
DAILY READING

Exodus 1:1-22

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ISRAEL OPPRESSED IN EGYPT

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; each came with his family:

2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah;

3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin;

4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher.

5 The total number of Jacob's descendants was seventy; Joseph was already in Egypt.

6 Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation eventually died. **7** But the Israelites were fruitful, increased rapidly, multiplied, and became extremely numerous so that the land was filled with them.

8 A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. **9** He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and powerful than we are. **10** Come, let's deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and when war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country." **11** So

the Egyptians assigned taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³ They worked the Israelites ruthlessly ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with difficult labor in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work on them.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives—the first whose name was Shiphrah and the second whose name was Puah—¹⁶ “When you help the Hebrew women give birth, observe them as they deliver. If the child is a son, kill him, but if it’s a daughter, she may live.” ¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this and let the boys live?”

¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them.”

²⁰ So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very numerous. ²¹ Since the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Pharaoh then commanded all his people: “You must throw every son born to the Hebrews into the Nile, but let every daughter live.”