that they would not believe. It turned out that God was right (as always).

However, because Moses finally did obey, and because he

is called a man of faith (Heb. 11:24-29), we are reluctant to say he lacked faith.

3. *Would the people accept Yahweh (the LORD) as God's name?* (4:1; 3:13-15).

Moses seemed to assume that they would do so. The name was almost certainly familiar to some Israelite elders from their knowledge of the distant past. They would recognize it, and use it in speaking of God.

4. *What was the rod of Moses?* (4:2).

Probably only the familiar shepherd's crook, as in Psalm 23:4. This rod became extremely prominent in the acts of Moses and Aaron in later chapters. "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" (4:17).

5. *What special force was there in the rod-to-serpent miracle?*

A carving of a serpent (cobra, or uraeus) was placed upon the front of the crown by many Pharaoh's. It was a symbol of the royal power in lower Egypt. Thus Moses' miracle gave the appearance of an intentional attack upon Egypt's supreme authority.

Also, an Egyptian goddess, Buto, was depicted in serpent form. She was the protectress of Egypt's northern capital. The miracle discredited her power.

Behind all this lay also the fact that the serpent has been the constant enemy of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). It was the representative and tool of Satan (Rev. 12:9). At the basic level, Israel's deliverance involved a confrontation with the devil himself.

6. *When did Moses use the rod-to-serpent sign?*

He showed it to the elders of Egypt (4:30), and before Pharaoh during his second confrontation with him (7:10).

7. *Whose name was to be made vivid by the miracle of the rod?*

The name of the LORD (Jehovah, Yahweh), the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham . . ." (Ex. 4:5). Note the continued emphasis upon God's name, and upon God's association with their forefathers (Ex. 2:24; 3:15-16; 4:5; 6:2; et al).

8. *What particular significance was there in the sign of the*

leprous hand? (4:6).

a. It displayed the limitless and superhuman power of God. Leprosy usually was a disease of long duration. Even the ceremony for cleansing it took eight days (Lev. 14:8-10). But in the case of Moses, the infection, the cure, and the cleansing were all immediate.

b. The leprosy suggested the uncleanness of the people. Compare Lev. 13:45. Moses came to them when they were an unclean people. But God could make the unclean clean.

9. *Was leprosy always white?* (4:6).

Often it was white: Miriam (Numbers 12:10); Elisha's servant Gehazi (II Kings 5:27); Lev. 13:3. We do not think that the leprosy of the Bible was the same disease as Hansen's disease, now called leprosy. The whiteness that is so commonly associated with Biblical leprosy is not associated with Hansen's disease.

10. *Were Moses' miracles convincing to the Israelites?* (4:8)

Yes, at least temporarily. They were convinced, until subsequent difficulties arose. Then they seemed to forget the miracles, and doubt the constant infinite power of God.

In the same manner the miracles of Christ did not produce an unshakeable faith in most of the people who saw them (John 12:37). People whose faith depends upon seeing signs often require a steady stream of miracles, or they forsake Christ. See John 6:14, 30.

In doing these miracles Moses was a type of Christ, who also came working miracles (Deut. 18:15).

11. *Was the miracle of changing water to blood used by Moses?* (4:9)

We have no record that Moses did this miracle in Egypt. The first of the ten plagues consisted of a similar miracle on a nation-wide scale (Ex. 7:20-25).

12. *Was Moses' excuse about not being eloquent a good excuse?* (4:10)

No; it was a miserable excuse, and God did not accept it.

Moses' great ability to speak afterwards shows that he really was an able speaker. For example, note 32:11-13. The

whole book of Deuteronomy consists of eloquent speeches by Moses.

Moses' excuse here comes close to blaming God for his imagined difficulty in speech. He said, in paraphrase, "I was not eloquent before now, and I have not miraculously become eloquent since you began speaking to me. How then can you expect me to speak?"

Eloquence was highly regarded by the Egyptians as a means for bringing about social justice and political decisions. One Egyptian story, called the "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant"¹ is an Egyptian classic. It was written in the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (about 2000 B.C.), before Moses' time.

Moses had to learn that the working of God's power does not depend upon human eloquence and wisdom (I Cor. 2:1, 4). Many people thought the speech of the apostle Paul was of no account (II Cor. 10:10). But his influence was powerful, in spite of this. When we appear weak in ourselves, the power of God may become more obvious and more potent in us (II Cor. 12:9-10).

But at that moment Moses could only feel that he was slow of speech (meaning he had a hard time recalling words) and was of a slow tongue (he had a hard time forming the words in his mouth).

13. *Who gives people their abilities or disabilities?* (4:11)

Yahweh, the LORD! "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7). Nothing! Therefore, we must neither low-rate the abilities God has given us (and therefore hesitate to use them), or overrate them (and become conceited).

King James version has "*the* dumb, or deaf, or *the* seeing, or *the* blind." The *the*'s are not actually in the Hebrew text. It appears from the scripture that God causes or allows some people to be handicapped and some to be more capable (John 9:1-3). But it is probably an overstatement to say that

¹Translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 407-410.

God is responsible for all the cases of blindness or deafness that exist.

14. *Does God provide to his spokesmen words, or just general ideas?* (4:12, 15)

He taught Moses "what you shall say." This involved general knowledge and ideas, but also frequently specific words. To Jeremiah God gave words (Jer. 1:9). To Paul also (I Cor. 2:13). Prophetic inspiration often times involved dictation of divine words. Many scholars of modern times resist this idea with some passion, but it is still true.

We must be careful as believers not to claim the kind of word-by-word revelations that God has given once-for-all to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:5; Jude 3). We are promised wisdom (James 1:5), but apparently not the miraculous revelations of words and thoughts such as Moses and the prophets received.

15. *How did Moses show his basic reluctance to go?* (4:13)

By asking God to send someone else. God had told HIM to go (4:13). He asked God to send someone else. In order that his request might not sound so blunt, Moses stated it with extra superfluous words: "Send by the hand (that is, by the power and efforts) or him whom thou wilt send." In fact, God was doing exactly what Moses asked him to do: God had decided to deliver Israel by Moses' hand, and was therefore sending Moses. God became angry with Moses' unwillingness (4:14).

16. *Who would help Moses with the speaking?* (4:14)

Aaron, Moses' brother, who could speak well, was at that very time coming to see Moses. Probably Aaron was coming to visit Moses to report the good news of the death of the king (2:23; 4:19). He could not have known just then that the new pharaoh would be as bad as the former one. Aaron would rejoice from his heart upon seeing Moses. It would be interesting to us to know just how Aaron learned of Moses' whereabouts.

Aaron is called the "Levite," although he would have been no more a Levite by race than Moses would have been. It

would seem that the title "Levite" had taken on some technical connotation of "teacher" or "spokesman."

The reference to Aaron in 4:14 is the first mention of him.

17. *How would Moses use Aaron's assistance? (4:15)*

Moses would put the words (of God) into Aaron's mouth (by first putting them into his ears) (Ex. 4:30). We wonder why Moses could not himself speak to Pharaoh if he could speak the words to Aaron. The fact that Moses put THE words into Aaron's mouth reveals the definiteness of God's communication with Moses (Compare Num. 22:38; 23:5; Isa. 51:16). God would direct both Moses' mouth so he would speak to Aaron correctly, and with Aaron's mouth so he would relay the message correctly. This passage indicates much about how inspiration worked as "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21).

18. *How could Moses be as God to Aaron? (4:16)*

Only in the respect that Aaron must get his utterances totally from Moses, just as Moses got his message totally from God. See Ex. 7:1-2, 19.

19. *What function was Moses' rod to play in the events that followed? (4:17)*

By the rod he would perform the signs (miracles). This surely came to pass (7:10, 20; 8:5, 16; and other passages).

Unbelieving critics argue that passages (like 7:19; 8:5) which place the rod in the hand of Aaron are by a different author (P., in post-exilic times!) than passages which place the rod in Moses' hand.² It seems to us that it would be simpler to suggest that this rod was merely passed back and forth between the hands of Moses and Aaron.

20. *Where did Moses go from the burning bush at Horeb? Why? (4:18)*

He returned back to Jethro, probably in the east part of the Sinai peninsula, to ask permission to go back to Egypt. (He doubtless drove the sheep back with him!) The courtesy of Moses and his thoughtfulness of others' feelings are

²The Broadman Bible Commentary (1969), Vol. 1, p. 335.

commendable.

Moses did not tell Jethro the whole story about the call at the burning bush to go back and save all Israel, but rather simply said that he wanted to go back and visit his relatives. We cannot condemn Moses for this. Jethro could not have accepted this revelation; he would surely have thought Moses had lost his mind.

Maybe Moses was not yet quite convinced himself. This is suggested by the Lord's repeating the command to go in 4:19. Moses was feeling cold feet.

We admire Jethro's agreeable response to Moses' request. Moses' departure was to involve also the departure of Jethro's daughter and Jethro's grandchildren.

Jethro's name in 4:18 is spelled as *Jether* in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek LXX spells it the same as in 3:1. No significance lies in this slight variation in spelling.

21. *Why the repetition of the command of God to Moses in 4:19?*

As indicated above, Moses was probably still hesitant. Some critics maintain that one supposed source of the text of Exodus (J) said that God called Moses in Midian; another source (E) said that God called him at Horeb.³ This analysis seems to us to overlook the naturalness in God's repeating the command to the still-hesitant Moses. It also ends up contradicting the idea that Moses wrote all of Exodus by attributing different passages in Exodus to different authors living centuries after Moses. Our Lord quoted a passage from Exodus (3:6) and said that it came from the "book of Moses" (Mark 12:26).

22. *When did Moses learn of the death of his enemies in Egypt? (4:19)*

God told him about it at Jethro's house, after he returned from the burning bush at Horeb! There is no indication that he knew it before then. This increases our admiration for Moses greatly. When God first called him, he probably

³W.O.E. Oesterly and T.H. Robinson, *Introduction to the Books of the O.T.* (Cleveland and New York: World, 1965), p. 36.

assumed that at least some of those who had tried once before in Egypt to kill him would still be alive, even if older. In the face of that possibility, he arose to go! Can we possibly be surprised if he showed a little reluctance?

Type: "The men are dead which sought thy life" (Ex. 4:19).
Antitype: "They are dead that sought the young child's (Jesus') life" (Matt. 2:20).

23. *Who went with Moses as he left for Egypt? (4:20)*

His wife and his two sons (Gershom and Eliezer). The second son is here alluded to for the first time. See Ex. 18:3-4. All three apparently sat on one ass! (However, the Greek LXX reads "asses.")

The "rod of God" in Moses' hand is prominently mentioned. This title occurs also in Ex. 17:9. It is called the "rod of GOD" because God used it in such a powerful way.

24. *Would God really harden Pharaoh's heart, and then punish him for his hard-hearted deeds? (4:21)*

Yes, He would. Yes, He did. And for just causes.

The pronoun *I* in "I will harden" is emphatic. God later hardened the heart of Sihon, the Amorite king (Deut. 2:30). Also He hardened the hearts of the Canaanite kings whom Joshua overthrew (Josh. 11:20). God sends strong delusions upon those who receive not the love of the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12).

Rom. 9:17-18: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth."

SPECIAL STUDY — HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART

In the passages about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, sometimes it says that (1) Pharaoh hardened his own heart; sometimes that (2) his heart was hardened, without any clear

indication as to whether God or Pharaoh himself was the main agent in the hardening; sometimes that (3) God hardened his heart. The following chart shows how these three different statements about hardening Pharaoh's heart occur in the scripture.

There are three different Hebrew words used to describe the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In the order of the intensity of their meaning they are:

- (1) *Kabad* — To be heavy, or insensible; to be honored; to be dull or unresponsive.
- (2) *Qashah* — To be hard, severe, fierce; to be stiff; to make hard, or harden. (Used only in 7:3 and 13:15)
- (3) *Hazaq* (strongest word) — To be strong, firm, obstinate, stout, rigid; to make strong or strengthen.

The following chart indicates which word is used in each passage.

| A. Hardening Pharaoh's heart: Preliminary predictions and declarations: | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Reference | Pharaoh hardened his own heart. | Indefinite about who hardened it. | God hardened it. |
| 3:19 | King of Egypt will not let you go | | |
| 4:21 | | | I will harden (<i>hazaq</i>) his heart. |
| 5:2 | I will not let Israel go. | | |
| 7:3 | | | I will harden (<i>Qashah</i>) P.'s heart |
| 7:13 | | P.'s heart was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 7:14 | | P.'s heart is stubborn (<i>kabad</i>) | |
| B. Hardening Pharaoh's heart: During the ten plagues: | | | |
| 7:22 (after 1st) | | P.'s heart was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 8:15 (after 2nd) | He hardened (<i>kabad</i>) his heart | | |
| 8:19 (after 3rd) | | P.'s heart was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 8:32 (after 4th) | Pharaoh hardened (<i>kabad</i>) | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 9:7 (after 5th) | heart of P. was stubborn (<i>kabad</i>) | |
| 9:12 (after 6th) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 9:34 (after 7th) | he sinned again and hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) his heart | |
| 9:35 | heart of P. was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 10:20 (after 8th) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 10:27 (after 9th) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 11:10 (summary) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 13:15 (just before Passover) | P. was stubborn (<i>qashah</i>) | |
| 14:4 (before pursuit) | | "I will harden (<i>hazaq</i>) P.'s heart." |
| 14:8 | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 14:17 (at Red Sea) | | I will harden (<i>hazaq</i>) the hearts of the Egyptians. |

C. Conclusions about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart:

1. The very first reference to Pharaoh's not letting Israel go places the basic choice about and blame for hardness upon Pharaoh himself (3:19).

2. God promised that he would further harden Pharaoh's heart, since Pharaoh himself had started in this evil way (4:21).

3. After the first five plagues, either the statement is made the Pharaoh hardened his own heart, or the scripture is indefinite about who hardened it. Pharaoh himself made the first choices, and started his own troubles.

4. After the sixth plague, God hardened his heart. Probably Pharaoh sensed to some degree that he was being pushed by a power outside of himself. He was being shown

what might be the consequences of further determined hardness.

5. After the seventh plague, God again left the choice of response to Pharaoh. Pharaoh confesses that he has sinned (9:27). But he sinned yet more, and hardened his own heart again (9:34).

6. After all these opportunities to choose right had been spurned by Pharaoh, God finally stepped in and hardened his heart after the last three plagues. Because Pharaoh chose to go the way of disobedient hardness, God pushed him down his self-chosen route to the bitterest end of his folly.

Take heed, lest any one of YOU be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13.

25. *In what way was Israel God's firstborn?* (4:22)

Israel was God's firstborn in that Israel was the most sacred of all peoples to God. The term *firstborn* is applied to the most honored son of a family, who would usually be the oldest. Pharaoh would have no difficulty in understanding the expression. The Pharaohs called themselves the "son of Ra" (the sun god) or some other deity. Pharaoh's oldest son (or heir) would be specially honored and even sacred in many respects. Israel bore a similar relationship with Yahweh to that which the Egyptian pharaohs claimed for themselves with their own deities.

Israel was not to be Yahweh's only son, but certainly his FIRSTBORN son (or people). Other nations would later be adopted.

Hosea 11:1 speaks of Israel as God's SON whom he called out of Egypt. Isa. 64:8 speaks of the LORD as Israel's father.

26. *What threat was directed at Pharaoh?* (4:23)

"Because you refuse to let Israel, my firstborn, go, behold, I will slay your son, your firstborn." Pharaoh's *firstborn* referred to here consisted of all the firstborn of all the people in Egypt. They were Pharaoh's firstborn because all the people of Egypt were regarded as belonging to Pharaoh. The

death of Egypt's firstborn would be a calamity that exceeded any calamity. See Ex. 11:5; 12:29.

27. *When and why did God try to kill Moses?* (4:24)

On the journey back to Egypt from Midian, while at an inn with his wife and two sons, Moses was smitten by God. Inns were simple tourist houses with shelter for animals as well as people. Compare Gen. 42:27. They must have been fairly common.

It appears from the scripture that Moses became deathly sick, so sick he could not rise from his cot nor do anything. This event occurred before they went as far from Midian as Mt. Sinai, probably at their first stop after leaving Midian.

The reason for this affliction was that Moses had neglected to circumcise one of his sons, possibly because his wife Zipporah had found the act repugnant to her. But God had long before told Abraham — the father and founder of the Hebrew covenant people — that circumcision was the token of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall but cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:14).

Moses was to be the leader of the covenant people Israel. He could not be a leader if he had not first been a follower of God in his own house. We cannot lead where we will not go. This was a serious shortcoming in Moses, and, he nearly died because of it. This incident is a forcible example to God's servants now. They cannot expect to lead people to obey God in ways that they themselves are unwilling to obey.

Skeptical critics dislike Ex. 4:24-26. The 1969 *Broadman Bible Commentary*⁴ said that the passage has an almost demonic element about it, and that one is hardly justified in concluding that Yahweh actually attempted to take the life of Moses. The same source thinks that *feet* in 4:25 is a euphemism referring to the male organ, and that the whole passage is a distorted and ugly allusion to ancient marriage

⁴Vol. 1, p. 337. See also Martin Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

rituals. For our part we find the story edifying and helpful, although not particularly pleasant.

28. *How did Zipporah save her "bridegroom"? (4:25-26)*

She took a sharp flint, and circumcised her son, and cast the foreskin at "his" feet (presumably Moses' feet). By doing this she purchased Moses' life anew by the blood of her son, and she received him back as it were from the dead. Moses recovered.

The fact that she circumcised only her *son* (singular), although two sons were with them on the trip, suggests that the older son had already been circumcised. Zipporah's act in throwing the foreskin at his feet suggests her abhorrence of the rite. We are not informed how Zipporah was able to know that the failure to circumcise the son was the cause of Moses' affliction.

Some interpreters believe that the *his* in 4:25 refers to the son, rather than to Moses. The Revised Standard version translates the passage, "she touched *Moses'* (emphasis ours) feet with it" (the foreskin). Martin Noth, an extreme liberal, says that this insertion of the name *Moses* is "begging the question."⁵ We agree that the *his* should probably be left unaltered and uninterpreted, as it is in the Hebrew text. But, nonetheless, the *his* does surely seem to refer to Moses' feet, rather than to the son's. The pronoun *him* in 4:24 and 4:26 seems to refer to Moses in both places. Why should not the *his* in between (in 4:25) also refer to Moses? Also, what significance could there be in casting it at the son's feet?

A quite different view of this passage (4:25-26) is often set forth. This is the view that the *son* is the one called the bridegroom. Gesenius *Hebrew Lexicon* says that it is customary for [Jewish] women to call a son when he is circumcised, "Bridegroom"; and that those who apply the words [of Zipporah] to Moses and not to the child, seem to have made a great mistake. By this view the infant son is by the ceremony of circumcision married into God's covenant.

⁵Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

It appears to us that this view and practice results from a misinterpretation of this passage, and that the more obvious meaning of the text should not be altered by interpreting it by the practice. Judge the practice by the verse, and not the verse by the practice.

Nonetheless, there are problems in the interpretation of the passage. Why should Zipporah refer to Moses as a *bridegroom* when he had been married to her for nearly forty years? The common King James version renders the Hebrew word *hathan* as *husband*; but in all truth *hathan* means a bridegroom, or daughter's husband, and does not simply mean husband. The question is not easy to answer. Possibly Zipporah looked upon Moses' near-death and hoped-for recovery as a renewal of their marriage, and therefore called him bridegroom. To us this seems a more reasonable explanation, than any explanations as to how the son could be called anyone's bridegroom.

After this circumcision incident, Moses sent Zipporah and the two lads back to Midian, and he went alone on toward Egypt. Compare Ex. 18:2-3. It was over a year later when they were reunited.

29. *Where did Moses meet Aaron? (4:27)*

He met him at the mountain of God, that is, Horeb, or Sinai (3:1). God spoke to Aaron, directing him to a certain place at a certain time, as He did later to Philip (Acts 8:26). Moses had made quite a long trip (perhaps seventy miles) from the burning bush at Horeb, back to Midian, and back again to Horeb with his family. The meeting with Aaron would be a strong sign of divine favor to Moses (see 4:14).

30. *What did Moses tell Aaron about? (4:28)*

Two things: the words of God, and all the signs that God had commanded him to do. There is no indication that Moses performed the signs before Aaron; but he told him about them.

31. *What did Aaron do when the elders of Israel were gathered? (4:30)*

He spoke the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses;

and he did the signs in the sight of the people. We hardly feel that Aaron himself actually did the signs (see 4:3-9). He probably announced that they would be done, and Moses did them. Note how prominent Aaron was as the spokesman here at the beginning of Moses' work of delivering Israel. Aaron's prominence later diminished.

32. *What was Israel's response to the news of deliverance? (4:31)*

They believed, and bowed their heads in worship. The people believed, as God had foretold they would (3:18), and not as Moses feared (4:1).

God twice gave encouragement to Moses as he began his great task: (1) Aaron met Moses, as God had predicted; (2) the people believed, as God had foretold.

On *visit*, see 3:16 and Gen. 50:25.

The Israelites believed when they first heard Moses. Their faith did not stand up in subsequent tests. But they started well, and God only gave them one test at a time. Each experience could lead into a harder test to follow, and to the opportunity for even greater victories of faith.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

5 And afterward Mo-ses and Aar-on came, and said unto Pha-raoh, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, the God of Is-ra-el, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (2) And Pha-raoh said, Who is Je-ho-vah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Is-ra-el go? I know not Je-ho-vah, and moreover I will not let Is-ra-el go. (3) And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Je-ho-vah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. (4) And the king of E-gypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Mo-ses and Aar-on, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. (5) And Pha-raoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. (6) And the same day Pha-raoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their

officers, saying, (7) Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. (8) And the number of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof: for they are idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. (9) Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein; and let them not regard lying words.

(10) And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pha-raoh, I will not give you straw. (11) Go yourselves, get you straw where ye can find it; for nought of your work shall be diminished. (12) So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of E-gypt to gather stubble for straw. (13) And the taskmasters were urgent, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw. (14) And the officers of the children of Is-ra-el, whom Pha-raoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task both yesterday and to-day, in making brick as heretofore?

(15) Then the officers of the children of Is-ra-el came and cried unto Pha-raoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? (16) There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. (17) But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to Je-ho-vah. (18) Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the number of bricks. (19) And the officers of the children of Is-ra-el did see that they were in evil case, when it was said, Ye shall not diminish aught from your bricks, *your* daily tasks. (20) And they met Mo-ses and Aar-on, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pha-raoh: (21) and they said unto them, Je-ho-vah look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pha-raoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

(22) And Mo-ses returned unto Je-ho-vah, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou dealt ill with this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? (23) For since I came to Pha-raoh to speak in thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER FIVE
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After careful reading of the chapter, propose a very brief topic or theme for it.
2. What people went in to talk to Pharaoh? (5:1; Compare 3:18)
3. What request did they deliver to Pharaoh? (5:1)
4. What particular wilderness (or desert) did the people propose to go into? (14:3, 12; 15:22)
5. Did they promise that the people would come back?
6. What did Pharaoh imply about the LORD by asking, "Who is the LORD?"
7. What did Pharaoh NOT know (perhaps deliberately)? What did he refuse to do?
8. What did the Hebrews request to do in the desert? (5:3)
9. What threat upon themselves did Moses use to strengthen his request to Pharaoh? (5:3)
10. What effect did Pharaoh assume that Moses' request would have on the people? (5:4)
11. Where did Pharaoh think that Moses and Aaron ought to be? (5:4)
12. Did Pharaoh regard Moses and Aaron with any honor?
13. What order did Pharaoh give the Egyptian taskmasters to deliver to the Hebrews? (5:6-8)
14. How was straw used in brick making? (Look this up in some Bible dictionary.)
15. Did Pharaoh really believe the people were idle, or was this just an excuse to burden them more? (5:8)
16. What "vain" (or lying) words does Pharaoh speak of in 5:9?
17. Where were the people to get straw for brickmaking? (5:11)
18. How far did the people go looking for straw? (5:12)
19. What did the people gather instead of straw? (5:12)
20. Were the taskmasters patient? (5:13)
21. Who were beaten? Why? (5:14)
22. Who came and cried unto Pharaoh? (5:15) Why did they not have Moses go do their pleading?
23. By what title did the Israelite officers refer to themselves before Pharaoh? (5:15)

24. Where did the blame rest for making fewer bricks? (5:16)
 25. How did Pharaoh respond to the protest? (5:17-18)
 26. What did the Israelite officers realize after they heard Pharaoh's response? (5:19)
 27. Where were Moses and Aaron standing? (5:20)
 28. How did the Israelite officers feel toward Moses and Aaron? (5:21)
 29. Did the Israelite officers now believe that the LORD had sent Moses to deliver them? (5:21)
 30. Explain "Ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh." (5:21)
 31. Explain the figurative meaning of "put a sword in their hands to slay us." (5:21)
 32. What did Moses do after the Israelites criticized him? (5:22)
 33. How did Moses feel just then? (5:23)
 34. What questions did Moses ask of God? (5:23)
 35. How had Pharaoh's responses matched Moses' hopes and beliefs?
 36. What did the LORD tell Moses that he would see? (6:1)
 37. What sort of manner is "with a strong hand"? (6:1)
 38. Would Pharaoh *let* them go or drive them out? (6:1; Compare 12:31-33).
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EXODUS FIVE: RESISTANCE TO GOD'S MAN

- I. RESISTANCE FROM SINNERS (Pharaoh); 5:1-14.
 1. Willful resistance; 5:1-5.
 2. Cruel resistance; 5:6-14.
 3. Intractable resistance; 5:15-18.
- II. RESISTANCE FROM GOD'S PEOPLE; 5:15-21.
 1. Bypassing Moses; 5:15-19.
 2. Criticizing Moses; 5:20-21.

It is not surprising that God's man should get resistance from sinners and outsiders. But the resistance from God's people is unexpected and more painful. Nonetheless, every man of God experiences it.

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

1. *Whose authority did Moses mention first when he confronted Pharaoh?* (5:1)

He mentioned first the authority of Jehovah (Yahweh), the God of Israel. By mentioning Jehovah's name first of all, Moses and Aaron set the tone for the whole conflict that was to come (chs. 5-11). It was fundamentally a conflict between Jehovah God and the gods of Egypt (which included Pharaoh himself). Moses went in to Pharaoh in God's name, speaking as a prophet. Compare Amos 1:3; Jer. 2:2.

It took a lot of courage to go in before great Pharaoh and demand that he let Israel go. Moses had had plain warning that Pharaoh would NOT let them go (3:19).

Moses requests that they be allowed to hold a feast unto Jehovah in the wilderness. God had told Moses to request permission to keep such a feast (or sacrifice; see 3:18; 10:9). Israel had to go into the wilderness for the sacrifice, because they would sacrifice animals sacred to the Egyptians (and almost EVERY animal was sacred to the Egyptians). This could infuriate the Egyptians like the slaughter of a cow would upset a Hindu mob. See 8:25-27.

2. *Who actually confronted Pharaoh?* (5:1)

Only Moses and Aaron. The elders had been instructed to go in with Moses (3:18). Where were they? The Jewish *Midrash*¹ says, very plausibly, that they stole furtively away, singly and in pairs.

This confrontation occurred somewhere in the Nile delta area, even though the capital of XVIII dynasty Egypt was in far-off Thebes to the south. XVIII dynasty kings frequently visited the important Nile delta area.² The fact that Pharaoh could communicate the "same day" (5:6) indicates that Pharaoh was near the Israelites, who lived by the delta.

¹Amos W. Miller, *Understanding the Midrash* (New York; Jonathan David, 1965), p. 159.

²G. L. Archer, *A Survey of O. T. Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), pp. 215-216.

3. *Was Israel's request to Pharaoh unreasonable?*

Not at all. Every nation presents sacrifices and worship to its gods. Work-journals belonging to the New Kingdom period (time of Moses) in Egypt have furnished, among other reasons for absenteeism, the offering of sacrifices by workmen to their gods.³

Pharaoh's refusal shows his complete lack of consideration for people, and his lack of fear of God. By refusing a small request, his real heart-nature was exposed and his conduct condemned. His heart did not need very much hardening to be totally solid!

Note that Moses refers to the God of *Israel*. This is one of the earliest references to Israel as a people, or nation. Previously, *Israel* is used only as a man's (Jacob's) name; hereafter, it is mostly the name of the people as a whole.

4. *What did Pharaoh know about Jehovah? (5:2)*

Perhaps nothing. He asks, "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken to his voice?"

Nonetheless, it seems very doubtful that Pharaoh was completely ignorant of Jehovah. The facts of how the Hebrews' God had saved Egypt in the days of Joseph were not secrets. Most likely Pharaoh was wilfully ignorant. Pharaoh regarded himself as a god.⁴ So he disregarded any God other than Egypt's gods.

Pharaoh was soon to regret saying, "Who is Jehovah?" He was to become VERY well acquainted with the power of Jehovah. Sennacherib of Assyria in later years asked a similar question about Jehovah, with equally disastrous results (II Kings 18:35).

Unbelieving critics argue that it had been only a short time (a few months) before when Jehovah revealed himself to the Hebrews by the name Jehovah.⁵ By this idea Pharaoh could

³A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), pp. 124f; quoted in R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the O. T.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 577.

⁴Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁵*Broadman Bible Commentary* (1969), p. 339.

not have known the name since the Hebrews had only recently been introduced to Him. We feel that this idea goes against the Bible's teachings. See notes on 6:2.

In spite of Pharaoh's harsh refusal of Moses' request, God later graciously told the Israelites, "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian" (Deut. 23:7).

5. *How did Moses reinforce his request that Pharaoh let Israel go?* (5:3)

He declared that the God of the Hebrews had "met" them, and demanded that they sacrifice unto Him, lest he fall on them with a pestilence (disease) or the sword (war). They faced danger if they did not obey God. See notes on 3:18.

Even though Moses' request was strong, it was rather politely worded: "Let us go, we pray thee."

Again, we emphasize that Moses was under no illusions that Pharaoh would grant their request. It was only their first barrage in the assault on Pharaoh.

6. *How did Pharaoh regard the Hebrews?* (5:3)

He probably regarded them only as one of the assorted Semitic peoples who had at various times in history entered into and "squatted" in Egypt. The Hyksos had been such a people. Such peoples were a threat to the "native" population. The Egyptians contemptuously referred to them as sandcrossers. They are also called the Habiri (or Habiru, or Khapiru, or Apiru), a name applied to peoples in various places who existed outside the normal establishments of society, somewhat like our "Gypsies."

7. *How did Pharaoh regard Moses and Aaron?* (5:4)

He regarded them as nothing more than slaves who ought to be out working with the rest of their people, at "your burdens."

Pharaoh had apparently already learned of the meeting of the Israelites with Moses and Aaron (4:29). This had created considerable stir among the Egyptian rulers, because the Israelites had taken time off from their toils to meet with Moses.

8. *Who were the "people of the land"?* (5:5)

Apparently they were the Hebrews. The exact implications of this expression are not clear, but it is obviously not complimentary. Perhaps Pharaoh refers to "people of the *land*" as contrasted with the city-dwelling "high-class" Egyptians. The people of the land were the working-class serfs, the riff-raff.

Or it may be that Pharaoh spoke of them as his private property. He owned all the land (Gen. 47:20), and they were the "people of the land," people who were permanently associated with the land use.

In any case, the large number of these people was disturbing to Pharaoh, just as their numbers long before had disturbed an earlier ruler of Egypt (Ex. 1:9).

9. *How did the Egyptians feel about idleness? (5:5)*

They did not tolerate it in slaves. A painting in an Egyptian tomb dated about 1450 B.C. (the very time of the oppression!) shows slaves making bricks while their supervisor watches with a stick in his hand. In the writing along the side of the painting the taskmaster is quoted as saying, "The rod is in my hand; be not idle!"⁶

10. *To whom is Ex. 5:5 addressed?*

It is addressed to "ye," apparently to Moses and Aaron, just as is 5:4. However, it sounds somewhat like a monologue, as if Pharaoh were thinking out loud while talking to Moses.

Martin Noth claims that verses 4 and 5 are remains of two distinct source documents, giving two different accounts of Israel's confrontation with Pharaoh. He says that verse 4 is a fragment of E. . . . inserted into the context of J.⁷ It seems to us that there is no clash at all between the verses, and that verse 5 is only somewhat of a repetition for emphasis by Pharaoh.

11. *What three classes of officials were over the Hebrew workers?*

(1) "Taskmasters" (Heb. *sare missim*), Egyptian officers

⁶Ira M. Price, E. L. Carlson, O. R. Sellers, *The Monuments and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1958), p. 168.

⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 53.

apparently over large labor gangs. (1:11)

(2) "Taskmasters" (Heb. *nogesim*). Literally, the title means oppressors; it seems to refer to Egyptian supervisors of smaller work crews. (5:6, 14)

(3) "Officers" (Heb. *shoterim*). Literally, the title means writers, scribes, officers, leaders. It seems to refer to Hebrew workers assigned to crews with them. Perhaps they were responsible to turn in written reports of their productivity each day.

12. *When did Pharaoh issue new work orders?* (5:6).

"The same day!"

13. *What new work-order did Pharaoh issue?* (5:7-11).

He ordered that the Hebrew slaves go find their own straw for brickmaking, but make just as many bricks as they did when straw had been brought to them. Obviously specific daily quotas of bricks had been assigned to be made.

Pharaoh's response was harsh and unreasonable. For requesting a three-day holiday for religious sacrifices, the people are sentenced to much heavier work on an apparently permanent basis. Probably Pharaoh sensed that their request was only the beginning of bigger aspirations.

14. *What did the straw serve for in brickmaking?* (5:7, 12)

Egyptian mud sticks together well enough that straw is not actually needed to hold mud bricks together. Therefore, bricks made without straw are found in Egypt, as well as bricks with straw. However, the straw contains an enzyme that makes the mud much easier to mix and handle.⁸ Not having straw would make the Hebrews' work much harder and more abrasive.

These mud bricks work well in a dry land like Egypt, where absence of rainfall prevents houses from being softened and washed away.

15. *Why did Pharaoh accuse Israel of being idle?* (5:8)

Because he was cruel, and was looking for something to

⁸Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press, 1972), pp. 91-92.

accuse them of, so he could oppress them. They had not really been idle, except for the one meeting with Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh still said they were idle even after the Israelite workmen themselves told him their true situation (5:16-17). This shows that his charge of idleness was only an excuse to treat them cruelly.

16. *How did Pharaoh regard the words of Moses and Aaron?* (5:9)

He regarded them as vain, or lying, words, which offered false hopes to the people. Pharaoh seems to have heard indirectly of God's promise to Moses to deliver Israel. By overburdening the people, he attempted to crush their spirits, remove all hope from them, and destroy all their confidence in Moses and Aaron.

AMENHOTEP II, (1448-1422 B.C.), Pharaoh of the exodus.

We can understand Pharaoh's reactions to Moses much better when we have read the unbearably boastful writings by Amenhotep II, telling of his exploits as a sportsman.

Now, further his majesty appeared as king as a goodly youth. When he had matured and completed eighteen years on his thighs in valor, he was one who knew every task of Montu [the god of war]: there was no one like him on the field of battle. He was one who knew horses; there was not his like in this numerous army. There was not one therein who could draw his bow. He could not be approached in running.

Strong of arms, one who did not weary when he took the oar, he rowed at the stern of his falcon-boat as the stroke for two hundred men. When there was a pause, after they had attained half an iter's course [probably five-eighths of a mile], they were weak, their bodies were limp, they could not draw a breath, whereas his majesty was (still) strong under his oar of twenty cubits in its length [about 34 feet!].

.....

He drew three hundred stiff bows in comparing the work of the craftsmen of them, in order to distinguish the ignorant from the wise. When he had just come from doing this which I have called to your attention, he entered into his northern garden and found there had been set up for him four targets of Asiatic copper of one palm in their thickness [A little less than 3 inches], with twenty cubits between one post and its fellow. Then his majesty appeared in a chariot like Montu in his power. He grasped his bow and gripped four arrows at the same time. So he rode northward, shooting at them like Montu in his regalia. His arrows had come out on the back thereof while he was attacking another post. It was really a deed which had never been done nor heard of. . . .⁹

17. *What did the Israelites use for straw?* (5:12)

They used stubble. The long clean wheat straw that had been cut with sickles, tied into bundles, and probably kept in barns, was no longer brought to them for brickmaking. Instead they had to go out and pull up stubby ends of wheat stems attached to the roots still in the ground. Along with wheat and barley stubble would be all kinds of field rubbish, weeds, twigs, etc. These had to be uprooted, carried home, cleaned, sorted, and chopped.

The presence of stubble indicates this occurred after the barley and wheat harvest, near the end of April, or early May. At this season the pestilential sand-wind blows over Egypt, often for days on end. The Israelites' sufferings must have been intense! Why would they ever at later times have longed to return to Egypt (Ex. 16:3)?

18. *Could the Israelites fulfill the heavier work demands upon them?* (5:14)

By no means! Thereupon the Hebrew "straw bosses" were beaten with sticks by the Egyptians, because their crews had

⁹From "Pharaoh as a Sportsman," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), p. 244. Used by permission.

not made the daily assigned quotas of bricks. The Egyptians had set this up deliberately. The impossibly difficult work quotas were just the excuse for the persecution they intended to lay on them.

19. *Who went to Pharaoh to protest the beatings?* (5:15-16)

The Israelite officers themselves went. They took matters into their own hands. Moses had failed initially to get them delivered, and so they went to Pharaoh seeking fair treatment. Observe that the Israelites meekly referred to themselves three times as "thy servants."

20. *Whom did the Israelites blame for their troubles?* (5:16)

They blamed Pharaoh's taskmasters, "thine own people." This was only partly true: the fault was really in Pharaoh himself. His people were only following his orders.

The Greek O.T. (LXX) reads in 5:16, ". . . thy servants have been scourged; thou wilt therefore injure (or deal unjustly with) thy people." Both this translation and that of the Hebrew Bible show how submissive the Israelites felt.

21. *What did the Israelites realize about their situation after their conference with Pharaoh?* (5:19)

"They did see that they were in an evil situation." It impresses us that they were extremely slow in figuring this out. The root of their trouble was Pharaoh himself, not his taskmasters. Perhaps in their desperation they had believed what they wanted to believe, that surely Pharaoh would help them when he knew the truth about them. That hope was now dashed. To whom could they turn now for help? They did not turn to God. Instead they turned to bitterness (5:21; 6:9).

22. *Where did the Israelites meet Moses and Aaron?* (5:20)

Moses and Aaron were standing in the road from Pharaoh's house, evidently having stationed themselves there, probably expecting to hear a more hopeful report.

23. *What use of Jehovah's name did Israel make toward Moses?* (5:21)

They called on Jehovah to judge (condemn, punish, or damn) Moses and Aaron. Their statement is nearly a curse.

What perversity this shows! While calling upon Jehovah to

judge and punish Moses, they show by their complaining that they have no confidence in God or His power to save.

24. *What effects did the Israelites feel that Moses' meeting with Pharaoh had had upon them?* (5:21)

(1) "You have made us stink in the eyes (nostrils?) of Pharaoh. *Savor*, or smell, here means reputation or standing. Similar expressions can be found in Gen. 34:30; II Sam. 10:6; I Sam. 27:12. In truth, the Israelites did not have a very good "savor" before Pharaoh even before Moses arrived; they were already enslaved then (2:23-24).

(2) "You have put a sword in their hands to slay us." You have given them the provocation and excuse to harm us.

These first accusations of the Israelites against Moses were only the beginning of a torrent of such objections to his leadership that would later grieve Moses. See Ex. 14:11; 15:24; 16:2; and on and on.

25. *What did Moses do when the Israelites rejected him?* (5:22)

He *returned* unto Jehovah. This expression is beautiful in its simplicity, implying constant communion with God. God's man must have such closeness with God constantly.

Then he *prayed*, asking God why He had done evil to the Israelites. Moses' words are not critical, but words of inquiry and prayer. They spring from faith instead of doubt. But his words are urgent: "Why did you ever send me?"

By the word *evil* Moses referred to calamity, misfortune, or other adversities, rather than to moral evil. Compare Gen. 43:6; Num. 20:15; Job 24:20.

Moses' prayer here is the first of many prayers he uttered after the times when the people challenged his leadership. Compare Ex. 32:1, 11; Numbers 11:11.

26. *What answer did God give to Moses' prayer?* (6:1)

"You shall see what I will do to Pharaoh . . . he shall drive Israel out of his land."

"By a strong hand" means "with a powerful force" and "with urgency." It refers to Pharaoh's hand, rather than to God's hand. God indeed laid His hand heavily upon Pharaoh (7:4-5; 13:3). This broke Pharaoh's resistance, so that

Pharaoh himself thrust Israel out of his land (See Ex. 12:33, 39.)

27. *How do we relate to Moses' experiences?*

Few people can read Exodus chapters 1-6 and fail to see therein a reflection of their own experiences with God and His people. In Moses we see our own aspirations and disappointments, faith and fears, hopes and hesitancy, dreams and despair. Moses as God's man is a picture of every man of God.

THE TEXT OF EXODUS

TRANSLATION

6 And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pha-raoh: for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

(2) And God spake unto Mo-ses, and said unto him, I am Je-ho-vah: (3) and I appeared unto Abraham, unto I-saac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name Je-ho-vah I was not known to them. (4) And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Ca-na-an, the land of their sojournings, wherein they sojourned. (5) And moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Is-ra-el, whom the E-gyp-tians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. (6) Wherefore say unto the children of Is-ra-el, I am Je-ho-vah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the E-gyp-tians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an out-stretched arm, and with great judgments: (7) and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am Je-ho-vah your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the E-gyp-tians. (8) And I will bring you in unto the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to I-saac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Je-ho-vah. (9) And Mo-ses spake so unto the children of Is-ra-el: but they hearkened not unto Mo-ses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

(10) And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses, saying, (11) Go in, speak unto Pha-raoh king of E-gypt, that he let the children of Is-ra-el go out of his land. (12) And Mo-ses spake before

Je-ho-vah, saying, Behold, the children of Is-ra-el have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pha-raoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? (13) And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses and unto Aar-on, and gave them a charge unto the children of Is-ra-el, and unto Pha-raoh king of E-gypt, to bring the children of Is-ra-el out of the land of E-gypt.

(14) These are the heads of their fathers' houses. The sons of Reu-ben the first-born of Is-ra-el: Ha-noch, and Pal-lu, Hez-ron, and Eac-mi; these are the families of Reu-ben. (15) And the sons of Sim-e-on: Jem-u-el, and Ja-min, and O-had, and Ja-chin, and Zo-har, and Sha-ul the son of a Ca-naan-i-tish woman; these are the families of Sim-e-on. (16) And these are the names of the sons of Le-vi according to their generations: Ger-shon, and Ko-hath, and Me-ra-ri; and the years of the life of Le-vi were a hundred thirty and seven years. (17) The sons of Ger-shon: Lib-ni and Shlm-e-l, according to their families. (18) And the sons of Ko-hath: Am-ram, and Iz-har, and He-bron, and Uz-zi-el; and the years of the life of Ko-hath were a hundred thirty and three years. (19) And the sons of Me-ra-ri: Mah-li and Mu-shi. These are the families of the Le-vites according to their generations. (20) And Am-ram took him Joch-e-bed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aar-on and Mo-ses: and the years of the life of Am-ram were a hundred and thirty and seven years. (21) And the sons of Iz-har: Ko-rah, and Ne-pheg, and Zich-ri. (22) And the sons of Uz-zi-el: Mish-a-el, and El-za-phan, and Sith-ri. (23) And Aar-on took him E-lish-e-ba, the daughter of Am-min-a-dab, the sister of Nah-shon, to wife; and she bare him Na-dab and A-bi-hu, E-le-a-zar and Ith-a-mar. (24) And the sons of Ko-rah: As-sir, and El-ka-nah, and A-bi-a-saph; these are the families of the Ko-rah-ites. (25) And E-le-a-zar Aar-on's son took him one of the daughters of Pu-ti-el to wife; and she bare him Phin-e-has. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Le-vites according to their families. (26) These are that Aar-on and Mo-ses, to whom Je-ho-vah said, Bring out the children of Is-ra-el from the land of E-gypt according to their hosts. (27) These are they that spake to Pha-raoh king of E-gypt, to bring out the children of Is-ra-el from E-gypt: these are that

Moses and Aaron.

(28) And it came to pass on the day when Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses in the land of E-gypt (29) that Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses, saying, I am Je-ho-vah: speak thou unto Pha-raoh king of E-gypt all that I speak unto thee. (30) And Mo-ses said before Je-ho-vah, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pha-raoh hearken unto me?

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER SIX
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After careful reading propose a brief title or topic for ch. six.
2. Why did God keep telling Moses "I am the LORD (Jehovah)"? (6:2, 6, 8, 29)
3. By what name was God known to Abraham and Isaac? (6:3; Gen. 17:1)
4. By what name was God NOT known to them?
5. Didn't Abraham really know the name *Jehovah* (LORD)? See Gen. 22:14; 18:14; 15:7.
6. How can we explain Ex. 6:3 if Abraham actually used the name *Jehovah*? Compare Ezekiel 39:7; Jer. 16:21; Isaiah 52:6.
7. What had God established with Abraham and Isaac? (6:4)
8. What did God intend to give to Abraham and Isaac? (6:4)
9. How were Abraham and Isaac "strangers" (sojourners) in the land? See Acts 7:4-5; Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16.
10. What had God heard? (6:5)
11. What did God remember? (6:5)
12. What significance would there be to Israel in God's saying, "I am the LORD"? 6:6-7; (Compare Isa. 49:23)
13. What does *redeem* mean in "I will redeem you"? (Ex. 6:6)
14. What is implied in God's arm being "outstretched"?
15. When did God formally take Israel to him as His people? (6:7; Ex. 19:1, 5-6; Deut. 4:20; 29:13)
16. Did Israel quickly sense the significance of the fact that the

LORD was their God? (6:7-8)

17. How strongly had God affirmed His intention to give the land to Abraham and Isaac? (6:8)
18. Did Israel accept God's words which Moses delivered unto them? Why or why not? (6:9)
19. Why did the LORD in 6:11 repeat His command to Moses to go in and speak unto Pharaoh? (Compare 4:22, 23; 5:1)
20. What objection did Moses give against going back to Pharaoh? (6:12)
21. What is meant by *uncircumcised* lips? (Compare Ex. 4:10; Acts 7:51)
22. What charge did the LORD give Moses and Aaron? (6:13). What is a charge?
23. Do you think from 6:10-13 that Moses was rather reluctant?
24. What is the purpose or point of inserting all of the genealogies of 6:14-25 into the story right here?
25. Which three sons of Jacob have descendants listed in 6:14-16?
26. Can you suggest any possible reason(s) for listing the descendants of only three of Jacob's sons in 6:14-16?
27. Whose son married a Canaanite woman? (6:15)
28. Was the chosen family at this time prohibited from marrying outside of their family? (Gen. 24:3-4; 28:1-2; Compare Ex. 34:11-16)
29. Name the three sons of Levi. (6:16)
30. What were the Levites later appointed to do? (Numbers 3:6-8, 12)
31. Who was Amram? (6:18, 20)
32. Who was Izhar the brother of? (6:18)
33. Who was the first son of Izhar, as listed in 6:21?
34. How was Korah related to Moses and Aaron? (6:18-21)
35. What was Korah later famous (or infamous) for? (Numbers 16:1-3, 32; Jude 11)
36. Who was Amram's wife? (6:20)
37. Whom did Aaron marry? (6:23)
38. Of what tribe was Aaron's wife? (6:23; Numbers 1:7)
39. Name Aaron's four sons. (6:23)

40. Who was Aaron's grandson? (6:25)
 41. What verse (in this sixth chapter) does 6:26 refer back to?
 42. What thought connection may there be between the genealogies of 6:14-25 and the emphatic references to Moses and Aaron in 6:26-27? Try to suggest some possible connection.
 43. According to (or by) what groupings were the Israelites to be brought out of Egypt? (6:26; Num. 1:3; Num. 10:11-14, 18; Ex. 7:4)
 44. What emphatic declaration did God make about Himself in 6:29?
 45. What was Moses to speak unto Pharaoh?
 46. What does the repetition in 6:12 and 6:30 suggest about Moses' willingness?
 47. Is there a sharp thought break between chapters 6 and 7? Does 6:28—7:7 seem like one paragraph to you?
-

EXODUS SIX: STRENGTHENING OF GOD'S MAN

Moses surely needed strengthening after the resistance described in chapter five. How was God's man strengthened?

- I. By God's name; 6:2-3, 6, 29.
 - II. By God's promises; 6:1, 6-8
 - III. By God's covenant; 6:4-5.
 - IV. By God's command; 6:10-13, 28-29.
 - V. By past examples (family associations); 6:14-27.
-

EXODUS SIX: STRENGTH FOR SERVICE

EXODUS SIX: THREE PRECIOUS P's

- I. Promise of God; 6:1, 6.
 - II. Power of God; 6:6.
 - III. People of God; 6:7, 14-26.
-

GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL (EX. 6:6-8)

1. I will bring you out; 6:6.
 2. I will rid you of bondage.
 3. I will redeem you.
 4. I will take you for my people; 6:7.
 5. I will be to you a God.
 6. I will bring you into the land; 6:8.
 7. I will give the land to you for a possession.
-

GOD'S COMMITMENT TO HIS PEOPLE

1. He redeems from oppressions.
 2. He takes us as His.
 3. He gives us an inheritance.
-

I AM THE LORD (JEHOVAH)

1. Jehovah, the covenant-maker (6:4).
 2. Jehovah, the cry-hearer (6:5).
 3. Jehovah, the deliverer (6:6).
 4. Jehovah, the receiver of His people (6:7).
-

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

1. *What is Exodus chapter 6 all about?*

The chapter gives the record of how God strengthened and reassured Moses. Moses was downcast after both Pharaoh and the people of Israel had rejected him (Ch. 5). Ch. six tells how God strengthened him and confirmed him in his labors.

2. *How do unbelieving critics interpret chapter 6?*

They regard it as a different account of the commission of Moses by a different author (called P, for priestly) than the

one who wrote 3:1—6:1 (called J, for Jehovist). P supposedly lived after the Babylonian captivity and J in the ninth or tenth century before Christ. They maintain that P knew nothing of Moses' call in Midian, but rather thought he was called in Egypt. Frankly, this shocks us.

Even a critic as extreme as Martin Noth admits that chapter six now *appears* (emphasis ours) as a confirmation of the commission previously given to Moses, and an invitation to make new demands upon Pharaoh.¹ It surely does so appear! But he is confident that he can see by the wording that really chapter six is an independent treatment of the one and only call and commissioning of Moses.

To us it is more natural to regard chapter six as a continuation of the story given in ch. five. Also to divide Exodus into several contradictory sources (J, E, P) is to deny that Moses wrote the books of the law, as Christ affirmed that he did (John 7:19; 1:17).

3. *How would God's saying "I am the LORD (Jehovah)" help Moses? (6:2)*

It would help because by that name all the power, permanence, potential, promises, and performances of God were brought back to their minds.

The name *Jehovah* signifies the eternal one, the one who causes things to happen. See notes on Ex. 3:14-15.

In this chapter God repeatedly reassured Moses and Israel by saying, "I am Jehovah" (6:2, 7, 8, 29). "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." (Prov. 18:10)

Centuries later in the time of the Babylonian captivity God was still reassuring Israel by saying "I am Jehovah." (Ezek. 39:7; 38:23).

If the name of the LORD Jehovah does not give us some reassuring thoughts, we need to study and meditate some more concerning it.

4. *By what name was God known to Abraham, Isaac, and*

¹*Op. cit.*, p. 58.

Jacob? (6:3)

As God Almighty (Hebrew, *El Shaddai*). This name is specially prominent in Gen. 17:1, where God gave the covenant of circumcision to Abraham. It also appears in Gen. 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3. The Greek O.T. translates it as *Pantocrator*, meaning the Almighty. The Latin gives it as *Deus omnipotens*, meaning God almighty.

The name *El* means mighty or powerful one. In its plural form *elohim* it is the most common word for *God* in the O.T. A variant form *Eloah* also occurs (Deut. 32:15; Ps. 18:31; Job 3:4 and many other places in Job).

The most ancient meaning of *Shaddai* is quite uncertain. Some connect it with the Assyrian word *shadu*, meaning mountain.² This could be the origin of the word, without its preserving any polytheistic implications, such as that *El Shaddai* was once a mountain worshipped as a god. Psalm 36:6 speaks of God's righteousness as being like a great mountain.

5. *Did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob really know that God's name was Jehovah (LORD)?*

Certainly they knew it. See Gen. 12:8; 14:22; 15:8; 21:33; 24:3; 26:22; 27:27; 28:16; 49:18. In Gen. 22:14 Abraham called the place where he almost sacrificed his son Isaac *JEHOVAH-JIREH*, meaning Jehovah will see, or provide.

In fact, Gen. 4:26 indicates that men began to call upon the name of Jehovah back in the time of Enosh, the great-grandson of Adam.

How then can Ex. 6:2 say that God was not known to them by his name Jehovah?

The explanation seems to be that to God knowing that his name is Jehovah means knowing what that name implies. It implies knowing his eternal nature, and how He will deliver his people.

Abraham knew Jehovah by name; but he never lived to learn the glorious Jehovah-type fulfillment of His promises or

²*Broadman Bible Commentary* (1969), p. 342. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

how He delivered His people. Even we do not really know a person when we know only what his name is.

That this is the true explanation of how Abraham could use the name *Jehovah* and still not know the name *Jehovah* is indicated by later passages, such as Ezek. 39:7 and Jer. 16:21 and Isa. 52:6. These passages were written centuries after the name *Jehovah* was well known. But even then God said, "I will cause them to know . . . that my name is *Jehovah*" (Jer. 16:21). Also "My holy name will I make known in the midst of my people Israel" (Ezek. 39:7).

In our language and idiom we do not speak of people as not knowing our names just because they do not know our works and personalities. But God so speaks of His name. It is for us to adjust our thinking to God's manner of speaking, rather than to assert that the Bible is contradictory. Critics assert oftentimes that previous references (in Genesis and Ex.) to the name *Jehovah* were from one source document (J), and that the Priestly source here at 6:2 introduces the name *Jehovah* for the first time. We find this unverified and unacceptable.

6. *What had God promised in His covenant with Israel spoken to Abraham?* (6:4, 8)

He promised to multiply their number and give them the land of Canaan. See Gen. 15:18; 17:4, 7, 8; 12:7; 26:3; 28:4, 13; 35:11-12. Israel's occupation of Canaan is always seen in the Bible as a fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. But on the other side, the driving out of the Canaanites is seen as God's punishment for their wickedness (Gen. 15:16).³

7. *What did God remember?* (6:5)

He remembered His covenant with Israel spoken to Abraham. To say that He remembered does not imply that God had previously forgotten. He was remembering now in the sense that He was now starting to ACT in fulfilling His covenant. Faithfulness to covenant promises is one of God's

³Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

most consistent qualities. How greatly this should reassure us who are under such NEW covenant promises as Heb. 8:12!

8. *What seven great promises did God give to Israel? (6:6-8)*

See p. 141 for the list of these promises. In these seven great promised acts, Israel would see what the name *Jehovah* meant. The name *Jehovah* should bring to their minds the whole list of God's acts in the exodus experiences.

The *I* in "I am Jehovah" is emphatic.

Jesus may also be called Jehovah (LORD), as well as the father is called by that name. Compare Isa. 40:3 and Mark 1:1, 3. All the significance of the name *Jehovah God* to the Jews should be felt by Christians in the mighty name of JESUS-JEHOVAH.

9. *What does "redeem" mean? (6:6; Compare 15:6)*

Basically it means to buy back something that has been forfeited or sold. It means to act as a redeemer-kinsman (Heb. *goel*), one who saves some destitute relative from danger, debt, or widowhood. Boaz was the redeemer-kinsman of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 2:20; 3:9; Lev. 25:25). Later the meaning of *redeem* was broadened to refer to deliverance from dangers of various types.

To *redeem* therefore means to deliver people from unbearable troubles. The way God redeemed Israel is an illustration of the way we Christians are redeemed (I Peter 1:18; Eph. 1:7). God did not spare Israel from all their troubles and hardships in the desert, but He did deliver them from all intolerable difficulties, those which were beyond their power to face. Similarly we cannot expect to escape all tribulation and persecution. But God does redeem us from the sin, death, and distresses that are beyond our ability to conquer.

10. *What kind of arm is an "outstretched" arm? (6:6)*

It is a visible, powerful, and active arm, like the arm of a warrior arming for battle. The idea of God's stretched-out arm and His great judgments reappears later in Ex. 13:3 and Deut. 5:15.

11. *What would God take Israel unto Himself to be? (6:7)*

To be His people! Compare Ex. 19:5-6; 29:45-46; Gen. 17:8;

Deut. 4:20; 7:6; 29:13. Israel was a stiff-necked rebellious people. God's choice of Israel was an act of incredible grace and forbearance.

The actual time and place when God took Israel as His people was at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:5). This Sinai covenant was reconfirmed and settled in the plains of Moab, just before Israel entered the promised land (Deut. 28:9; 29:1, 12-13).

The result of God's taking Israel for His people would be to cause them to know that He was Jehovah their God. This thought about knowing God's name was a strong and repeated emphasis by God (6:2, 6; Isa. 49:23).

At the present time we Christians are the people of God, whether we be Jews or Gentiles (Eph. 1:4; II Cor. 6:18; Rev. 21:7).

12. *What was God's heritage to Israel?* (6:8)

The heritage was the land which He swore to give to Abraham (Compare Neh. 9:15). A heritage is a possession, often one received as an inheritance. Interestingly, the term *heritage* is applied in Deut. 33:4 to the law (or Torah) itself.

13. *How did Israel respond to Moses' words of reassurance?* (6:9)

They would not hearken or pay attention to him. Because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage they were not receptive to any optimistic promises. *Anguish of spirit* is literally *shortness of spirit* (or *breath*). Their longsuffering had shrunk to shortness of spirit. Israel's vital energy and hope was shortened and sapped.

14. *What order did God give to Moses in his despondency?* (6:10-11, 13)

God told him to go in and speak to Pharaoh and demand that he let Israel go. God's order to Moses would strengthen his weak spirit. Often a good "kick in the pants" is exactly what hesitant men need. Note the reemphasis of the order in 6:13.

Note also that the demands upon Pharaoh have gone up. Previously it was only for permission to go and sacrifice (5:1). Now Moses is to ask that Israel be released (6:11, 13).

15. *What are uncircumcised lips?* (6:12, 30)

Lips seems to be a figure of speech meaning speaking ability. Uncircumcised lips are lips that are not adequate and capable of saying the words necessary to get a needed job done.

Similarly we read of uncircumcised hearts and ears, that is, ears and hearts that will not hear and comprehend (Acts 7:51).

The root application in the word *uncircumcised* refers, of course, to the natural fleshly state of the male member. In the ages before Christ came, to be uncircumcised was to be outside of God's covenant promises to Abraham's descendants (Gen. 17:10-14). By broadening the use of the term, it came to be applied to several inadequate, incompetent, unqualified aspects of our being.

NOTE: The Biblical description of Moses at this point (6:12) is not very flattering; but it is realistic. In significant contrast to the Biblical record about Moses, the Jewish historian Josephus⁴ says that Moses did not let his courage sink for the king's threatenings; nor did he abate of his zeal on account of the Hebrews' complaints. How different is the truthful inspired Biblical account from the flattering propaganda version of history by Josephus!

16. *Why is a genealogical list (6:14-25) inserted into the history at this point?*

To be very candid, no one knows why with absolute certainty.

Unbelieving critics see it only as evidence of the existence of several poorly-harmonized source documents lying behind our book of Exodus. Martin Noth⁵ says 6:13-30 is a secondary insertion which serves in the Priestly author's view to introduce and exalt the priest Aaron as the older brother of Moses. Believers can point out that Aaron was introduced long before (in 4:14, a verse ascribed to J, another author!).

⁴*Antiquities*, II, xiii, 4.

⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 58.

Also, in the genealogy Aaron really receives little more stress than Amram (6:18, 20) or even Korah (6:21-24).

But what can believers say to account for the genealogy here? Ex. 6:27 indicates that the genealogy is to highlight and identify the persons Moses and Aaron at this dramatic moment in their history.

Also we may conjecture that at this discouraging time in Moses' career, he himself may have recalled his family tree, a family that had long before received God's promises through their forefather Abraham. This would be great encouragement to Moses. How could he (or we) forsake the God and faith of the forefathers?

God himself may have brought thoughts about his family tree to Moses' mind just then (Compare John 14:26). Therefore, when Moses later penned Exodus, he recorded here an abbreviated genealogy, but one given in sufficient detail to make its encouraging force in his life obvious. The genealogy is certainly too abbreviated to have been intended as a full family record.

17. *What is presented in the genealogy?*

First the names of Jacob's (Israel's) three oldest sons (Reuben, Simeon, and Levi) and their immediate descendants are given (6:14-16). Then the descendants of Levi are traced on through several generations, with special attention given to those personages who will be prominent in the later history of Israel's wilderness wanderings and the conquest of Canaan.

18. *What are "heads of fathers' houses"?* (6:14)

This is a technical term for clans, or families;⁶ or for a collection of families called by the name of a common ancestor.⁷

19. *What is related of Reuben's descendants?* (6:14)

Only his sons' names. Their names here are identical to (and possibly transcribed from) Gen. 46:9. The Reubenites

⁶J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1969), p. 234.

⁷Keil and Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

are also listed in Num. 26:5-9 and I Chron. 5:1ff.

20. *What is related of Simeon's descendants?* (6:15)

Only his sons' names and the fact that one son (Shaul) was the son of a Canaanite woman. The list here is like that of Gen. 46:10, and is similar to those in Num. 26:12-14 and I Chron. 4:24ff.

The marriage of Simeon to a Canaanite woman speaks loudly about the strong tendency of the Israelites to enter such faith-destroying marriages. These were later strictly forbidden by God through Moses (Ex. 34:15-16; Deut. 7:3-4). The idolatry which later developed among the Simeonites (Num. 25:14), and their great decline in population (Num. 1:23; 26:14) suggests an inherent weakness in the tribe's character.

21. *Who were the three sons of Levi?* (6:16)

Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Memorize these names now! These were fathers of large families that later had specific assignments in transporting and caring for the tabernacle in the wilderness. See Numbers 3:14ff.

A comment in *Preacher's Homiletic Commentary* about these genealogies is good: These genealogies are like great stone bluffs, sterile looking, but there is a spring at their feet.

22. *Are there gaps in the genealogy given for Levi?* (6:16-20)

Yes. This is clearly indicated by the fact that all three of Levi's sons had been born before Jacob's family settled into Egypt (Gen. 46:11); then, Amram, the son of Levi's son, lived only 137 years; and Amram's son Moses was only eighty years old at the time of the exodus. There are not enough years in the life spans of these men to stretch across the Egyptian bondage period of 430 years (Ex. 12:40).

Even more conclusive proof of gaps in the genealogy of Levi is the fact that at Mt. Sinai, less than two years after the time of Ex. 6, the Kohathites (which included Moses) numbered 8600 men and boys (Num. 3:28ff). These Kohathites are divided into four groups named after Kohath's four sons, including Amram. This would indicate that there were about 2147 ($8600 \div 4$) Amramites. But Amram the

father of Moses had only two sons (Moses and Aaron), and these had less than ten descendants at Mt. Sinai. So apparently the numerous Amramites are descendants of the previous Amram, Levi's grandson, and not the later father of Moses, also named Amram.

23. *Who were the sons of Kohath?* (6:18)

They were (1) Amram (not the father of Moses, but a previous Amram); (2) Izhar, the father (or, more probably, a previous ancestor) of the infamous Korah, who led a rebellion against Moses (Num. 16:1); (3) Hebron; and (4) Uzziel. Of the latter two we know little (Compare 6:22). Uzziel's sons helped bury Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:4). See also Num. 3:30.

24. *Who were Moses' father and mother?* (6:20)

Amram and Jochebed, his father's aunt. See notes on Ex. 2:1.

Jochebed's name means "Jehovah (Jah) is (my) glory."⁸ This shows that the name *Jehovah* (or Yahweh) was indeed used by the Hebrews before Ex. 6:3. And therefore the imaginary *P* source (to which critics ascribe Ex. 6) did know and use Jehovah's name before the Ex. 6:3 "revelation." Critics ascribe all earlier uses of the name *Jehovah* to another source. Their knowledge of unknowable things passes all bounds.

25. *Who were Aaron's wife and children?* (6:23)

His wife was Elishaba, better known as Elizabeth (from the LXX). She was of the tribe of Judah. Her brother Nahshon was one of the princes of the tribe of Judah, so she would be a princess (I Chron. 2:10). Elishaba was a sister of a direct ancestor (Nahshon) of Christ. Her father was Amminadab, and her grandfather was named Ram (Matt. 1:4; Luke 3:33; Ruth 1:18-20).

Aaron's children were Nadab and Abihu and Eleazar and

⁸Hertz, *op. cit.*, p. 234. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 87, affirms a differing view, that the name *Jochebed* means only "May he (the unnamed god!) glorify." Hertz is a Jewish commentator, and his interpretation of this name seems definitely preferable.

Ithamar. Memorize these names now, preferably in pairs. Aaron's sons (descendants) later became the priests in Israel (See Ex. 28:1). Nadab and Abihu were burned to death at Mt. Sinai for offering "strange" (unauthorized) fire upon the altar of incense (Lev. 10:1-2). Eleazar became high priest after Aaron died (Num. 20:25-28). In later generations the high priesthood passed to the house of Aaron's son Ithamar in the person of Eli and his sons Ahimelech and Abiathar (I Chron. 24:3; I Sam. 1:9). Still later the high priesthood reverted to the house of Eleazar through Zadok (I Kings 2:26-27, 35).

26. *How did Korah's family become famous?* (6:24)

Korah led a great rebellion against Moses at Kadesh-barnea (Numbers 16; Jude 11). Centuries later the surviving "sons" of Korah became famous temple musicians among the Levites of Israel (I Chron. 6:22-23). Psalm titles on Psalms 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88 attribute these psalms to the sons of Korah.

27. *How significant were Eleazar and Phinehas?* (6:25)

Extremely significant. Eleazar became high priest after the death of his father Aaron (Num. 20:23-28). He was priest during Israel's conquest of Canaan and the division of the land (Josh. 14:1).

Phinehas was the son of Eleazar and succeeded him as high priest (Josh. 24:33). Phinehas is renowned for spearing an adulterous couple, and thereby averting God's judgment upon Israel (Num. 25:7-11; Psalm 106:30).

28. *What purpose does the reference to Aaron and Moses in 6:26-27 have?*

This reference draws our minds back to the main story of Moses and Aaron and their confrontation with Pharaoh, after the interruption of presenting their family tree in 6:14-25. The story now resumes where it left off at 6:13. We are reminded in 6:26-27 of the fact previously stated, namely that Moses and Aaron had been commanded to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. The genealogies give a sense of historical honor to Moses and Aaron. This sharpens the

issues in their conflict with Pharaoh.

Note that Aaron is mentioned first in 6:26 and Moses first in 6:27. Probably no great significance can be attached to this.

Note also the third-person writing in Ex. 6:26-27. This style does not eliminate the possibility that Moses himself wrote Exodus. Egyptian writings by the Pharaohs about themselves and by themselves are often written in third person. So also are Biblical writings. Note Ezra 7:10 (compare 8:15) and John 19:35 as examples.

29. *Whose words would Moses (and Aaron) speak? (6:28-29)*

God's words. "Speak . . . all that I speak unto thee." Compare 7:2. God's servants need not fear or wonder what they should speak. Speak words God has given us.

30. *What reassurance did God give Moses? (6:28-29)*

God told him, I am Jehovah! See notes on 3:14-15 and 6:3 for information about the meaning and power in the name Jehovah.

Regarding Moses' statement about "uncircumcised lips," see notes on 6:12.

31. *Where does the paragraph beginning at 6:28 extend to?*

It extends on through 7:7. It is unfortunate that the chapter division was placed where it is. 7:1-7 continues God's reassurance to Moses, telling how He will harden Pharaoh's heart, and work wonders in Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel.

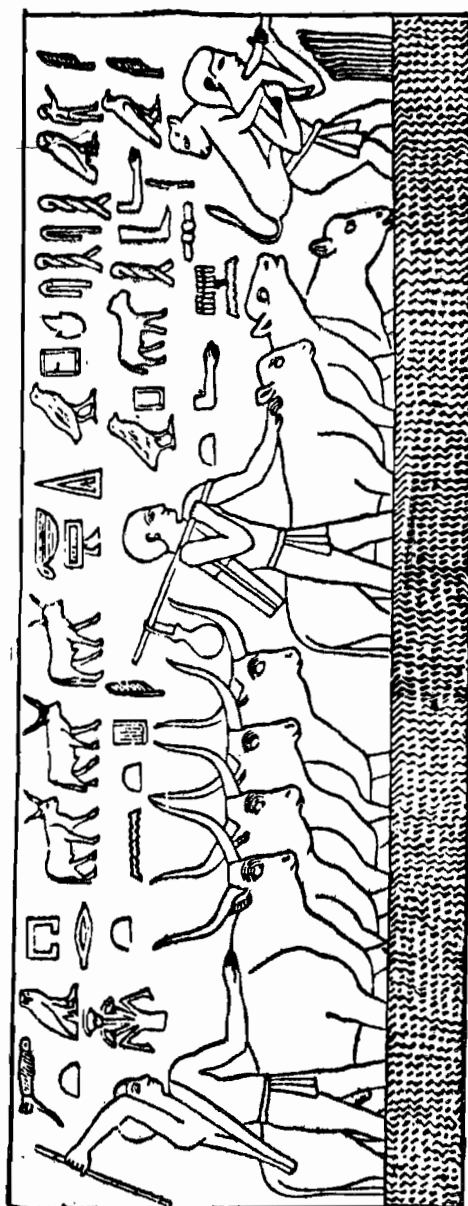
The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

7 And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses. See, I have made thee as God to Pha-raoh; and Aar-on thy brother shall be thy prophet. (2) Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aar-on thy brother shall speak unto Pha-raoh, that he let the children of Is-ra-el go out of his land. (3) And I will harden



(Upper) The author at Beersheba with mud bricks made with straw. The bricks the Israelites made in Egypt were similar to these. These bricks were made for restoration and preservation of archaeological remains.

(Lower) The Sphinx in Egypt. It has a lion-shaped body, and a head representing king Khephren (about 2500 B.C.), the builder of the second great pyramid. An inscription standing between its forelegs tells of a later Pharaoh (Thutmose IV) who cleaned away deep sand from the Sphinx and later became king.



A Herd in the Old Kingdom, Fording a Canal. (From J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, p. 93.)

Pha-raoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of E-gypt. (4) But Pha-raoh will not hearken unto you, and I will lay my hand upon E-gypt, and bring forth my hosts, my people the children of Is-ra-el, out of the land of E-gypt by great judgments. (5) And the E-gyp-tians shall know that I am Je-ho-vah, when I stretch forth my hand upon E-gypt, and bring out the children of Is-ra-el from among them. (6) And Mo-ses and Aar-on did so; as Je-ho-vah commanded them, so did they. (7) And Mo-ses was fourscore years old, and Aar-on fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pha-raoh.

(8) And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses and unto Aar-on, saying, (9) When Pha-raoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a wonder for you; then thou shalt say unto Aar-on, Take thy rod, and cast it down before Pha-raoh, that it become a serpent. (10) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went in unto Pha-raoh, and they did so, as Je-ho-vah had commanded: and Aar-on cast down his rod before Pha-raoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. (11) Then Pha-raoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers: and they also, the magicians of E-gypt, did in like manner with their enchantments. (12) For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aar-on's rod swallowed up their rods. (13) And Pha-raoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken.

(14) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Pha-raoh's heart is stubborn, he refuseth to let the people go. (15) Get thee unto Pha-raoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thy hand. (16) And thou shalt say unto him, Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou hast not hearkened. (17) Thus saith Je-ho-vah, In this thou shalt know that I am Je-ho-vah: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. (18) And the fish that are in the river shall die, and the river shall become foul; and the E-gyp-tians shall loathe to drink water from the river. (19) And Je-ho-vah said

unto Mo-ses, Say unto Aar-on, Take thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the waters of E-gypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their ponds of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of E-gypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.

(20) And Mo-ses and Aar-on did so, as Je-ho-vah commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pha-raoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. (21) And the fish that were in the river died; and the river became foul, and the E-gyp-tians could not drink water from the river; and the blood was throughout all the land of E-gypt. (22) And the magicians of E-gypt did in like manner with their enchantments: and Pha-raoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken. (23) And Pha-raoh turned and went into his house, neither did he lay even this to heart. (24) And all the E-gyp-tians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. (25) And seven days were fulfilled, after that Je-ho-vah had smitten the river.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER SEVEN
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After careful reading, propose a brief topic or theme for the entire chapter.
2. Which chapters in Exodus deal with the ten plagues?
3. What had God made Moses unto Pharaoh? (7:1)
4. What position did Aaron bear unto Moses? (7:1)
5. What demand were Moses and Aaron to make unto Pharaoh? (7:2)
6. What would God do to Pharaoh? (7:3)
7. What would God multiply in the land of Egypt? (7:3)
8. What was God going to lay upon Egypt? For what purpose? (7:4)

9. By what terms are the Israelites described in 7:4?
10. What would the Egyptians learn to know about God? What would cause them to know this? (7:5)
11. How old were Moses and Aaron when they spoke unto Pharaoh? (7:7)
12. What miracle were Moses and Aaron to do? (7:9-10)
13. What did the magicians of Egypt do after Moses' rod became a serpent? (7:11-12)
14. What miracles did the magicians of Egypt duplicate? (7:11-12, 22; 8:7, 18)
15. Name the Egyptian magicians. (II Tim. 3:8)
16. What effect upon Pharaoh's heart did the rod-to-serpent miracle have? (7:13)
17. At what place was Moses told to go to meet Pharaoh? (7:15)
18. What was Moses to take with him when he met Pharaoh? (7:15)
19. How would Pharaoh come to know that God was the LORD (Jehovah)? (7:17)
20. What results would occur because of the change in the Nile waters? (7:18, 21)
21. What waters would be affected? (7:19)
22. Did Pharaoh witness the changing of the waters? (7:20)
23. How far-reaching in area was the change in the waters? (7:21)
24. Who duplicated the water miracle? (7:22)
25. What was the condition of Pharaoh's heart after the water was changed? (7:22)
26. Where did Pharaoh go after this miracle? (7:23)
27. How did the Egyptians try to obtain good water? (7:24)
28. How long did the Nile-to-blood plague last? (7:25)

EXODUS SEVEN: THE CONFLICT BEGINS!

- I. The command; 7:1-7.
- II. The confrontation; 7:8-13.
- III. The calamity; 7:14-21.

IV. The counterattack; 7:22-25.

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG MEN (7:1-2)

1. Relationships are assigned by God; 7:1.
2. Relationships are needed to serve mankind; 7:2.

PHARAOH: THE TYPE OF STUBBORN SINNERS (7:3-5)

- I. Rejects the divine command; (7:3-4)
- II. Receives the divine punishments; (7:4)
- III. Ruins others by his wickedness; (7:5)

THE COUNTERFEITS OF SATAN (7:8-12, 22-23)

("Anything you can do, I can do better!")

- I. Imitations of God's works; (7:8-10, 22)
- II. Inferior to God's works; (7:11-12)
- III. Inspire evil men to more evil; (7:13, 22)

MAN'S RICHEST RESOURCES RUINED! (7:14-25)

- I. Ruin caused by stubbornness; (7:14)
 - II. Ruin comes to the mightiest; (7:15-16)
 - III. Ruin contains God's lesson; (7:16-17)
 - IV. Ruin crunches our resources; (7:18-21, 24)
 - V. Ruin cannot always bring repentance; (7:23)
-

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

1. *What is in Exodus chapter seven?*

The conclusion of God's charge to Moses to go back to Pharaoh extends to 7:7. It started back at 6:28.

The story of Moses and Aaron's second encounter with Pharaoh is in 7:8-13. At this encounter the miracle of the rod changing to a serpent (or crocodile) was displayed.

The story of the first plague, the river-to-blood disaster, is in 7:14-25.

We entitle this chapter *The Conflict* (or contest) *Begins!*

The conflict we refer to is the battle between God and Pharaoh. The battle consisted of the ten plagues, and Jehovah God won the conflict. The stories of the ten plagues are found in Exodus chapters 7-12.

2. *What relationship would Moses have toward Pharaoh? (7:1)*

He would be as God to Pharaoh, with divine power and authority over him. He could barge into Pharaoh's throne room without an appointment and not be arrested. He would work miracles, like God, He would speak the divine message.

Moses had been fearful of confronting Pharaoh (6:30), but he had no cause for fear.

3. *What relationship would Aaron be to Moses? (7:1)*

He would be Moses' prophet, or spokesman. As the prophets spoke God's message, so Aaron would speak Moses' message. Note 4:16, where we are told that Moses would be as God to Aaron.

4. *What was Moses to say unto Aaron? (7:2)*

"All that I (Jehovah) command thee." It is necessary that God's men speak the whole counsel of God (Acts 20-27). Our leaving out some of God's words may be worse than our saying some wrong things.

5. *What would God do when Aaron spoke to Pharaoh? (7:3)*

Two things: (1) he would harden Pharaoh's heart; and (2) multiply his signs (miracles with a meaning) and wonders in the land of Egypt. Compare Exodus 11:9. It is simply a wrong view of God's nature to think that He is so loving and indulgent that he will never "rub it in" to those who defy Him.

Also it is a wrong view of God to think that He is not jealous of His own honor. Jehovah was determined to teach Pharaoh the truth about Jehovah; and this He would do by inflicting the plague-wonders on Egypt.

6. *What are the "great judgments" by which God would bring Israel out? (7:4)*

They are the ten plagues of Exodus 7-12. The word *judgments* here refers to acts of punishment. Compare Ex. 6:6. These judgments redeemed Israel and punished Egypt.

Ramm correctly asserts that modern man seeks to omit real judgment on the part of God, while still preserving the love of God.¹ But love in that case ceases to be *holy* love, and disappears into sentiment and sentimentality. We add further that it is a false analysis of God's real nature.

7. *With what organization would Israel leave Egypt? (7:4)*

As "hosts," or armies. Israel left Egypt organized as an army, with its tribes as different divisions (Ex. 12:51; Num. 1, 2). Their organization was not very strong; nor were they well-equipped. But they were not without some force.

8. *What would Egypt learn by Israel's deliverance? (7:5)*

That God was Jehovah! See notes on 6:2-3. The statement "I am Jehovah" carries with it a depth of meaning that few modern readers grasp. The Egyptians would learn that Jehovah is the existing one, the eternal, the ultimate causer. They would learn that their bag of gods was a fiction! See 7:17; 8:10, 22; 14:4, 18.

9. *What were Moses' and Aaron's ages at this momentous time? (7:7)*

Moses, eighty; Aaron, eighty-three. Moses had been about forty when he went out to help Israel (Acts 7:23). He was 120 at his death (Deut. 31:2). Thus Moses' life is divided into three nearly equal parts:

- (1) 40 yrs. in Egypt as a prince (thinking he was somebody);
- (2) 40 yrs. in Midian as a shepherd (finding out he was a nobody);
- (3) 40 yrs. in the desert as leader of Israel (learning what God can do with a somebody who realized he was a nobody).²

10. *What miracle was Moses to do in Pharaoh's presence? (7:8-9)*

Change his rod to become a serpent. Of the three miracles given to Moses to do (in 4:1-9), only the rod-to-serpent miracle was done before Pharaoh. The water-to-blood sign

¹Bernard L. Ramm, *His Way Out* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1974), p. 54.

²Attributed to D. L. Moody. Quoted in Ramm, *Ibid.*

became the first of the ten plagues. The leprosy sign is not referred to after it was shown to Moses. Certainly Moses' miracles set him forth as God to Pharaoh.

The *serpent* referred to in 7:9 is (in Hebrew) a *tannin*, meaning a large reptile, sea or river monster. Jewish commentators rendered it as *crocodile*. The Hebrew word for serpent in 4:3 is *nahash*, meaning a serpent or snake.

We have no strong reasons for doubting that Aaron's rod became a *crocodile* in the presence of Pharaoh, rather than a serpent. Certainly that would be an even more impressive miracle than changing it to a serpent. The only real objection to this idea is that it differs from the previous rod-to-serpent miracle shown to the Israelites (4:30). However, that miracle was specially designated to be shown to the Israelites; Pharaoh is not mentioned in reference to it. Another objection is that the Greek LXX renders both 4:3 and 7:9 as *drakon*, meaning dragon or (in later times) serpent.

Some critics made an issue of whether the rod is said to be Aaron's rod or Moses' rod, arguing that references to the rod as Aaron's are in sections by a different author from those referring to the rod as Moses' rod.³ Keil and Delitzsch correctly insist that there was only one rod.⁴ Aaron threw down the rod in 7:8, 10. The *same* rod was later used by Moses at the river's edge (7:15). Even there Aaron actually wielded the rod (7:19). Obviously the one rod was passed back and forth between Aaron and Moses.

11. *What means did Pharaoh use to belittle Moses' miracle?* (7:11)

He called in his wise men and sorcerers and magicians, who (seemingly) duplicated Moses' miracle. Pharaoh was NOT convinced that Moses' miracle proved that Moses had any powers that differed from those the Egyptian magicians and sorcerers possessed. Their performance confirmed his unbelief.

³Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), pp. 71, 73.

⁴Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentaries on the O.T.*, Vol. II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), pp. 475-476.

Back of Pharaoh's act lay a total unwillingness to accept any suggestion that he, Pharaoh, and the other gods of Egypt were not supreme. King Amenhotep II (probable Pharaoh of the exodus) entitled himself "the son of the sun god Re, . . . Amen-hotep-the-god-Ruler-of-Heliopolis, given life forever; the good god, likeness of Re," ⁵ To him Moses' miracle was a fifteen-cent stunt that was not about to make him relinquish his lofty views of his own omnipotence!

12. *How did Pharaoh's magicians duplicate the miracle?* (7:11-12)

In truth, we do not know. We only know that the effect produced was similar enough to Moses' miracle to satisfy Pharaoh. Davis ⁶ lists four suggestions as to how they may have done it:

(1) An optical illusion, produced in the minds of the viewers by Satan or evil spirits.

(2) Effective sleight-of-hand, possibly aided by Satan.

(3) Charming of serpents to become rigid like sticks. Some writers report that Egyptian magicians have been renowned for doing this. By pressing the nape of the neck, they partially paralyze the snake in such a way that they become stiff and unmovable, thus seeming to change them into rods. ⁷ (This would be MUCH more difficult if the rods were changed into crocodiles!)

(4) Supernatural feats, by demonic assistance, "lying wonders" (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:13-14; Deut. 13:1-3). Such powers are real. We lean to this interpretation, since the text says they did their act by their "enchantments." Compare Rev. 16:14.

The great inferiority of the magicians' enchantments to Moses' powers was shown when Aaron's crocodile ate up the magicians' crocodiles. Their folly became obvious to all except the wilfully blind (II Tim. 3:8-9).

⁵From "The Asiatic Campaigning of Amenhotep II," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), p. 245. Used by permission.

⁶*Op. cit.*, pp. 82-84.

⁷Jamison, Faussett, Brown, *Commentary on Old and New Testament*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1945), p. 295.

13. *Who were these magicians? (7:11-12)*

The apostle Paul gives their names as Jannes and Jambres (II Tim. 3:8), names also found in the Jerusalem Targum (a second-century A.D. Jewish writing).⁸ Magicians were very important in the bureaucracy of the ancient Egyptian government. They were a professional class, and held high government positions as advisers and diviners. Pharaoh called upon them to interpret his dreams (Gen. 44:8).

14. *Did Pharaoh function as God planned. (7:13)*

Exactly so! God had said Pharaoh would not hearken, and he didn't. According to the predicted plan of God, Pharaoh set himself up to become the victim of the signs and wonders (the ten plagues) that were now poised to strike his land.

15. *Who hardened Pharaoh's heart? (7:14, 3)*

The wording of 7:13-14 does not actually indicate whether Pharaoh hardened his own heart or God hardened it. However, the prediction in 7:3 indicates that God did it on this occasion. But do not forget that Pharaoh had already committed himself NOT to let Israel go (5:2). See notes on 4:21 ff. for a discussion about who hardened Pharaoh's heart.

16. *How do skeptical critics regard 7:14 ff?*

They regard it as the start of a different section, mostly by a tenth century B.C. author called J (for Jehovist, or Yahwist). The previous material (6:2—7:13) is attributed to a P (Priestly) author of the fifth century B.C. Some brief segments of 7:14—8:4 are attributed to P or to another source called E (Elohism). We simply cannot accept this theory (and that is all it is, a theory). It denies the Mosaic authorship of the book, something that Christ affirmed. Those who hold this view have many differences in their analyses as to which "source" certain segments are to be ascribed to (though they all deny it to Moses!). This lack of unity casts strong doubt on the whole system. In 7:15 we have a clear allusion back to 7:8-9. This supports the fact

⁸Alan Cole, *Exodus* (Downers Grove, Ill., 1973), p. 89.

that both sections are by the same author.

17. *Where did Moses go to encounter Pharaoh before the first plague? (7:15)*

To the Nile river brink. We gain the impression that Pharaoh went there regularly, perhaps every morning (8:20; Compare 2:15). We suppose it was an act of worship to the Nile, for the Egyptians honored the Nile as a god. They even had a Hymn to the Nile:

When the NILE floods, offering is made to thee,
oxen are sacrificed to thee, great oblations are made
to thee, birds are fattened for thee, lions are hunted for
thee in the desert, fire is provided for thee, and offering
is made to every (other) god, as is done for the Nile,
with prime incense, oxen, cattle, birds, and flame.⁹

Note the curiously antiquated wording "against he come" in the King James version of 7:15. A.S.V. gives "to meet him," and R.S.V. "to wait for him."

18. *What demand did Moses remind Pharaoh about? (7:16)*

The demand of God, that Pharaoh let Israel go out of his land, so Israel could serve Him in the wilderness (the desert of Sinai).

19. *What would the water-to-blood miracle make Pharaoh know? (7:17)*

That Jehovah was Jehovah (the Eternal one)! This idea is repeated so many times in Exodus that we need to pay special heed to it. See notes on 7:5; 6:2,6,7. Pharaoh had brazenly said, "I know not the Lord." He is about to get to know the Lord extremely well!

20. *Was the "blood" really blood? (7:17)*

Most commentators assume that any thick red fluid would correspond to the description of the river as "blood."¹⁰ Keil and Delitzsch say that the changing of the water to blood was not a chemical change into real blood, but a change in color which caused it to assume the appearance of blood;

⁹From "Hymn to the Nile," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), p. 373. Used by permission.

¹⁰Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

and that we should compare this miracle to Joel 3:4, where the moon is said to turn into "blood."¹¹

We are hardly willing to say that this "blood" was so exactly like body blood that it might have been used for transfusions. But we do not like the practice of assuming that we know a great deal more than what the scripture says. We assume that the river-blood was so much like body blood that it ought to be called "blood," just as the scripture speaks of it.

Many interpreters seek to explain this "miracle" as an unusual intensification of the annual pollution of the Nile at its lowest annual level, just before the spring rise begins in June.¹² At this time the river is stagnant and sometimes red as ochre from microscopic organisms. But the Nile river is not unhealthful to fish at that stage,¹³ as it became when Moses changed it.

Furthermore, if Moses' act of reddening the river were just the usual annual reddening of the Nile, why would it have had any effect on Pharaoh?

The liberal critic Martin Noth, while not accepting the literal truth of the plague stories, nevertheless says that the Nile-to-blood miracle is not a representation of regular annual Nile pollution, but is presented as a unique divine wonder.¹⁴ In this he speaks truth.

Others seek to explain the reddening of the river as being associated with some volcanic explosion.¹⁵ But this is mostly guesswork. These explanations also require us to believe

¹¹*Op. cit.*, p. 478.

¹²K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1966), p. 93. Gabriel Hebert, *When Israel Came Out of Egypt* (Richmond: John Knox, 1961), p. 69.

¹³Keil and Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

¹⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁵Phythian-Adams, *The Call of Israel* (1934), pp. 137-72. *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1967, has an article "The Explosion that Changed the World," which suggests that the explosion of the Greek island of Santorini about 1400 B.C. may have been a factor in causing the ten plagues in Egypt. The article admits that this theory stands on shaky ground.

some colossal coincidences occurred, such as that the volcanic eruptions occurred on the days just after Moses made predictions of disasters, and that the affected areas ended just where the Israelites began.

21. *What effects did the changed water produce? (7:18, 21)*

The fish died. The river *stank*. (That is exactly the meaning of the statement.) The water became loathesome and undrinkable. Such a pollution of the Nile would have had religious implications to thoughtful Egyptians.

22. *What places were affected by the change in the water? (7:19)*

The river branches of the Nile delta. The canals. (Canals had been dug all over the delta region for irrigation.) The pools (or reservoirs). And "in wood and stone."

The usual interpretation is that the "wood" and "stone" refer to *vessels* of wood and stone. Probably this is correct. Certainly the greatness of the miracle was demonstrated when water already in containers also changed to blood at the same time the river did. To us, it seems that the text says this very thing happened. Keil and Delitzsch say that this is NOT indicated by the text, but only that no more water was put into these vessels that was not changed to blood. This argument could be true only if several hours or days were required for the water to change to blood, allowing time for people to dip up water after the reddening started, but before all of it changed. The scripture does not really indicate any such time lag.

Some interpreters think that the "blood" so penetrated underground that trees and plants of "wood" picked it up with their roots, so that the plants would ooze red sap if plucked. There was blood in "stone," because the springs that flowed out from fissures in the stone ran with red liquid.

This explanation about the "wood" and "stone" seems unlikely to us, since apparently the Egyptians were able to obtain drinkable water by digging in the ground (7:24).

23. *Did Pharaoh himself witness the change? (7:20)*

Certainly he saw Moses and Aaron smite the water, and it appears that he saw the change occur. 7:23 indicates that

Pharaoh went to his house only after the water had changed and the magicians had performed their enchantments to change water to blood. Therefore, we assume Pharaoh saw the change occur.

The Nile river is a huge river. The delta of the Nile is nearly 150 miles wide and 125 long. The enormity of this miracle is staggering. "The blood was throughout all the land of Egypt."

It was powerfully appropriate that the first plague be directed at the Nile. Because the Nile affects all of Egypt, the plague got the attention of all Egypt. The Israelites would see God's power on a massive scale, and so would the Egyptians. It is still a picture of God's power to us.

24. *How did the magicians get into the act of changing water to blood? (7:22)*

We do not know. Maybe they were accompanying Pharaoh as he came out to the water. Maybe he summoned them, as he did before (7:11).

How were they able to change water to blood? Presumably by the same tricks or powers by which they changed rods to serpents (see notes on 7:11-12).

Where did they get water to change to blood if all water was almost immediately transformed by Moses? We suppose they got it from the water obtained by digging holes (7:24). The rabbi Ibn Ezra said they took rain [which is rare in Egypt], or they obtained water from Goshen, or they digged for it.¹⁶

One would think that the magicians would have shown more power (and certainly more usefulness!) if they could have changed the blood back to good water. But this they had no power to do.

Furthermore, the magicians probably only changed a few drops of water. Compared to Moses' massive miracle, this was nothing. But it was enough to satisfy Pharaoh. His wicked heart found all the justification he felt necessary in

¹⁶J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino Press, 1969), p. 238.

the magicians' act. He now felt that Moses' miracle did not prove that he needed to change his thinking or his deeds. So he did not even consider it seriously, or lay it to his heart (7:23).

25. *Did the Israelites have good water?*

The scripture does not tell us definitely one way or the other. In later plagues a distinction between the treatment of the Israelites and of the Egyptians definitely occurred. No such differentiation is stated in 7:20-21, although that does not prove it did not occur. Josephus (in *Antiquities* II, xiv, 1) has an account that seems fanciful to us: "Such [bloody] was the river to the Egyptians, but it was sweet and fit for drinking to the Hebrews, and in no way different from what it naturally used to be."

26. *Did the Egyptians succeed in obtaining water by digging?* (7:24)

It appears that they did. Note that *all* the Egyptians digged round about the river. If the first few test holes that were dug had produced only the same blood that was in the river, surely digging would not have been employed on so wide a scale.

27. *To what period does the "seven days" of 7:25 refer?*

Probably it refers to the duration of the water-to-blood plague. Others suggest that it was the interval of time between the first and second plague (the frogs). We assume that after seven days the flow of fresh water from the upper Nile cleansed the river in lower Egypt (the delta). If this was the case, it is one more evidence that this change in the river water was not the usual annual discoloration, because that continues about twenty days.¹⁷

28. *How long a time-span did the plagues occupy?*

The last plague (death of the firstborn) occurred in March. The seventh plague (the hail, which beat down the flax and barley, but did not destroy the wheat) occurred sometime in

¹⁷F. C. Cook, editor, *The Bible Commentary*. Exodus-Ruth (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), p. 22.

January. The interval between January and March averages out to nearly three weeks between plagues. If we assume that the other plagues were approximately the same time apart, the whole series would have required about six months; and the first plague would have occurred during early autumn (Sept.-Oct.). This is admittedly mostly guesswork.

SPECIAL STUDY: THE TEN PLAGUES

I. *Facts about the Plagues:*

1. List of the plagues:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) River to blood. | (6) Boils. |
| (2) Frogs. | (7) Hail. |
| (3) Lice (gnats). | (8) Locusts. |
| (4) Flies. | (9) Darkness. |
| (5) Death of livestock. | (10) Death of firstborn. |

2. Meaning of the word *plague*:

A *plague* is not just a disease or epidemic, but any event or thing that afflicts, smites, troubles, or harasses.

The plagues are frequently called *signs* and *wonders*. See Ex. 7:3; 8:23; 10:1; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; Ps. 105:27. A *sign* is a miracle with a message. The plagues were to teach something, as well as to punish.

The plagues are also called *judgments*, a term which refers to punishments. (Ex. 6:4; 12:12)

The English word *plague* is a translation of several Hebrew words in Exodus. *Plague* in Ex. 9:14 (and Num. 14:37) is from *maggephah*, meaning a slaughter (as in I Sam. 4:17), or pestilential and fatal disorder. *Plague* in Ex. 11:1 is from *nega'*, meaning a blow, or stroke. *Plague* in Ex. 12:13 is from *negeph*, meaning a stumbling, or smiting, or plague. A verb form of this word is in Josh. 24:5.

II. *Purposes of the plagues:*

1. To force Pharaoh to let Israel go. Ex. 3:20: "I will put

forth my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go." See also Ex. 7:4.

2. To show that God was the LORD, JEHOVAH. This was to be demonstrated both to the Egyptians (7:5, 17; 8:22; 9:14; 14:4, 18), and to the Israelites (6:7; 10:2; 15:11).
 3. To show God's power. Ex. 9:16. The Egyptians would learn that the LORD was high above all gods (Ex. 9:14).
 4. To *punish* Pharaoh and the Egyptians for their treatment of Israel. The word *judgments* in Ex. 6:6 carries the idea of punishments. "God cast upon them the fierceness of his anger" (Ps. 78:49-50). God made sport of the Egyptians and mocked them (Ex. 10:12).
 5. To execute judgment upon the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12; Num. 33:4). Several of the gods of Egypt seem to have been specific targets of various plagues. See the following article and the notes on the various plagues.
 6. To show that God made a *distinction* between His people Israel and those not His people. See 8:23; 11:7. One-half of the plagues are specifically said to have not touched the Israelites. Indeed, the Hebrews may have been exempt from all the plagues.
 7. To cause God's name and fame to be spread abroad through the earth (Ex. 9:16; 10:2). Even today we still tell and retell the stories of God's acts in the plagues.
 8. To produce fear in the surrounding nations that God would defeat them (Josh. 2:9-10; 9:9; I Sam. 4:8). The nations would learn that God would curse those who cursed the Israelites (Gen. 12:3).
 9. To be signs to strengthen Israel's faith. The Israelites should have had courage to invade and conquer Canaan after they had seen what God did to the Egyptians (Deut. 7:18-19; Ps. 78:42-43).
- Sadly, Israel did not understand the wonders in Egypt (Psalm 106:6-7, 21-22), and they soon forgot God's acts in Egypt.
10. To cause Israel (and us!) to keep the statutes of God

(Deut. 6:20-24).

11. To serve as *tests* (or temptations) to Israel (Deut. 4:33; 7:19). How would Israel respond to God's help? Would they have steadfast faith, or would they fail the test? Would the demonstrations of God's power in the plagues give Israel faith at other times when God did not choose to show His power so immediately and dramatically?

III. *Moral significance of the plagues.*

1. The plagues show God means business. We better do what He says.
2. The plagues show that God is certainly going to win in His conflict with Satan and with Satan's followers. Those who oppose God are going to lose and lose utterly.
3. The plagues show that God will surely PUNISH those who defy Him and refuse to receive His truth.
4. The plagues show that God will HARDEN those who set themselves to defy Him, and then punish them doubly. Other examples of this truth can be seen in the cases of (1) the Canaanites (Deut. 2:30); Hophni and Phinehas (I Sam. 2:25); (3) King Rehoboam (I Kings 12:15); King Amaziah (II Chron. 25:15-16); and (5) those who receive not the love of the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12).
5. The plagues show God's determination to keep His covenant with Abraham and his descendants. God was determined to bless Abraham and his descendants and give them the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:14; Psalm 105: 8-9, 27-36).
6. The plagues were types of Christ's victory over Satan. Moses was a type, or likeness, of Christ who was to come. At the outset of Moses' ministry, he defeated Pharaoh in the plagues. At the outset of Christ's ministry he defeated Satan's temptations in the wilderness. And finally Christ "despoiled the principalities and the powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (the cross)" (Col. 2:15).

We certainly agree with Bernard Ramm's statement

that unless there is a deeper typology in Exodus, the story is trivial. That which raises the story in Exodus above all other stories of struggle and survival in human history is its deeper typology. Ramm adds that it is at this point that Jewish commentaries and critical Protestant commentaries fail, because in both instances they fail to grasp the deeper struggle behind the events.¹ How true!

7. Since the experiences of the Israelites are examples, or types, of our spiritual experiences as Christians (I Cor. 10:11), the plagues appear to be illustrations of the way Christ will destroy all the enemies of His church. He shall smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15).

Thus the plagues are types of God's subsequent judgments upon the nations. The plagues of Egypt resemble the seven last plagues of Rev. 15:5—16:21. Both involve sores, or boils (Rev. 16:2, 11), water to blood (Rev. 16:3-4), frogs (Rev. 16:13), and hail (Rev. 16:21). In both the plagues in Egypt and those described in Revelation, men are unwilling to repent (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21), even in the face of total ruination.

IV. *Arrangement of the ten plagues.*

1. The plagues grew generally more severe as they progressed. The plagues of the locusts and the darkness were particularly severe. The darkness was severe in that it exposed the greatest god of Egypt, its sun-god, Re, as being nothing. The plagues increased to a climax of terror at the death of Egypt's firstborn.
2. Commentators frequently have expressed the idea that the first nine plagues are grouped into three groups of three (1-2-3, 4-5-6, 7-8-9). We feel that this triple-triad arrangement is a man-made analysis, and is not really very significant. A case could be made for grouping the plagues into two groups of five, since plague number five (death of livestock) and plague ten (death of the

¹Bernard L. Ramm, *His Way Out* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1974), pp. 58-59.

firstborn) both involved death. Still these groupings seem accidental and unintentional. Certainly they were not obvious during the course of the plagues.

Nevertheless, we feel we should list here some of the reasons why many interpreters feel that the first nine plagues are arranged into three groups of three.

- a. Plagues one and two in each group (1-2, 4-5, 7-8) are announced to Pharaoh in advance, while the third plague of each group is inflicted without previous warning.
- b. The first series (1-2-3) was wrought with the rod of Aaron. No rod is mentioned in the second series (4-5-6). The rod is in the hand of Moses in the third series (7-8-9).
- c. In the second series a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians is mentioned. See 8:22; 9:4. However, this distinction is also mentioned in connection with plague seven (the hail; 9:26).

Keil and Delitzsch' commentary adopts the view that the three-fold grouping is real and noteworthy. However, they add the very necessary caution that this arrangement is NOT a merely external arrangement adopted by the writer for the sake of greater literary effect, but is in fact founded upon the facts themselves.²

V. *Views held about the plagues.*

1. Bible-believers regard the plagues as miracles. While the plagues involved familiar natural phenomena like frogs, lice, hail, locusts, etc., there were miraculous features about their coming and going.

Joseph Free lists five respects in which the plagues had a miraculous nature: 1. Intensification - frogs, insects, etc. were intensified far beyond any ordinary occurrence ever; 2. Prediction - the time of their appearance (like "tomorrow") and disappearance was predicted

²*Op. cit.*, p. 473.

before several plagues. Even modern weather forecasters cannot predict exactly when and where it will hail. 3. Discrimination - In the area where the Israelites lived, there were no flies (8:22), no hail (9:26), etc. 4. Orderliness - the severity of the plagues gradually increased. 5. Moral purpose - the plagues were not just freaks of nature, but carried a moral purpose in several ways.³

2. Other interpreters who are more skeptical view the ten plagues as purely natural events. They consider that the original events have grown larger and more marvelous as they have been told and retold. They feel that the plague stories are "derived from living oral tradition of the mighty acts of God."⁴ Of course, to hold such a view we must deny that Moses wrote down the record of events to which he was an eyewitness. Even more harmful is the presupposition lying behind these views, that God has never intervened in history by miraculous acts.

The interpreters who regard the plague stories as corrupted accounts of natural events do not agree among themselves as to what those natural events may have been. One Prof. Mahler thought that the plague of darkness was a total eclipse of the sun in 1335 B.C.⁵ Of course, 1335 is not the date of the exodus; and a solar eclipse lasts about three minutes, not three days. Others have thought that the plagues were effects of volcanic explosions, like those that blasted Mont Pelee in Martinique in 1902, or Krakatoa in the East Indies in 1883. Those produced terrific tidal waves, torrential rains, muddy cataracts of black and poisonous water, so that many fish died; and dark clouds of volcanic dust covered the sky.⁶ This explanation also is set forth as the

³Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press, 1972), p. 95.

⁴Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 71.

⁵J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1969), p. 231.

⁶See "The Explosion that Changed the World," in *Reader's Digest*, Nov. 1967, pp. 122-127. Also W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The Call of Israel* (1934), 137-172.

explanation for the drying up of the Red Sea waters, the pillar of cloud and fire, and the descent of Jehovah in the cloud on Mt. Sinai.

The volcanic theory cannot explain how Moses could have predicted the coming and departure of these plagues at such precise times. Nor can it explain how the plagues were so selective about their victims. By common consent the theory is admitted to stand on shaky ground.

Others have thought that the plagues were only natural events in Egypt, which happened to an unusual degree. Sir Flinders Petrie wrote:

The order of the plagues was the natural order of such troubles on a lesser scale in the Egyptian seasons, The river turning to blood with the fish dying, was the unwholesome stagnant Nile just at the *lowest* [emphasis by author] before the inundations, when it is red and swarming with organisms. The Egyptians have to resort to wells and cisterns at this time, The frogs abound after the inundation has come in July. The plagues of insects, murrain and boils belong to the hot summer and damp unwholesome autumn. The hail and rain come in January. . . . The locusts come in the spring, over the green crops about February. The sandstorms bring a thick darkness that may be felt, in March. . . .⁷

The inadequacy of such an explanation may be perceived by suggestions by Greta Hort.⁸ She argues that the first nine plagues began with an unusually *high* [emphasis by the author] inundation, which may have brought microcosms known as flagellates, which would redden the river and kill the fish. Decomposing fish

⁷*Egypt and Israel* (1911), pp. 35-36.

⁸Quoted in K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1966), pp. 48-59.

drove the frogs ashore, having also infected them with *Bacillus Anthracis*. . . . The cattle disease of the fifth plague would be anthrax contracted from the dead frogs, etc.

For our part we place our faith in the record given in the Bible, and not in the contradictory guesswork of those without deep faith in God.

JEHOVAH VS. THE GODS OF EGYPT*

The ten plagues were Jehovah's judgment against all the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12; Num. 33:4). All of the plagues showed the utter inability of Egypt's gods to protect the Egyptians. Several of the plagues appear to have been pointed directly against specific Egyptian gods. Here are some of the gods of Egypt which seem to have been special targets of specific plagues:



Hapi, god of the Nile. Sculpture at Kom Ombo temple, upper Egypt.



Hathor, cow goddess of love. Statue at Memphis.

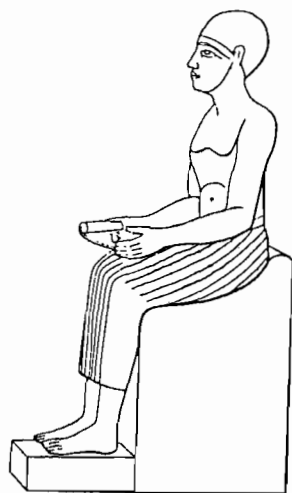
*The drawings of the gods of Egypt are from E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Dweller on the Nile* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1888); and from E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Mummy* (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1972). Used by permission.

Hapi, the god of the Nile, was often depicted as holding a table or altar on which are vases for libations, and lotus flowers, and fruits. He is thus represented as if he were presenting the rich products of the Nile's productivity. He was discredited in the first plague, when the river water turned to blood.

Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis, was called "the second life of Ptah," (the creator god). *Apis* was disgraced in the fifth plague, the murrain (or death) of cattle.



The Apis Bull.



I-em-hetep.

Hathor, the cow-headed goddess, was identified with the sky, and was the goddess of beauty, love and joy. She assisted the souls of the dead. The plagues of murrain of cattle and of hail discredited her.

Imhotep was originally an architect, wise-man, and chief ritualist in the Old Kingdom of Egypt. (In Egypt magic and medicine were inseparably related.) *Imhotep* became a demigod after his death, and eventually was deified as the god of medicine. But he couldn't prevent the plague of boils from scourging all Egyptians.

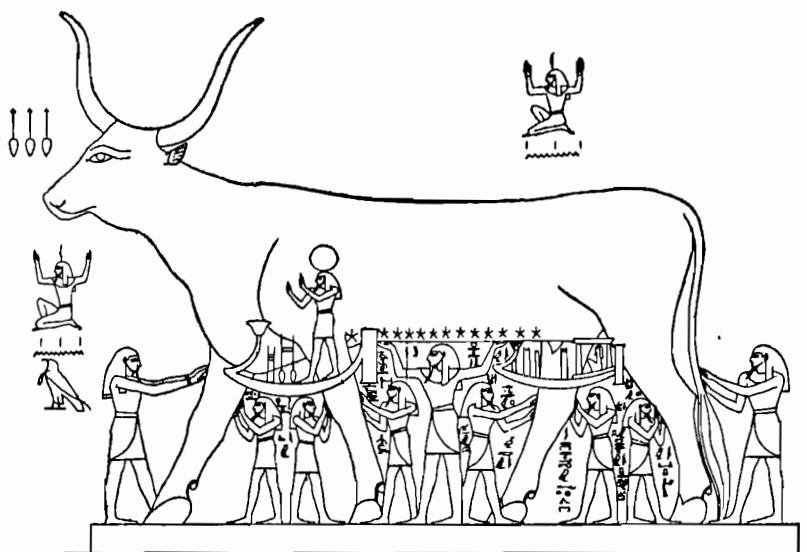


Amen-Rā



Rā

Two sun-gods of Egypt were discredited by the plague of darkness. *Amon* (or Amon-Ra), the city god of the capital city of Thebes, was a sun-god. To the Egyptians he was the ONE and ONLY ONE, the maker of gods, and lord of eternity. *Ra* (or Re) was the great sun-god. He was the great god of Heliopolis, the "city of the sun." He was second only to Ptah, the chief god.



The Celestial Cow

Various divine beings support her limbs, while in the middle, *Shu*, the god of the atmosphere upholds her. (Shu couldn't prevent the plague of hail!) Along her belly, which forms the heavens, and bears the stars, moves the celestial boat of the sun-god, who wears the sun-disk on his head. Pictures like this one show that the plagues attacked Egyptian gods.*

* From J. H. Breasted, *A History of Egypt* (New York: Scribner's, 1924), p. 55.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

8 And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses, Go in unto Pha-raoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (2) And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: (3) and the river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thy house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs: (4) and the frogs shall come up both upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. (5) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Say unto Aar-on, Stretch forth thy hand with thy rod over the rivers, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of E-gypt. (6) And Aar-on stretched out his hand over the waters of E-gypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of E-gypt. (7) And the magicians did in like manner with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of E-gypt.

(8) Then Pha-raoh called for Mo-ses and Aar-on, and said, Entreat Je-ho-vah, that he take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto Je-ho-vah. (9) And Mo-ses said unto Pha-raoh, Have thou this glory over me: against what time shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, that the frogs be destroyed from thee and thy houses, and remain in the river only? (10) And he said, Against to-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word; that thou mayest know that there is none like unto Je-ho-vah our God. (11) And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. (12) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went out from Pha-raoh: and Mo-ses cried unto Je-ho-vah concerning the frogs which he had brought upon Pha-raoh. (13) And Je-ho-vah did according to the word of Mo-ses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. (14) And they gathered them together in heaps; and the land stank. (15) But when Pha-raoh saw that there was respite,

he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken.

(16) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Say unto Aar-on, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the earth, that it may become lice throughout all the land of E-gypt. (17) And they did so, and Aar-on stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and there were lice upon man, and upon beast; all the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (18) And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: and there were lice upon man, and upon beast. (19) Then the magicians said unto Pha-raoh, This is the finger of God: and Pha-raoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken.

(20) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pha-raoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (21) Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the E-gyp-tians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. (22) And I will set apart in that day the land of Go-shen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am Je-ho-vah in the midst of the earth. (23) And I will put a division between my people and thy people: by to-morrow shall this sign be. (24) And Je-ho-vah did so; and there came grievous swarms of flies into the house of Pha-raoh, and into his servants' houses: and in all the land of E-gypt the land was corrupted by reason of the swarms of flies.

(25) And Pha-raoh called for Mos-es and for Aar-on, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. (26) And Mo-ses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the E-gyp-tians to Je-ho-vah our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the E-gyp-tians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? (27) We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to Je-ho-vah our God, as he shall command us. (28) And Pha-raoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice

to Je-ho-vah your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: entreat for me. (29) And Mo-ses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat Je-ho-vah that the swarms of flies may depart from Pha-raoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: only let not Pha-raoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Je-ho-vah. (30) And Mo-ses went out from Pha-raoh, and entreated Je-ho-vah. (31) And Je-ho-vah did according to the word of Mo-ses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pha-raoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. (32) And Pha-raoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER EIGHT
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. What purpose was in God's mind for his people after Pha-raoh let them go? (8:1; 9:1; 10:3)
2. Where would the frogs originate? (8:3)
3. What would the frogs get into? (8:3-4)
4. Whose hand signalled the frogs to come up? (8:5-6)
5. How did the magicians' frog-miracle compare to that of Moses and Aaron? (8:7-8)
6. What did Pharaoh promise after the frogs came upon the land? (8:8)
7. What did Moses mean by "Glory over me"? (8:9)
8. Where would frogs remain after the plague was removed? (8:9)
9. When were the frogs to be removed? (8:10)
10. What did Moses do to get the frogs removed? (8:12)
11. Where did the frogs die? (8:13)
12. What was done with the dead frogs? (8:14)
13. What was Pharaoh's response after the death of the frogs? (8:15)

14. What was Aaron's rod to smite? (8:16)
15. What did the lice attack? (8:17)
16. Could the magicians duplicate the plague of lice? (8:19)
17. What was the magicians' comment about the lice? (8:19)
18. Where did Moses meet Pharaoh after the plague of lice? (8:20)
19. Where would there be swarms of flies? (8:21)
20. How did the plague of flies affect different areas differently? (8:22)
21. What compromise offer did Pharaoh make to Moses? (8:25)
22. What did Moses refer to as the "abomination of the Egyptians"? (8:26)
23. Did Pharaoh actually promise to let Israel go? (8:28, 8)
24. What second compromise offer did Pharaoh make? (8:28)
25. Where did Moses go to pray that the flies be removed? (8:29-30)
26. How many flies remained? (8:31)
27. What was Pharaoh's reaction after the removal of the flies? (8:32)

EXODUS EIGHT: LITTLE CREATURES — BIG PLAGUES!
 (The supremely great smitten by the supremely contemptible!)

1. Frogs; 8:1-15.
2. Lice (gnats); 8:16-19.
3. Flies; 8:20-32.

COMPROMISES THAT CONTINUE CAPTIVITY!
 (Pharaoh's compromise offers)

1. "Go; sacrifice in the land." (8:25)
 (The compromise of remaining in the "world.")
2. "Go, but not very far." (8:28)
 (The compromise of lukewarmness)
3. "Go, ye that are men." (10:11)
 (The compromise of undedicated families)

4. "Everyone go; but leave your flocks." (10:24)
(The compromise of undedicated livelihoods)

FLEETING REPENTANCE IN FRIGHTENED REBELS (8:8-15)

1. Caused by disasters; (8:8)
2. Causes men to call God's ministers; (8:8)
3. Causes men to make promises; (8:8)
4. Causes procrastination in seeking deliverance; (8:10)
5. Brings blessings briefly (8:11-14)
6. Quickly forgotten; (8:15)

THE FINGER OF GOD! (8:19)

1. Cannot be escaped; (8:16-17)
2. Cannot be counterfeited; (8:18)
3. Cannot be comprehended by some; (8:19)

GOD'S REDEMPTION FOR HIS PEOPLE; (8:23)

1. It is obvious; (8:22)
2. It is protective; (8:24)
3. It is instructive; (8:22)
4. It leads to deliverance; (8:20, 25)

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHT

1. *What is in chapter eight?*

This chapter contains the stories of three plagues - the frogs, the lice (or gnats), and the flies. The chapter closes with Pharaoh's first compromise offers to Moses. The chapter tells how the plagues soon forced Pharaoh to admit that Jehovah was causing them, and that Moses' prayers could remove them. Also in this chapter we learn how the magicians of Egypt (and the gods of Egypt) utterly failed to match Moses' deeds or protect Egypt.

2. *What demand and threat did Jehovah give Pharaoh?* (8:1-2)

He demanded the Pharaoh let Israel go so that they might serve Him. *Serving* God in this case involved sacrificing to Him (3:12, 18). God threatened to smite ALL of Pharaoh's land with frogs if he refused to let Israel go.

Refusing was a habit with Pharaoh. See 7:14. The warning, "If you refuse . . .," was given before several plagues. See 8:2, 21; 9:2; 10:4.

3. *What did the Egyptians think of frogs?*

Frogs were highly regarded before this plague. Each September after the summer overflowing of the Nile had gone down, frogs would become numerous in ponds of water all over Egypt. Their croaking was a reminder that the gods had done their duty again and another fruitful year lay before them.

Within Egyptian mythology the frog was the embodiment of the life-giving power.¹ The frog was the symbol of the goddess Hekt (Heqt), who was thought to blow the breath of life into the nostrils of the bodies of men that her husband (Khnum) fashioned on the potter's wheel from the dust of the earth. She also supposedly assisted women in childbirth, and was a symbol of the resurrection and fertility.

4. *Where would the frogs penetrate?* (8:3-4)

From the river they would go everywhere. Frogs would enter the houses, where they would be particularly offensive to the scrupulously clean Egyptians. (See notes on 8:15, 17.) Psalm 105:30 says, "Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the *chambers of their kings*." There was no escaping this scourge. By digging holes the Egyptians had found some relief from the water-to-blood plague, but they could not escape the frogs. They entered homes, bed-chambers, even ovens and kneading troughs, where unbaked bread was rising. This was most unusual; for frogs do not normally seek dry places like beds or ovens, nor do they crawl on people.

An Egyptian oven was only a hole in the earth, in which

¹Martin Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

they put wood for a fire, and over which they put an earthen pitcher. The bread was placed inside that, and baked by the action of the fire in the hole beneath. We can imagine that when this hole was filled with frogs the preparation of bread would become utterly impractical.

5. *What act started the plague of frogs?* (8:5)

Aaron stretched forth his hand with his rod in his hand, over the rivers (referring to the branches of the Nile delta), the streams (or canals), and pools. See notes on 7:19. Aaron used the rod in the first three plagues (7:19; 8:5, 16).

6. *How disastrous was the plague of frogs?* (8:6)

It was not a mere inconvenience; it was a *destruction*, or ruination. Psalm 78:45 says, "He sent . . . frogs, which *destroyed* them." It stopped all usual activities of life. People could not work, or sleep, or eat, or move about without the most dreadful interference from the frogs. Frogs leaped upon and crawled over people wherever they were.

We are sure that the popularity of the frog-goddess Hekt dropped to near zero after this plague.

Egypt's power was defeated not by lions, but by frogs. The supremely powerful Pharaoh was brought low by the supremely contemptible frogs.

The plague of frogs was clearly a miracle. The frogs came and died suddenly at the command of Moses and Aaron. Their coming in such great numbers can be accounted for on no other basis.

7. *How did the magicians respond to the frog plague?* (8:7)

By their enchantments (secret arts) they brought up more frogs upon the land of Egypt. This certainly did not help the Egyptians. They needed frogs removed, and not more frogs. But to Pharaoh the implications of the magicians' duplicating the frog miracle were more important even than relief from the frog-scurge. At least he could satisfy himself that he was not dealing with a uniquely powerful Jehovah and a uniquely powerful Moses.

Note again that it was by *enchantments* that the magicians brought up frogs on Egypt. This makes us think that

supernatural powers of Satan were involved. Compare 7:11, 22; 8:18. Rev. 16:14 prophesies, "Three unclean spirits, as it were *frogs*, proceed forth; for they are spirits of demons, working signs."

8. *What did the frogs teach Pharaoh about Jehovah?* (8:8)

He learned that Jehovah was very real and "out of his league"; and that he needed Moses as an intercessor. The man who once said that he did not know Jehovah (5:2) now requests that Jehovah be entreated. He begins and ends his speech with the name of Jehovah.

9. *What did Pharaoh ask Moses to do?* (8:8)

To entreat, or intercede, to Yahweh (Jehovah) to take away the frogs. In return he promised to permit Israel to go and sacrifice. He certainly did not keep this promise. This pattern of appeal-promise-renegeing soon became a habit. Four times Pharaoh asked Moses to entreat the LORD to remove some plague (8:8, 28; 9:28; 10:17). Four times Moses complied (8:12, 30; 9:33; 10:18). Four times Pharaoh backed down and would not keep his promise (8:15, 32; 9:34-35; 10:20).

Pharaoh's repentance was that of a hypocrite, and not a godly sorrow. He desired not a new life, but simply removal of the judgment that had come upon the nation. When hypocrites have been overpowered, they often beg for deliverance and make promises. Thus did king Jeroboam I (I Kings 13:6), and Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:24). Pharaoh was like people who repent and make promises when in the anguish of a sick room, or in a storm, or war, or bankruptcy. Such repentance and promises often do not last long when the troubles are past.

10. *What does "Glory over me" mean?* (8:9) *Who said this?*

Literally it says, "Glorify thyself." It means to take the honor or advantage over me, by directing me as to *when* I shall entreat God for you and your servants, to cut off the frogs from you. This was a face-saving gesture granted by Moses to Pharaoh. Moses did not say when he would remove the frogs, but when he would pray about it.

Granting Pharaoh the privilege (?) of designating when

Moses should pray for deliverance from frogs actually enhanced the power and honor of Moses! Pharaoh would perceive that Moses could do this not just at some time of Moses' choosing, but at any time Pharaoh said.

11. *Why did Pharaoh not ask for immediate deliverance? (8:10)*

Why wait till tomorrow? Possibly Pharaoh hoped that by the next day the frogs would be going away by themselves, and he would be clear of the plague without being obligated either to Moses or to Jehovah.

Perhaps it was a face-saving gesture for Pharaoh. It was as if he said, "I can tough this out another day! You have not made me cry out in utter abject helplessness." He was still basically unwilling to yield to the claims of God upon him and to Moses' authority.

12. *What would Pharaoh learn by the removal of the frogs? (8:10)*

That there was no one else like Jehovah, *our* God. Compare 9:14. The *our* reflects some justifiable Israelite pride. The truth that no one else is like God is frequently asserted in later scriptures (Deut. 33:26; II Sam. 7:22; Isa. 46:9).

13. *Where would there be frogs after the plague? (8:11)*

In the river only. Their presence in the river indicates that the river was no longer polluted. The blood was all gone.

14. *Where did Moses pray about the frogs? (8:12)*

He "went out" from Pharaoh. This he did also after the plagues of flies (8:29), hail (9:29), and locusts (10:18). Often prayer is best done privately. Praying in Pharaoh's presence would seem like casting pearls before swine.

15. *Did Moses' prayers remove the frogs? (8:13-14)*

Yea, verily! The frogs outside of the river, in fields, court-yards, and houses ALL died. They were gathered (maybe raked up) into heaps, and the land *stank* again. Compare 7:21.

The deeds of sinners often leave stinking heaps of after-effects, even after the sins are forgiven. Past sins may leave behind weakened bodies, bad memories, broken marriages, debts, and enmity.

16. *What did Pharaoh do after the frog-plague was removed?* (8:15)

He hardened his heart, and would not let Israel go, as he had promised he would. Pharaoh was still unwilling to admit that the God of the Hebrews had outdone the gods of Egypt in a demonstration of power.

17. *How did these plagues affect most Egyptians?*

The plagues caused total disruption of their usual life-patterns and much misery. When a father or a ruler sins, he brings misery on his whole family or nation. Thus Pharaoh caused others to suffer even more than he did.

The Greek historian Herodotus (about 450 B.C.) wrote about the Egyptians:

All other men pass their lives separate from animals; the Egyptians have animals always living with them. [The murrain of cattle disrupted this life-style!]

.....

They are religious to excess, far beyond any other race of men, . . . They wear linen garments [See Ex. 9:31!], which they are specially careful to have always freshly washed. . . . The priests shave their whole body every other day, that no *lice* or other impure thing may adhere to them when they are engaged in the service of the gods. Their dress is entirely of linen. . . . They bathe twice every day in cold water, and twice each night [What did they do when their water turned to blood?]; besides which they observe, so to speak, thousands of ceremonies.²

18. *What warning was given before the plague of lice?* (8:16)

No warning was given before this plague. Similarly no warning was given before plagues six (boils) and nine (darkness). Aaron's rod was employed before the plague of lice, as with the previous two plagues.

19. *What insects are referred to as "lice"?*

²Herodotus II, 36, 37, Translated by George Rawlinson (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), pp. 88-89.

Probably *gnats*. This is the translation of the Hebrew word *kinnim* in the R.S.V., the Catholic *New American Bible*, the *Berkeley* version, and the *New American Standard Bible*. Nonetheless, the meaning of the word is still uncertain. The *New English Bible* renders it *maggots*, and the *Jerusalem Bible* as *mosquitoes*. The Jewish historian Josephus translated the word as *louse* (Gr. *phtheir*), as did the Jewish Talmud; and these renderings have influenced most later translations. The Greek O.T. (LXX) rendered it as *sknips* (pl. *skniphes*), probably meaning *flea*. The *skniphes* were small insects which pierced the skin, and also set up intolerable itching and penetrated the ears and nostrils.

Gnats and other small insects are a common affliction in Egypt, but not to the disastrous degree reached in this plague.

20. *Where did the gnats (or lice) originate?* (8:17)

From the dust of the earth. "ALL the dust of the earth became lice throughout all the land of Egypt." We hardly suppose that every particle of dust in Egypt became an insect on a one-to-one basis, but the expression certainly refers to limitless hosts of insects.

All in Hebrew usage sometimes means a very large portion, but not necessarily *all* in an absolute sense. Thus in the days of Noah "*All* flesh had corrupted their way" (Gen. 6:12); however, Noah and his family had not. Similarly *all* the cattle of Egypt died in plague five; but some cattle were still alive during plagues six and seven (Ex. 9:6, 9, 25).

21. *How did the lice affect Egypt?* (8:17)

They were upon both man and beast. Compare Psalm 105:31. See note 17 in the notes on this chapter.

22. *How did the magicians react to the lice?* (8:18-19)

They tried by enchantments to produce lice (gnats) but they could not. They did not give up; they were defeated! How small a thing the Lord used to put down the Egyptians! God apparently set this as the limit on the Satanic powers by which they had changed rods to crocodiles, made water blood, and produced frogs. The magicians had tried to

salvage their own honor and the reputation of their gods, but their folly now became manifest (obvious) to all men (II Tim. 3:8-9). We wonder why Pharaoh and the magicians were so slow in perceiving that ALL of the plagues were the work of God's finger.

The confession of the magicians that this was the *finger of God* is a thoroughly Egyptian expression. Compare I Sam. 6:3, 9; Luke 11:20. We would probably use the idiom "the hand of God." G. L. Robinson says that the phrase *finger of God* occurs often in Egyptian magical texts. For example, we read of the "*finger of Seth*" (who was one of the principal gods of Egypt). Also in a condemnation of the monster-dragon Aphophis, the sun-god Re said, "The *finger of Thoth* [the Egyptian recorder-god] is before thy eyes."³

The magicians do not imply that they are converted to Moses' God; but they surely recognize that he is a God, and has some potent powers.

23. *How did Pharaoh react to the defeat of the magicians? (8:19)*

Their confession of impotence did not convince Pharaoh of the need of ceasing his resistance to the command of God. His heart was hardened. The text does not indicate whether he himself hardened it, or God, or both.

24. *Where was Moses to accost Pharaoh before the plague of flies? (8:20)*

Moses was to rise up early the next day and meet Pharaoh at the water, presumably at the brink of the Nile. Compare 7:15. Moses was to make the same demand as before (7:16; 8:1). Pharaoh was surely getting the message by this time.

25. *What kinds of flies afflicted Egypt (8:21)*

Many kinds! Indeed *swarms*! The Hebrew word here translated "swarms" (of flies) means "mixture."⁴ Psalm 78:45 says (in KJV) "He sent divers sorts of flies"; this is an

³*The Bearing of Archaeology on the Old Testament* (New York: American Tract Society, 1944), p. 42.

⁴The Hebrew word *'arob* used here is employed nine times in the O.T., and is always related to this plague.

accurate rendering of the idea. The Hebrew word is similar to that used in Ex. 12:38, where it refers to the *mixed* multitude that left Egypt with the Israelites.

The Greek O.T. translated "swarm" as *kunomia*, or dog-fly. Since the Greek Bible was translated in Egypt, this may be a precise description of the type of fly that attacked the Egyptians. The dog-fly (also called the stable-fly, because of its usual presence in stables) has a sharp and painful bite, which may cause inflammation. It is the species *Stomoxys calcitrans*.

Other translations have been made of "swarms" (of flies). *Jerusalem Bible* and *Berkeley* version give it as *gadflies*, a word referring to any of various flies, as horseflies, botflies, warble flies, that bite and annoy livestock. This seems like an excellent translation.

The Jewish commentator J. H. Hertz renders it *beetles*. Beetles (particularly the scarab beetle, a dung beetle) were sacred bugs in Egypt. The ichneumon fly, which was regarded as a manifestation of the god Uatchit, has been suggested. Another common view is that the "swarms" were swarms of various creatures, not just insects. This is a common Jewish view. Josephus (*Antiquities* II, xiv, 3) said they were "various sorts of pestilential creatures, with their various properties, such indeed as had never come into sight of men before." Another Jewish view, that they were "swarms" of "evening wolves," is not regarded as acceptable.

Once again we must note that most of the plagues had religious significance, and were directed against the gods of Egypt.

26. *What distinction was made during the plague of flies? (8: 22-23)*

There were to be no flies in Goshen where the Israelites were. This is the first specific mention of such a distinction during the plagues, although we are by no means certain that it had not been the case during the first three plagues.

This distinction would cause Pharaoh to know that Israel's god was "Jehovah in the midst of the earth." It was God's

great goal in the plagues to make this truth real to Pharaoh. (Ex. 7:5, 17; 14:4, 18)

27. *What would God place between his people and the Egyptians?* (8:23)

Literally the text says, "I will set a *redemption* (or ransom) between my people and thy people." The Hebrew word *peduth* is also translated *redemption* in Ps. 111:9; 130:7; Isa. 50:2.

However, some authors feel the word is more accurately rendered *division*. The Greek O.T. and Latin Vulgate render it *division*. So also the R.S.V.: "I will put a division. . . ." We still prefer the translation of *redemption*.⁵ As Keil and Delitzsch⁶ assert, the exemption from the plague of flies was essentially a redemption, or deliverance, for Israel. It was not just a division from harm, but involved deeper deliverance and blessings.

28. *When was the plague of flies to start?* (8:23)

The next day! The flies arrived the next day as predicted. The fulfillment of this prediction shows that the plague was a miracle.

29. *What effects did the flies have on the land?* (8:24)

The land was *destroyed*,⁷ or ruined. "Corrupted" seems too weak a translation here. The Hebrew word *shahat* means to *destroy* when physical objects are referred to. Thus, a vineyard is destroyed (Jer. 12:10), a temple (Lam. 2:6), or a crop (Judges 6:4; Mal. 3:11).

Psalm 78:45 says, "The flies *ate them up*."

The plague is said to have been *grievous*, meaning heavy,

⁵The question hinges around whether *peduth* is from the verb *padad*, meaning to divide, or from a very similar verb *padah*, meaning to redeem. Both Davies' *Lexicon* and Harkavy's *Hebrew Dictionary* say it comes from *padah*.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 485.

⁷The Hebrew verb *destroyed* is in the imperfect, or future, tense, but it has a past significance here. Ancient Hebrew did not always distinguish carefully between the tenses. The imperfect tense here may indicate the continuation of the flies' destruction of the land for some days: "it was being destroyed."

or massive, or abundant, or numerous. This is a form of the same word used to describe the heavy (or hardened) heart of Pharaoh. God sends heavy plagues to defeat men's heavy resistance.

30. *What effect did the flies have on Pharaoh?* (8:25)

This plague brought him to Moses with a compromise offer. Pharaoh promised to let Israel go and sacrifice, but only in the land. Pharaoh had found no deliverance from the gods of Egypt, his magicians, or his own bluster; therefore, he now seeks compromise with Moses. Persecutors like Pharaoh never want God's people to go far out of their reach and power.

This was the first of four compromise offers by Pharaoh. Any of them would have effectively prevented Israel from leaving the land permanently, and Moses turned them all down.

PHARAOH'S COMPROMISE OFFERS

1. Go sacrifice in the land of Egypt. (Ex. 8:25)
2. Go out of the land, but do not go far. (8:28)
3. The men alone may go sacrifice. (10:8, 11)
4. Everyone may go, but leave flocks and herds in Egypt. (10:24)

31. *Why couldn't Israel sacrifice in the land of Egypt?* (8:26-27)

Because the Israelites would offer sacrifices that would be an abomination (a detestable thing) to the Egyptians, so that the Egyptians would stone them. Also to sacrifice to Jehovah acceptably, they had to obey His command to go three days' journey out of the land. Compare 3:18.

Moses did not specify what the Egyptians would find abominable about their sacrifices; but apparently Pharaoh sensed the truth in Moses' objection. At least he offered no rebuttal.

The "abomination" did not involve sacrificing cattle, for the Egyptians did sacrifice and eat cattle, even though some

cattle were sacred to them. See notes on 7:15. Probably the best explanation is that the abomination somehow involved the use of sheep for sacrifice. Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 46:34).

This dialogue between Moses and Pharaoh suggests that during their stay in Egypt the Israelites had not sacrificed to their God.

32. *What second compromise offer did Pharaoh make? (8:28)*

He would let them go and sacrifice in the desert out of the land of Egypt; only they should not go far away. Pharaoh's offer is a significant concession, and shows the plagues were truly having effect on him. Note Pharaoh's request for Moses to "Entreat" for him. See notes on 8:8.

The world does not want Christians to move too far from it, or be too different from it. They want us to be in their power, and not to condemn them by the example of a life too righteous.

33. *What did Moses caution Pharaoh about doing? (8:29)*

"Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more." Pharaoh had done deceitfully previously when he promised during the plague of frogs to let Israel go, but refused to do so after the plague (8:8, 15).

God's servants like Moses are ready to help persecutors in misery, and to pray for them. But also they *warn* them about sin.

On "going out" to pray for Pharaoh, see 8:12.

34. *How fully were the flies removed? (8:31)*

"There remained not one!" How great is God's deliverance! The flies were removed in answer to prayer. God removes swarms of judgments when his servants pray to him.

35. *How did Pharaoh fulfill his promises to Moses? (8:32)*

He hardened his heart again, and would not let them go. He broke his promise (8:28). This *also* refers back to the second plague (the frogs), when he hardened his heart after promising to let them go if the frogs were removed (8:8, 15).

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

9 Then Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Go in unto Pha-raoh, and tell him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (2) For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, (3) behold, the hand of Je-ho-vah is upon thy cattle which are in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the herds, and upon the flocks: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain. (4) And Je-ho-vah shall make a distinction between the cattle of Is-ra-el and the cattle of E-gypt; and there shall nothing die of all that belongeth to the children of Is-ra-el. (5) And Je-ho-vah appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow Je-ho-vah shall do this thing in the land. (6) And Je-ho-vah did that thing on the morrow; and all the cattle of Egypt died; but of the cattle of the children of Is-ra-el died not one. (7) And Pha-raoh sent, and, behold, there was not so much as one of the cattle of ~~the~~ Is-ra-el-ites dead. But the heart of Pha-raoh was stubborn, and he did not let the people go.

(8) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses and unto Aar-on, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Mo-ses sprinkle it toward heaven in the sight of Pha-raoh. (9) And it shall become small dust over all the land of E-gypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast, throughout all the land of E-gypt. (10) And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pha-raoh; and Mo-ses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast. (11) And the magicians could not stand before Mo-ses because of the boils; for the boils were upon the magicians, and upon all the E-gyp-tians. (12) And Je-ho-vah hardened the heart of Pha-raoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as Je-ho-vah had spoken unto Mo-ses.

(13) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pha-raoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. (14) For I will this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people;

that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. (15) For now I had put forth my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth: (16) but in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. (17) As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? (18) Behold, to-morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very greivous hail, such as hath not been in E-gypt since the day it was founded even until now. (19) Now therefore send, hasten in thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; *for* every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. (20) He that feared the word of Je-ho-vah among the servants of Pha-raoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: (21) and he that regarded not the word of Je-ho-vah left his servants and his cattle in the field.

(22) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Stretch forth thy hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of E-gypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of E-gypt. (23) And Mo-ses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and Je-ho-vah sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down unto the earth; and Je-ho-vah rained hail upon the land of E-gypt. (24) So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as had not been in all the land of E-gypt since it became a nation. (25) And the hail smote throughout all the land of E-gypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. (26) Only in the land of Go-shen, where the children of Is-ra-el were, was there no hail.

(27) And Pha-raoh sent, and called for Mo-ses and Aar-on, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: Je-ho-vah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. (28) Entreat Je-ho-vah; for there hath been enough of *these* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. (29) And Mo-ses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto Je-ho-vah; the thunders shall cease,

neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know that the earth is Je-ho-vah's. (30) But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear Je-ho-vah God. (31) And the flax and the barley were smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bloom. (32) But the wheat and the spelt were not smitten: for they were not grown up. (33) And Mo-ses went out of the city from Pha-raoh, and spread abroad his hands unto Je-ho-vah: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. (34) And when Pha-raoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. (35) And the heart of Pha-raoh was hardened, and he did not let the children of Is-ra-el go; as Je-ho-vah had spoken by Mo-ses.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER NINE
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the chapter, propose a brief theme or topic for it.
2. Before which plagues in chapter nine did Moses come in unto Pharaoh with demands? (9:1; etc.)
3. What did the LORD intend for his people to do after they were released? (9:1, 13)
4. What is *murrain*? (9:3)
5. What animals would be affected by the murrain? (9:3)
6. How would the murrain affect the cattle of Israel? (9:4)
7. What time was set for the murrain to begin? (9:5)
8. Who investigated the effects of the murrain on Israel's cattle? (9:7)
9. What does Pharaoh's reaction to the murrain reveal about him? (9:7)
10. What was to be sprinkled toward heaven? By whom? In the sight of whom? (9:8)
11. What effect would the ashes produce? (9:9)
12. What are *blains*? (9:9)

13. Why could not the magicians stand before Moses? (9:11)
What does "stand before" mean?
14. What happened to Pharaoh's heart after the plague of boils?
(9:12)
15. When was Moses to stand again before Pharaoh? (9:13)
16. What lesson was Pharaoh to learn from the plagues? (9:14)
17. What possible plague did God threaten Pharaoh with in
9:15? What would have been the effect of this plague?
18. Why had God not smitten Pharaoh with pestilence, but
rather let him live? (9:16)
19. Where would God's name be declared? (9:16)
20. What question did God ask of Pharaoh? (9:17) Why ask this
question?
21. How much advance warning was given about the hail? (9:18)
22. How severe would the hail be? (9:18-19, 24)
23. What precaution was Pharaoh urged to take before the hail?
(9:19) Why should God give Pharaoh such a forewarning?
24. Did Pharaoh's servants take heed to the warning about the
hail? (9:20-21) What determined whether they heeded or
not?
25. What act did Moses perform at the start of the hail? (9:22)
26. What was mixed with the hail? (9:23)
27. What effect did the hail have upon the trees? (9:25)
28. Where was there no hail? (9:26)
29. What confession about himself did Pharaoh make after the
hail? (9:27) What did Pharaoh confess about the LORD?
30. What (lying!) promise did Pharaoh make to Moses?
31. When did Moses promise to call off the thunder? (9:29, 33)
How does this promise show faith on the part of Moses?
32. What was Pharaoh to learn by the LORD's stopping the
thunder? (9:29)
33. What did Moses foreknow about Pharaoh's conduct after the
hail? (9:30)
34. What two crops were smitten by the hail? (9:31)
35. What two crops were not smitten by the hail? Why not? (9:32)
36. Was Moses able to get the thunder stopped as he promised?
(9:33)

37. Who hardened Pharaoh's heart after the hail stopped? (9:34)
38. How did Pharaoh sin "yet more" by hardening his heart? (9:34)
39. Was Pharaoh's breaking his promise a surprise? (9:35)

**EXODUS NINE: WEALTH AND HEALTH
DESTROYED BY DISOBEDIENCE**

1. Plague of death of livestock; 9:1-7.
2. Plague of boils; 9:8-12.
3. Plague of hail; 9:13-35

EXODUS NINE: SUFFERINGS CAUSED BY SIN

1. Brute creation suffers; 9:1-7, 9, 19, 25; Rom. 8:20.
2. Physical bodies suffer; 9:8-11, 19, 25.
3. National wealth suffers; 9:6, 24-25.

EXODUS NINE: MAN POWERLESS BEFORE GOD'S PUNISHMENTS

1. Powerless to prevent them; (9:3, 18)
2. Powerless to endure them; (9:10-11, 27-28)
3. Sometimes powerless to learn from them; (9:7, 12, 30, 35).

EXODUS NINE: GOD'S MERCIES DURING GOD'S JUDGMENTS

1. The mercy of advance warning; 9:2-3, 18-19.
2. The mercy of deferred punishment; 9:15-16; II Pet. 3:9.
3. The mercy of praying ministers; 9:28-29.
4. The mercy of removed plagues; 9:33.

WEALTH AND HEALTH DESTROYED

9:1-35

HEART PLAGUES! (Ex. 9:14) (The Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Passover)

1. Cause agony of spirit; 9:27; 10:4-7; 12:30.
2. Sent when lesser corrections fail; 9:15-17.
3. Cause men to confess God; 9:27; 10:16.

FEAR OF THE WORD OF GOD (9:20-21)

1. Based on God's past acts.
2. Brings action; 9:20; Matt. 7:21.
3. Brings deliverance; 9:25.

REPENTANCE BASED ON FEAR (9:27)

1. Felt by the mightiest of men; 9:27.
2. Causes us to acknowledge sin; 9:27.
3. Causes us to seek God's servants; 9:27-28.
4. Often concerned with removal of penalty rather than removal of sin.
5. Often very temporary; 9:34-35.

THE WORK OF GOD'S MINISTER WITH A STUBBORN SINNER (9:27-33)

1. Be available to help him; 9:27.
 2. Pray for him; 9:28, 33.
 3. Proclaim God's deliverance; 9:29.
 4. Present God's demands; 9:29.
 5. Tell him the truth; 9:30.
-

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER NINE

1. *What instruction did God give Moses after the plague of flies? (9:1)*

He sent him back to Pharaoh, presumably at Pharaoh's house, as in 8:1. There he was to make the same demand as before: "Let my people go that they may serve me." This was the fourth or fifth time this demand was made to Pharaoh (5:1; 7:2, 7, 16; 8:1, 20).

2. *What threat was to be made to Pharaoh? (9:2-3)*

If he refused there would be a grievous (heavy) *murrain* on all the livestock of Egypt. A *murrain* (Heb. *deber*) is a destruction, pestilence, or plague. The English word *murrain* is an archaic term from the same root as the word *murder* and the Latin *mors* (meaning death). We do not know exactly the nature of this plague, whether it was like anthrax or rinderpest, or some other disease. But it was deadly!

This murrain may have been a *unique* pestilence, because it was not confined to one species of animal, as most diseases are. This murrain is said to be the HAND of the Lord.

First God destroyed Egypt's cattle, then its crops (by hail and locusts). This really cut off its food supply. The change from plagues affecting people's personal comfort to economic disasters represents a worsening of the plagues.

3. *What animals would be affected by the murrain? (9:3)*

The disease was to affect cattle in the field, horses, donkeys, camels, herds and flocks. Cattle and domestic animals were very common in Egypt, and very precious to the Egyptians, as witnessed by their paintings and literature. Pharaoh himself kept a large number of cattle (Gen. 47:6, 17). The disease appears to have been limited to cattle in the fields; those that were sheltered indoors escaped. This partly explains why some cattle survived the plague (9:10, 21).

Horses were affected. Horses were common in Egypt in the XVIII dynasty (1570-1345 B.C.), which was the time of Moses. They were primarily used for war, and their introduction has been attributed to the Hyksos (1670-1570 B.C.).

Note that the animals presented to Abraham at an earlier date do not include horses (Gen. 12:16).

The reference to *camels* has been thought by some to be an anachronism, something out of its true historical position, because supposedly camels were not domesticated in Moses' time.¹ However, numerous evidences have been brought forth showing that camels were in limited use during the times of the patriarchs and Moses. The Egyptologist K. A. Kitchen mentions the "Mesopotamian lexical lists that originated in the Old Babylonian Period [which] show a knowledge of the camel about 2000/1700 B.C., including its domestication." Also from the city of Byblos comes an incomplete camel figurine of the nineteenth/eighteenth centuries B.C.²

4. *What animals were not affected by the murrain?* (9:4)

It did not kill the Israelites' cattle. Regarding the distinction which God made between Egyptians and Israelites, see 8:22. The fact of this distinction certainly shows that the death of the cattle had miraculous features. Also the setting of a specific time for its coming makes it miraculous.

5. *When would the murrain strike?* (9:5)

God said, "Tomorrow." And true to the prediction on the next day all the cattle of Egypt died; but of the cattle of the children of Israel, not one died.

This plague shows the absolute rulership of Jehovah. He completely controls every creature in the world. Disease strikes only when and where He decrees. The believer is safe in the hands of God.

6. *What portion of the cattle of Egypt died?* (9:6)

"All the cattle of Egypt died." This *all* is restricted in 9:3 to those "which are in the field." It would seem that the term *all* in 9:6 (as in 8:17) is not to be taken in an absolute sense, but as referring to such a large portion that what remained

¹For example, see G. E. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957), pp. 40, 46.

²K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1966), p. 79.

was as nothing in comparison.³ Thus, we find that there were some cattle still remaining in 9:19 and 12:29.

7. *How did the Egyptians regard cattle?*

While the Egyptians did sacrifice cattle and eat them, the cow had *sacred* associations to the Egyptians. The goddess *Hathor* is pictured in the form of a cow. She was the goddess of love, beauty, and joy. She helped the departed soul on its perilous journey after death. This goddess is often pictured as a cow suckling one of the kings, giving him divine nourishment.

The *Apis* bull was regarded as the incarnation of the Egyptians creator-god Ptah of the capital city of Memphis. After their deaths these bulls were mummified. During their lifetimes the bulls were fed choice food, bathed, brushed, and pampered daily. On their birthdays they were brought out for the people's adoration. When one died, another was chosen on the basis of various markings such as a black color, with a square or triangular spot on his forehead. Mummification for these animals is estimated to have cost \$50,000 to \$100,000 each. In A.D. 1856 the excavator Auguste Mariette found a long underground avenue where these bulls had been buried in black granite sarcophagi. The burial tunnels extended 1120 feet; and sixty-four large burial chambers lay along the avenue. Remains of drink-offerings dedicated by visitors were still lying near some of the sarcophagi.⁴

8. *Who checked on the survival of the Israelites' cattle? (9:7)*

Pharaoh himself sent investigators, who found that not even one Israelite cow had died in the plague. The possibility that such a thing might have happened in an ordinary plague is almost nonexistent.

Nonetheless, Pharaoh's heart was stubborn, and he probably attributed the sparing of the Israelites' cattle to natural

³Keil and Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 487.

⁴G. Frederick Owen, *Archaeology and the Bible* (Westwood, N. J.: Revell, 1961), pp. 181-183.

causes; or, more probably, he just did not let himself think about it.

9. *What was used at the start of the plague of boils?* (9:8)

Moses and Aaron both took full handfuls of ashes (or soot, or dust) from a furnace (or oven). Then apparently Aaron passed his handfuls to Moses, who scattered (or sprinkled) the ashes toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

Some authors (Pink, for example) have suggested that the ashes came off an altar for human sacrifice. This does not seem to be true, as we have no evidence the Egyptians burned human bodies. More probably the ashes came from a brick kiln or smelting furnace.⁵

If these ashes did come from a brick kiln, there is a sardonic twist of vengeance revealed. The Israelites had been enslaved at brick-making, and now the ashes that made the lives of the oppressed bitter smite the oppressor with boils.

10. *What effect did the ashes produce?* (9:9-10)

They spread like a dust cloud over all the land of Egypt, settling upon men and beasts. This caused an inflammation to break out in boils (blains), which became blisters, or running sores (Lat. *pustulae*). Such boils were sometimes regarded as leprous (Lev. 13:12, 18-20; 14:43). This disaster struck both man and beast. The previous plague had caused the deaths of domestic animals in the fields, but spared others to be afflicted by the boils and hail. This time the boils affected every beast and man in Egypt.

What irresistible power lay in those ashes! We do not assume that there was a biological connection between the ashes and the boils. God caused the boils; but the scattering of the ashes was a visual aid linking Moses to the boils, and doing it right under Pharaoh's nose.

This plague is a further advance in the terribleness of the disasters. Previously the Egyptians had not been directly attacked in their persons (although admittedly the lice and flies were not pleasant).

⁵Keil and Delitzsch. *op. cit.*, p. 488.

In Deut. 28:27, 35 God threatened to smite the Israelites with the *botch* of Egypt, if they disobeyed Him. The *botch* is the boil referred to here in Ex. 9:9.

The plague of boils may have been an attack on Imhotep, the Egyptian god of medicine. Imhotep had been a sage, architect, and chief ritualist in the Old Kingdom of Egypt; but had become regarded as a demigod after his death, and later was "canonized" to become their god of medicine. The inability of their gods to save Egypt must have shaken the Egyptians profoundly.

11. *How did the magicians fare with the boils? (9:11)*

Very poorly! Just after being "loused-up" (8:18-19), now they find themselves "boiled." God's judgment comes on high and low alike. So great was their pain that they could not stand before Moses. They were probably in such misery they could not endure to remain in one position for more than a few seconds. To stand up face to face with Moses in a confrontation was utterly beyond their power.

12. *Why did not Pharaoh let Israel go after the plague of boils? (9:12)*

He did not let them go because Jehovah hardened his heart. This is the FIRST time that the text specifically says that God himself hardened Pharaoh's heart. Of course, God had predicted that He would do this (4:21).

We wonder if Pharaoh sensed that he was being driven by some irresistible force outside of himself. Perhaps after this plague he wondered within himself how he could have been so stubborn. We have the opinion that he WAS in some manner conscious that matters had gotten beyond his control. If this were not so, then it would seem that God was dealing with him solely for the purpose of punishment. That stage did come to pass, but it was not there yet. In the very next plague God gave Pharaoh the choice; and he hardened his own heart. Apparently then during this plague of boils and during the next plague, God was still dealing with Pharaoh for the purpose of persuasion and not just punishment.

Before we accuse Jehovah of being unjust for hardening

Pharaoh's heart, we need to consider how often Pharaoh had already hardened his own heart. (See 8:15, 32. See also notes on 4:21 and the special study on *Hardening Pharaoh's Heart*.)

It is God's right as God to deal with sinners any way He chooses. Any good that God does to a sinner is an act of pure grace. What all sinners really deserve is death.⁶ God's dealings with men never remove from man the responsibility for his own actions.

13. *How and where did Moses announce the plague of hail?* (9:13) (9:13)

Moses met Pharaoh again at an early hour (compare 8:20), possibly again at the water's edge (7:15; 8:20). There Moses spoke God's demand that Pharaoh let Israel go so they could serve Him. See notes on 9:1.

14. *Upon what would God send the plague of hail and the following plagues?* (9:14)

He would send them upon the *heart* of Pharaoh, and upon his servants. These last three plagues were of greater severity than the previous ones, and pointed toward the final decisive blow. These plagues attacked his innermost nature and feelings. These plagues would break his will or destroy him. Each of the three plagues before the passover produced a real, though temporary, change in Pharaoh's feelings.

These heart-plagues were to teach Pharaoh that there was none like Jehovah in all the earth. This lesson had been the assignment to learn in 8:10; but Pharaoh seemed to need a second lesson. (Compare 8:10; 18:11.)

The word *plagues* (plural, referring to the next three plagues) in 9:14 is a different word than is used with reference to the other plagues. This word means a blow (sometimes a fatal blow, as in Num. 14:37; Ezek. 24:16; I Sam. 4:17), or slaughter, or stroke, or striking.

15. *What had God considered doing to Pharaoh and the Egyptians?* (9:15)

He had considered smiting them with a pestilence that would have killed them all. The word for *pestilence* is the

⁶Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

same word translated *murrain* in 9:2. The people would have died, as the cattle had died. Pharaoh could justifiably have been slain. So could we all for our sins! But, bless the Lord, He has no pleasure in the death of the sinner (Ezek. 33:11), but only desires that the sinner may turn from his wicked way and live.

16. *Why had God spared Pharaoh? (9:16)*

He spared him to show Pharaoh His power, and that God's name might be declared throughout all the earth. WE must now declare Moses' deeds and God's wonders in Egypt, so that His name may be honored throughout all the earth.

The King James Vers. of Ex. 9:16 says, "For this cause I have *raised thee up*. . . ." This is very similar to the wording used by Paul in Rom. 9:17. What does "raised thee up" mean? It seems to mean two things: (1) I have raised you up to be king in Egypt; and (2) I have enabled you to stand firm in your kingship against all the punishments that have come upon you in the plagues. The Hebrew Bible simply reads (as given in the A.S.V.) "I have made thee to stand."

The Greek O.T. says, "On account of this I have preserved thee." The R.S.V. gives a similar reading: "I have let you live." This seems to us to limit the meaning too much. God had not only preserved Pharaoh through the plague-disasters, but even before that had raised him up to be king. Pharaoh had already made of himself a vessel fitted for destruction (Rom. 9:22). Nonetheless, God had raised him up to become king, and preserved him as king, so that Pharaoh could see God's power (and therefore be without excuse), and that God's power might be declared in all the earth.

17. *Is Ex. 9:17 a question?*

We feel that it is a question. It is given as a question in the KJV, the A.S.V., the *Berkeley Bible*, the *New American Bible*, and the *Living Bible*. The R.S.V., the *Jerusalem Bible*, and the *New English Bible* render it as a statement. On the basis of grammar alone, it can be read either as a question or as a statement.

As a statement it would either state a completely obvious

fact, or it would express amazement on the part of God. God was certainly not amazed at Pharaoh's response; He had predicted it exactly.

As a question, it functions not as a request for information, but to bring about conviction. Like God's questions to Cain and to Adam (Gen. 3:11; 4:10), this one was directed at the conscience: "Are you still exalting yourself against my people?"

The verb translated "exalting yourself" may have the idea of "fortifying yourself" by heaping up mounds and ramparts. Pharaoh was digging in for a fight against God.

18. *When was the hail to begin?* (9:18)

"Tomorrow!" Moses announced before four of the plagues that they would start *tomorrow*. (Flies, 8:23; murrain, 9:5; hail; locusts, 10:4) Hailstorms are rare in Egypt. This hailstorm was to be the worst in all the history of Egypt. It was to be very *grievous*. The word *grievous* (Heb. *kabed*) is the word used to describe Pharaoh's *heavy* stubborn heart (Ex. 9:7). Heavy hail for a heavy heart!

19. *What opportunity to escape the hail was announced?* (9:19)

Moses announced that men and beasts who came in from the fields and took shelter in houses would be saved from the hail. Those that remained outdoors would be killed by hailstones. This warning was an act of pure divine mercy.

20. *Was the warning about taking shelter from the hail heeded?* (9:20-21)

Those of the servants of Pharaoh who feared (respected) God's word as uttered by Moses caused their servants and cattle to flee into the houses. But he who did not take the word of Jehovah to heart left his servants and his cattle in the field.

The expression "regarded not the word of Jehovah" is literally "set not his heart . . ." This is a similar expression to Ex. 7:23, where Pharaoh did not "set his heart" on the matter after the water was turned to blood.

This is the first plague where we see indication that the warnings were taken seriously by the Egyptians. This is

definite progress toward victory. We imagine that Pharaoh was displeased to see his subjects obeying the word of Moses and Aaron.

In Egypt cattle are usually kept out-of-doors from January to April. After that they are kept indoors for protection from the heat. Note that the livestock were kept in people's houses, a custom in many lands. See note 17 in Ex. ch. 8.

Giving attention to the word of God is the condition for deliverance from the coming judgments of God. God has promised to keep us from the hour of trial coming upon the whole world (Rev. 3:10). But we must heed His word to receive deliverance.

21. *How was the plague of hail started?* (9:22-23)

Moses stretched forth his hand with his rod toward heaven. In the three plagues just before the Passover, Moses stretched forth his hand and/or rod toward heaven (10:12-13, 21-22). Regarding the rod, see 4:17.

22. *What was the plague of hail like?* (9:23-25)

There was thunder⁷ and hail, and fire (presumably lightning) going to the land. Jehovah rained upon all the land of Egypt. Psalm 78:47-48: "He killed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with hail-stones. He delivered up to the hail their cattle, and their flocks to the lightning-flashes." Psalm 105:32-33 says, "He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig trees, and broke the trees of their borders." This fire was mingled together, perhaps into balls of fire.

Assuming that the hailstorm covered just the habitable area of Egypt, it would be a ribbon-shaped hailstorm, about ten miles wide and four hundred miles long, with a fan-shaped end.

At the south end of the Nile delta, near Cairo, about two inches of rain falls each year. Hail sometimes accompanies the rain, but not with great severity. South of this area rain

⁷Thunder in Hebrew is *voices of God*. Thunder is often used as a representation of God's voice. See Ex. 19:19; John 12:29; Job 37:2-5; Psalm 77:18.

is a rare occurrence. The rains usually fall from January to April. This is the time when the cattle are likely to be outdoors.

The extent of the hail disaster was indicated by the Egyptians themselves. In Ex. 10:7 they begged Pharaoh to release Israel before any more plagues came. The economy of the country had been ruined.

God's judgments in all ages have often been accompanied by dreadful hail. See Isa. 30:30; Ps. 18:13; Rev. 16:21.

23. *How did the Israelites fare in the hail storm? (9:26)*

There was no hail in Goshen where they were. Also the Israelites had no flies (8:22), no murrain of cattle (9:4, 6), and no darkness (10:23). Compare 11:7 and 12:13.

24. *How did Pharaoh respond to the plague of hail? (9:27-28)*

He summoned Moses and Aaron, and confessed his sin, and asked for prayer that the hail stop. He promised to let Israel go. The terribleness of the plague really seized him. Pharaoh had given up calling upon his magicians. The solution was obviously only in Moses and Aaron.

The wicked often seek the prayers of the righteous when the wicked find themselves defeated. Note the cases of King Jeroboam I (I Kings 13:6) and Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:24).

Pharaoh's confession that he had sinned *this time* sounds as if his guilt were not very deeply felt. He certainly had sinned before this (see 8:29).

Pharaoh's confession that Jehovah was righteous, and he and his people were wicked, is progress. He had once said he did not even know Jehovah (5:2). For similar confessions, see II Chron. 12:6 and Lam. 1:18. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of righteousness, that is, of God's righteousness and Christ's righteousness (John 16:10). Pharaoh repeated his confession about sinning in 10:16, during the plague of locusts.

This was the third time Pharaoh begged for a removal of a plague. Compare 8:8, 28.

Pharaoh made an unconditional promise to let Israel go if

the thundering and hail stopped.

25. *Where did Moses go to pray about the hail?* (9:29, 33)

He went out of the city. See notes on 8:12.

Moses was utterly confident that his prayers would stop the hail. And they did!

Moses indicated that Pharaoh was to learn from the plagues that the earth (or the land) was the LORD'S! Compare 8:10, 22; 9:14. Pharaoh had already learned that Jehovah was a God, and that there was no one like him. He is now to learn that Jehovah owned and controlled all the land. Compare Psalm 24:1. When this assertion is read against the background of divine kingship in Egypt and the Egyptian view of different deities controlling different areas and different activities of life and nature, the assertion takes on a tone of triumph, exultation, and victory. It is not Pharaoh who controlled and owned the earth. It was not even the gods of Egypt, but YAHWEH, God of Israel!

26. *Did Moses trust Pharaoh's promise to release Israel?* (9:30)

Moses knew he would not keep it. Moses knew this by God's revelation, rather than by his own natural understanding of human nature. (See 4:21; 9:35)

"Let favor be showed unto the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:10).

Note the full name *Jehovah God* in 4:30. It appears that Moses relished speaking this name in all its fulness in Pharaoh's hearing.

27. *What crops were smitten by the hail?* (9:31-32)

The flax and barley were smitten. These ripen about the same time, in the month of March. The hail hit when the barley heads had appeared and the flax was in bloom, that is, with immature heads blooming with pollen. This would be near the end of January. Regarding the importance of flax as the source for linen cloth, see note 17 in ch. 8.

The wheat and spelt mature in April, about a month after the barley. The hail fell at a time when it would not greatly harm the subsequent yield of wheat and spelt. Spelt (not rye, or rie) is a grain much like wheat, but inferior to it.

The desperate Egyptians were in sorrow and fright. Their sky-goddess Nut could not protect them from hail from the sky. (She is often pictured as a lanky nude female arching from horizon to horizon across the sky, touching the ground with finger tips and toes.) The goddess Isis and the god Seth also were thought to have care over agricultural production. But the gods were silent.

28. *Did Pharaoh keep his promise to let Israel go? (9:34-35)*

No. He hardened his heart, and his Egyptian servants did also. Observe that Pharaoh hardened *his own* heart. God had hardened his heart after the plague of boils (9:12). This time God let Pharaoh make the decision, and Pharaoh proved himself to be a hard-hearted liar. He also revealed (unintentionally!) that God's treatment of him was completely just. (See notes on 4:21 concerning the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.) In refusing to let Israel go, Pharaoh sinned "yet more." (See 9:27.)

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

10 And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Go in unto Pha-raoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servant, that I may show these my signs in the midst of them, (2) and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought upon Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am Je-ho-vah. (3) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went in unto Pha-raoh, and said unto him, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me. (4) Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring locusts into thy border: (5) and they shall cover the face of the earth, so that one shall not be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat

every tree which groweth for you out of the field: (6) and thy houses shall be filled, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the E-gyp-tians; as neither thy fathers nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned, and went out from Pha-raoh. (7) And Pha-raoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve Je-ho-vah their God: knowest thou not yet that E-gypt is destroyed? (8) And Mo-ses and Aar-on were brought again unto Pha-raoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve Je-ho-vah your God; but who are they that shall go? (9) And Mo-ses said, We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto Je-ho-vah. (10) And he said unto them, So be Je-ho-vah with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. (11) Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve Je-ho-vah; for that is what ye desire. And they were driven out from Pha-raoh's presence.

(12) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Stretch out thy hand over the land of E-gypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of E-gypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. (13) And Mo-ses stretched forth his rod over the land of E-gypt, and Je-ho-vah brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all the night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. (14) And the locusts went up over all the land of E-gypt, and rested in all the borders of E-gypt; very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. (15) For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing, either tree or herb of the field, through all the land of E-gypt. (16) Then Pha-raoh called for Mo-ses and Aar-on in haste; and he said, I have sinned against Je-ho-vah your God, and against you. (17) Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat Je-ho-vah your God, that he may take away from me this death only. (18) And he went out

from Pha-raoh, and entreated Je-ho-vah. (19) And Je-ho-vah turned an exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the border of E-gypt. (20) But Je-ho-vah hardened Pha-raoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Is-ra-el go.

(21) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Stretch out thy hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of E-gypt, even darkness which may be felt. (22) And Mo-ses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of E-gypt three days; (23) they saw not one another, neither rose any one from his place for three days: but all the children of Is-ra-el had light in their dwellings. (24) And Pha-raoh called unto Mo-ses, and said, Go ye, serve Je-ho-vah; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. (25) And Mo-ses said, Thou must also give into our hand sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Je-ho-vah our God. (26) Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve Je-ho-vah our God; and we know not with what we must serve Je-ho-vah, until we come thither. (27) But Je-ho-vah hardened Pha-raoh's heart, and he would not let them go. (28) And Pha-raoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thy-self, see my face no more; for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die. (29) And Mo-ses said, Thou has spoken well; I will see thy face again no more.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TEN
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the entire chapter, propose a brief theme or title for the entire chapter.
2. Why had God hardened Pharaoh's heart? (10:1) (Give the Biblical answer.)
3. Who was to be told of God's deeds in Egypt? (10:2)
4. What were the people to come to know because of the signs

(plagues)? (10:2)

5. What question did God ask of Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron? (10:3) Was this a fair question, seeing that God had hardened his heart? (10:1; Compare 9:33.)
6. What plague was to follow the hail? (10:4) When would it arrive?
7. How extensive would this plague be? (10:5-6)
8. Had Egypt ever experienced a plague like the one threatened? (10:6)
9. Who urged Pharaoh to let the men of Israel go? (10:7) Why did they urge this?
10. What (or who) caused Moses and Aaron to come back unto Pharaoh? (10:8)
11. Had Pharaoh softened up a little? (10:8; Compare 9:25, 28)
12. Who all were to depart from Egypt? (10:9)
13. Does 10:10 sound sincere or sarcastic? Compare 10:11.
14. What did Pharaoh think were the motives of Moses and Aaron? (10:10)
15. Why did Moses and Aaron leave Pharaoh's presence? (10:11)
16. What did Moses stretch forth to bring in locusts? (10:12, 13)
17. From which direction did the wind blow in locusts? (10:13)
18. How did the locusts compare to locusts of other times? (10:14)
19. What did the locusts eat? (10:15)
20. What confession did Pharaoh make? (10:16)
21. What two requests did Pharaoh make during the locust plague? (10:17)
22. By what term did Pharaoh describe the locust plague? (10:17)
23. What did Moses do to get the locust plague removed? (10:18)
24. What removed the locusts? Where did they end up? (10:19)
25. What happened to Pharaoh's heart after the locusts were removed? (10:20)
26. What did Moses stretch forth to bring on the darkness in Egypt? (10:21-22)
27. How heavy and dense was the darkness? (10:21)
28. How long did the darkness last? (10:22-23)
29. How did the darkness affect the dwellings of the Israelites? (10:23)

30. What compromise offer did Pharaoh make to Moses? (10:24)
 31. Could Israel have survived in the wilderness without their livestock? (10:24)
 32. Could Israel have offered sacrifices without taking livestock? (10:25)
 33. What additional demand did Moses make to Pharaoh besides that he let them take out all their own livestock? (10:25)
 34. Did Israel know what God would ask them to sacrifice? (10:26)
 35. Did Pharaoh agree to Moses' request? Why or why not? (10:27)
 36. What command and what threat did Pharaoh make to Moses? (10:28)
 37. Did Moses agree to accept Pharaoh's order? (10:29)
 38. Did Moses see Pharaoh's face again? (10:29; 12:30-31)
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EXODUS TEN: LOCUSTS AND DARKNESS (WORDS OF TERROR!)

I. LOCUSTS; 10:1-20

1. Advance warning; 10:1-6.
2. Fear; 10:7.
3. Defiance of Pharaoh; 10:8-11.
4. The disaster; 10:12-15.
5. The supplication; 10:16-18.
6. The deliverance; 10:19.
7. The hardening; 10:20.

II. DARKNESS; 10:21-23.

1. Stopped activity; 10:21-23.
2. Subdued Pharaoh; 10:24.
3. Strengthened Moses; 10:25-26.
4. Sharpened the conflict; 10:27-29.

EXODUS TEN: FOOD AND FAITH FORFEITED
(FOOD AND FAITH ARE MAN'S DEAREST POSSESSIONS.)

- I. FOOD FORFEITED to locusts; 10:1-20.
- II. FAITH FORFEITED through darkness; 10:21-29.
(Egypt's chief gods were sun-gods. The faith of the Egyptians in these gods was forfeited.)

FROM IGNORANCE TO HARDENING (Ex. 10:1; Eph. 4:18)

- I. Man's deliberate ignorance.
 1. Ignoring God's mercies; Ex. 8:13, 31; 9:33; 10:19.
 2. Ignoring God's power; Ex. 7:12; 8:18-19; 9:6-7.
 3. Ignoring God's past punishments; Ex. 9:12, 24-26; 10:3.
- II. God's dreadful hardening; Ex. 10:1, 20, 27.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS (Ex. 10:2)

1. God controls nature.
2. God condemns sinners.
3. God is the LORD.

THE LOCUSTS: GOD'S ARMY (Joel 2:11; Ex. 10:14)

1. Covered everything; Ex. 10:4, 14.
2. Consumed everything; Ex. 10:5, 15.
3. Conquered the king; Ex. 10:16-17.
4. Controlled by God; Ex. 10:19.

LOCUSTS AND DARKNESS,
TYPES OF FINAL PUNISHMENTS

1. Locusts; Ex. 10:4-5; Rev. 9:3.
2. Darkness; Ex. 10:21-23; Matt. 8:12; Jude 13.

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER TEN

1. *What were God's purposes in sending Moses back to Pharaoh after the plague of the hail? (10:1-2)*

God's purposes were (1) that He might show further signs (miracles and plagues) in the midst of Pharaoh and his servants; and (2) that Moses might tell to his children and grandchildren how God had made sport of the Egyptians, and the great signs God had done among them.

The expression "what things I have wrought" literally refers to actions which bring shame, disgrace, or mockery upon its objects.

By this time Pharaoh had gone so far in disobedience that there was no opportunity for him to turn and change his ways. Moses was sent to him primarily to provide an opportunity for God to work further signs upon Pharaoh. Moses' going to Pharaoh and warning him of the next plague would cause Pharaoh to know that the next plague was no accident, but was linked to Jehovah and Moses.

Moses himself certainly told the next generation about the miracles and signs in Egypt (Deut. 7:8, 18-19). But Moses was not the only one that was to tell of these wonders. He was only the representative of all the people. The Israelites have always related to their children God's wonders in Egypt. Psalms 78 and 105 are examples of the way the plague stories were told in song and story. We ourselves still also exult in God's triumphs in Egypt.

God repeated again His desire that Israel would know that He was Jehovah! (Compare 6:7.) Israel needed to learn this as much as the Egyptians did. The Israelites had worshipped idols in Egypt (Josh. 24:14; Ezek. 20:6-8), and they continued to do so even after their exodus.

2. *Why would God send locusts, and when? (10:3-4)*

God would send locusts because Pharaoh would not humble himself before the LORD. He had confessed after the last plague (hail) that he had sinned, and that Jehovah was righteous (9:27). But he hardened his heart afterwards (9:35).

God did not demand that Pharaoh humble himself so that He might, as it were, place his foot upon the neck of a defeated victim (Josh. 10:24). But rather God sought to humble Pharaoh that Pharaoh might be blessed, for God exalts the humble (James 4:10).

The locusts would be brought in *tomorrow*. Likewise the plagues of hail, murrain, and flies were announced one day in advance.

3. *What would the locusts do?* (10:5-6)

They would blanket the land because they were so numerous. They would eat up every sprig of green vegetation left by the hail. They would get into the houses of the Egyptians and fill them in a manner such as no one had ever seen before. They would even eat the wood of the trees. This would grieve the Egyptians because they were fond of trees. Their land did not have a great many trees because they were so close to the desert.

Joel 2:9-10 refers to a later locust plague: "They leap upon the city; they run upon the wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth quaketh before them; the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining." Compare also Psalm 105:34-35; 78:46.

See notes on 10:14-15 for more about the effects of the locusts.

4. *Why did Pharaoh's servants urge Pharaoh to let the Israelites go?* (10:7)

They had already suffered much in the previous plagues - the frogs, boils, hail, etc. They had probably been out in the land and had seen that Egypt was destroyed. They believed that Moses' threats were to be taken very seriously.

They asked Pharaoh, "How long will this man (Moses) be a snare (a trap, or noose) unto us. Send the men (of Israel) away, and let them serve Jehovah their God! Don't you know yet that Egypt has perished?" Note their use of the full title "Jehovah their God."

5. *Did Pharaoh make a sincere offer to let Israel go?* (10:8)

Not really. He did tell Moses and Aaron to go and serve Jehovah their God (and note that he also used God's full title). But almost before he finished uttering the offer, he was hedging. He demanded, "Who and who (else) will be going?" (Thus his question reads in Hebrew.)

6. *What feelings did Moses express about who would leave Egypt?* (10:9)

Total confidence! Total freedom! Total certainty! He declared, "With our young, and with our senior citizens, WE SHALL GO!" He did not request permission; he stated their intentions with force. (In the Hebrew Moses' reply to Pharaoh begins with the words "With our young, and with our old, . . ." Moses unhesitatingly threw back into the teeth of Pharaoh's demanding question the full list of who would be leaving Egypt.)

Moses made again the demand that Pharaoh let them go and *sacrifice*, the demand that he made at the very first meeting with Pharaoh (5:1).

7. *Did Pharaoh agree to let ALL Israelites go?* (10:10-11)

Defiantly not! His reply was contemptuous and sarcastic toward Moses and Aaron, and also toward Jehovah. The Hebrew may be translated, "May Jehovah be with you in like manner to that by which I am sending you out, (you) and your little ones! Watch out! Because (I know) evil is in your minds!" (literally, "before your faces").

Pharaoh knew he was not going to send them out; and he did not think Jehovah *could* deliver them any more than he *would* deliver them. He practically dared Jehovah to do anything. It is easy to imagine Pharaoh was smirking as he fired off his choice sarcastic saying. It is the kind of "put-down" that cruel people enjoy.

Note that to Pharaoh it was *evil* for Moses to consider taking the Israelites away from his slave service.

Pharaoh's restriction of permission to depart to the men only was pure tyranny, without reason or mercy. Even the

Egyptians, according to Herodotus,¹ held religious festivals at which women were in the habit of going with men. He tells of men and women sailing together to the assemblies, vast numbers in each boat, and that the number of men and women sometimes amounted to seven hundred thousand!

Oppressors often permit *adults* to exercise religious observances, while they seek to control the *children* and educate them away from the faith of their fathers. Proud persecutors yield a little to God, but yet refuse to obey His basic terms. They threaten the people of God. But their threats return upon the threateners.

Pharaoh's lack of genuine sincerity was demonstrated by his driving Moses and Aaron from his presence.

8. *What brought locusts into Egypt? (10:12-13)*

Moses stretched forth his hand and rod. (Compare 9:22-23) Then the LORD caused a wind to blow from the east for twenty-four hours, all day and all night, and the next morning the cloud of locusts appeared, and then settled all over Egypt.

Sometimes locust swarms first appear as a dark band on the horizon, heavy enough to block the light of the rising sun. Egypt has occasional invasions by locusts, so that this sight must have terrorized the people.

Usually locusts come into Egypt from the SOUTH² or southwest (from Ethiopia and Libya). But sometimes they do come into Egypt from the east, from Arabia.³ The fact that the wind blew so long suggests that the locusts were blown in from a great distance. The power of the LORD reached far beyond the borders of Egypt, and ruled over every land.

9. *What effects did the locusts have upon Egypt? (10:14-15)*

They utterly covered the land, so that the land was

¹Herodotus, *Histories*, II, 58, 60. Translated by George Rawlinson (London: Dent, 1964), Vol. II, pp. 143-144.

²The Greek O.T. translates 10:13, "The Lord brought a *south* wind upon the land." We feel that this is probably incorrect.

³Keil and Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

darkened. They ate every herb and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. Nothing green remained in all the land of Egypt.

The locusts in this plague were a variety more destructive and numerous than ever seen before. Compare Joel 2:2-3; Psalm 105:34-35; 78:46.

Locusts that develop to the migratory stage resemble the grasshopper, but are larger, being nearly three inches long. They are yellowish-tan in color, with dark roundish spots on their wings. A locust can eat its own weight daily. In a severe plague a square mile of land will have from one hundred to two hundred million locusts. They are hardy creatures. They can fly up to twenty hours continuously at ten to twelve miles an hour. Locusts have been tracked as far as 900 miles in fourteen days.⁴ In one day they can eat the growing food grains that took a year to grow; and the price of bread will soar beyond the reach of the poor (who then may be reduced to eating the locusts!). Palm trees bending with fruit may be reduced to bare spars, golden grainfields to stubble, and even wild marsh reeds disappear. While locust hordes are often a mile or less in width, clouds of locusts have been known to extend over 500 miles and to be so thick as to hide the sun completely as they fly over.

10. *What did the locusts cause Pharaoh to do? (10:16-18)*

He summoned Moses and Aaron in haste, and confessed that he had sinned, and begged them to forgive him, and pray for the LORD to take away this DEATH (the locusts).

Pharaoh sought forgiveness of his sin "this once." He did not ask for a purification of his moral nature. He had once before confessed to sin (9:27), but that conviction left him quickly when the hail stopped.

Pharaoh asked Moses to pray for him, rather than humbling himself before God and praying for himself. (See 9:28.)

Moses complied with Pharaoh's request, and went out

⁴Part of this information is taken from a vivid article, "Reports From the Locust Wars," *National Geographic* mag., April 1953, pp. 545-562.

from him and entreated Jehovah. See notes on 8:12.

11. *How were the locusts removed?* (10:19)

The LORD changed the direction of the wind, and a very strong wind from the (Mediterranean) sea blew the locusts into the Red Sea, and there remained not one locust in the land of Egypt.

Only God could remove such a scourge. Swarms of fully mature locusts are almost impossible to discourage once they have settled to feed. And they are hard to hurt with any quantity of poison not also deadly to other creatures.

This is the first mention of the Red Sea (Heb., *Yam Suph*). We feel that this is the same sea we now refer to as the Red Sea. (See Introductory Section VII.)

12. *Why did not Pharaoh release Israel after the locust plague?* (10:20)

Because Jehovah hardened his heart. See notes on 4:21; 9:12.

13. *What was unusual about the darkness in Egypt?* (10:21-23)

It came when Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven. See 9:22-23 and 10:12-13 on Moses' stretching forth his hand.

The darkness was so intense it could be "felt."

The Israelites had light while the Egyptians nearby were in darkness.

14. *Why was the darkness so dreadful?*

Darkness was a direct attack on some of Egypt's main gods. Re (or Ra), the sun-God, was also the creator of gods and men; his emblem was the sun's disk. Pharaoh himself was thought to be the embodiment of that god. Another great god was Amon, and he also was a sun-god. He was the chief deity of Thebes, the capital city during the XVIII dynasty, the time of Moses.

The darkness was so dense it could be "felt." This is to be taken literally. The same word meaning *feel* is used in Judges 16:26 (where Samson *felt* the pillars), and in Psalm 115:7 (where the hands are said to *feel*).

What caused this darkness? Was it a supernatural

darkness, like that which came the day Christ died (Luke 23:44)? The Greek O.T. reads in Ex. 10:22, "There was darkness, very black, even a *storm*, over all the land of Egypt three days." We feel that the darkness could have been caused by a dust storm. The other plagues involved use of natural creatures and things. God miraculously controlled their intensity and exactly when and where they affected. Severe sandstorms occur in Egypt during the spring months (which was the time of year this plague occurred).

The author of this book lived in western Kansas during the "dust bowl" days of the early 1930's. The dust clouds then rolled over the prairies, turning daylight into total blackness, so black that not even the position of windows could be detected by those in houses; so black that one feared to walk across a familiar room. God's darkness in Egypt was more severe than any Kansas "dust bowl" storm; but the mental picture of a darkness so heavy that it could be felt, and that caused no "one to rise from his place for three days" is very real.

What a terrifying prospect lies in store for those in hell, in the "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12)! If Pharaoh found the darkness of Egypt terrifying, what a fearsome fate awaits those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever"! (Jude 13)

5. *What final compromise offer did Pharaoh make to Moses?* (10:24)

He would let all the Israelites go, but they must leave flocks and herds behind. Pharaoh seems to be saying that the cattle of the Israelites were to be placed and kept in designated places under the guard of Egyptians, as a pledge of the Israelites' return. Perhaps Pharaoh simply coveted their herds to replace his own destroyed flocks.

Israel could not have survived long in the desert without the milk, meat, skins, and wool of their animals.

We suspect that Pharaoh had difficulty contacting Moses in the pitchy darkness!

16. *How did Moses receive the compromise about leaving their*

livestock behind? (10:25-26)

He insisted that every one of their cattle must go with them. Not a hoof was to be left behind. This was necessary because they did not know what Jehovah would ask them to sacrifice until they arrived at their destination.

In addition to that, Moses demanded that Pharaoh give to *them* "sacrifices and burnt-offerings," that is, additional animals from Pharaoh's herds. This may be a "dig" at Pharaoh, because his herds were extinct, or nearly so (9:6).

By making this extra demand Moses seems to be forcing the issue between him and Pharaoh to a decisive climax. He was not giving one concession to Pharaoh; rather he was upping his demands!

There is no indication that the Israelites received livestock from the Egyptians when they left Egypt, or that they even requested any at that time (12:35-36).

17. *How did Pharaoh try to get Moses away from him permanently?* (10:28)

He told Moses to get away from him, and not to come back, for he would kill him if he returned. Moses accepted the demand without fear. He knew, and told Pharaoh so plainly, that after just one more plague, Pharaoh's servants would come down to him, and bow down, and plead with the Israelites to leave (11:8). Even Pharaoh himself came to Moses and begged for them to leave (12:30-31).

Pharaoh made this final refusal because the LORD hardened his heart. He was no longer in control of his choices of conduct. On "hardening Pharaoh's heart," see 4:21; 14:4, 8.

18. *Did Moses warn Pharaoh of the final plague?* (10:29; 11:4)

Yes. Before leaving Pharaoh's palace, as Pharaoh ordered (10:28), Moses warned him of the final plague of the death of the firstborn. The conversation of 10:28-29 is continued in 11:4-8. 11:1-3 is an interruption in the narrative, inserted to explain how Moses knew about the last plague, and could therefore tell Pharaoh about it.