THE GREAT ESCAPE! THE BOOK OF
EXODUS
FROM CAIRO (MEMPHIS) TO THE PROMISED LAND

TEACHING SERIES BY PASTOR DAN BETZER
The
GREAT ESCAPE

A study of the book of EXODUS
taught by Pastor Dan Betzer

Exodus 1:13-14
And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to
serve with rigour: [14] And they made their lives
bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick,
and in all manner of service in the field: all their
service, wherein they made them serve, was with
rigour.

Somewhere around 1400 - 1500 B.C.
THE GREAT ESCAPE
A Study Of The Book Of Exodus

My good friend the Rabbi sat across the breakfast table from me. I told him I was beginning this series on the Book of Exodus and asked him for his opinion of this, one of the greatest sagas in human history. I was stunned by his response:

IT'S A MYTH!

A myth? The Book of Exodus? A fairy tale? Just fiction! Recently, while in Israel, I asked some authorities there, “How many Jews in Israel believe the Exodus story?” The answer given me: 85% of the Israelis believe the story is a fact.

So do I! I am convinced of it. It is one of the most wondrous odysseys ever told. Let’s study it together.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

The book of Exodus takes up where Genesis finishes. It is a continuing story.

As Exodus opens, we find the Jews, the Israelites, in captivity, in bondage in the Land of the Nile, Egypt. How did they get there? Why were they slaves? Why were they hated? When did all this happen? And ... why does it even matter after all these centuries?

The Bible opens with a section of five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They are known collectively as THE TORAH. We believe they were written by the Holy Spirit through the pen and personality of the great Moses.

This saga began almost 3700 years ago. At that time the known world was ruled by Egypt and its powerful leader, the Pharaoh. But...which Pharaoh?

The famous Cecil B. DeMille film The Ten Commandments lauds Ramses as the Pharaoh. This is highly unlikely for he most historians list his reign as beginning at a different time. Further, Ramses fits none of the criteria of the Bible.

The most likely Pharaohs would have been Seti, Thutmose I or Thutmose II. I personally lean toward Thutmose I, although this is somewhat speculative. We know he built a large palace at Memphis (ancient Cairo) and it is possible that it was his daughter
who found the baby Moses among the reeds of the Nile river. The Pharaoh’s daughter was named Hatshepsut. According to the Jewish historian Josephus (of 2,000 years ago), the daughter was named Thermuthis. Why did Josephus call her that? Thermuthis was the name of an Egyptian serpent god who was allegedly the protector, provider and nourisher of infants. Egyptian royalty usually chose animal gods or goddesses to be associated with. It could be a crocodile, a hippo, a falcon, etc. So, Hatshepsut may have been identified with the serpent goddess Thermuthis who protected children. If she was indeed the woman who found and protected Moses, then she would fit the historical description “because she protected a child from destruction when she drew him from the water.

More about this later.

**HOW DID THE JEWS GET IN EGYPT IN THE FIRST PLACE?**

For the Biblical answer to that we go to the book of Genesis. Joseph was one of the 12 sons of Jacob. This patriarch Jacob had four women, two of them his wives (Leah and Rachel) and two of the concubines. Joseph was the 11th son of Jacob, but the first by the wife of his first love, Rachel.

You are aware of the ‘twelve tribes of Israel,’ named after Jacob’s sons. Here are the twelve and their mothers:

**WIFE RACHEL** – Joseph and Benjamn

**WIFE LEAH** - Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulon

**CONCUBINE BILHAH** - Dan and Naphtali

**CONCUBINE ZILPAH** - Gad and Asher

The sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah hated Joseph and were conspiring to kill him, but instead sold him into slavery:

Genesis 37:19-28

And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. [20] Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. [21] And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. [22] And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. [23] And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many
colours that was on him; [24] And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. [25] And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. [26] And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? [27] Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. [28] Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Joseph left Israel with the taunts of his brothers ringing in his ears. The slave traders brought him into Egypt, the amazing land with a history stretching back into antiquity. When his great grandfather (Abraham) had come to Egypt many decades before, the Great Pyramid of Giza was already 1,000 years old.

Joseph was purchased in Egypt by one of Pharaoh’s top men, Potiphar. Some time later, due to the lust, treachery and lies of Potiphar’s wife, who accused him of attempted rape, Joseph was sent to prison. The ancient Egyptians operated a terrible maximum-security prison called The Prison of Tar, located in Saru on the border between Egypt and Israel (then known as Palestine). Here the Egyptians carried out their capital punishment by hanging. Joseph was not found guilty of a capital crime and therefore would have spent the rest of his life in prison. But God intervened! Genesis 41:14-16 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. [15] And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. [16] And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

What an amazing sudden change in Joseph’s life when some years later, God enabled Joseph to interpret the Pharaoh’s dreams and the young Jew was elevated to the position of Grand Vizier of Egypt.

The position now inherited by Joseph entailed 30 major functions, including:

- Manager of all royal residences
- Supervisor of all public works
- Head of the Egyptian military
- National chief of police
- Chief Justice of the Egyptian Supreme Court
• Manager of all the royal agriculture and farms
• Head of the Egyptian internal revenue service
• Etc.

Genesis 41:41-46  And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the
land of Egypt. [42] And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon
Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about
his neck; [43] And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they
cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.
[44] And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift
up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. [45] And Pharaoh called Joseph's name
Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah
priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.  [46] And Joseph was
thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out
from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

You will remember that Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to purchase grain, having no idea
that their long-since-hated brother Joseph was still alive, let alone the Grand Vizier of
Egypt.  Genesis 45:3  And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my
father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his
presence.

It was at this point that Joseph brought his very old father Jacob and all the family to
Egypt:  Genesis 45:17-20  And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren,
This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; [18] And take
your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of
the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. [19] Now thou art commanded,
this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your
wives, and bring your father, and come. [20] Also regard not your stuff; for the good
of all the land of Egypt is yours.

The family was granted, by Pharaoh himself, choice land in the Nile Delta, some of the
most fertile land in the Middle East. They were given GOSHEN, with its cities of Tanis
and Pithom (a total of 900 square miles). Archeologists have since found a lot of
construction there done with inferior bricks (because much later, as we shall see, the
Hebrews were forced to make improper bricks by order of the Pharaoh of the Exodus.)

Seventy of Joseph’s family were now in the Land of the Nile:  Genesis 47:27  And
Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions
therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

THE EGYPTIAN EFFORT AT JEWISH GENOCIDE

The Nazis were not the first who attempted to destroy an entire race of Jews. That dishonor goes back to Egypt:

Exodus 1:1-14

Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. [2] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, [3] Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, [4] Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [5] And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already. [6] And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.
[7] And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. [8] Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. [9] And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: [10] Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so 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 Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12] But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. [13] And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: [14] And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

For a long time, Egypt had been ruled by foreign pharaohs. Suddenly, they were overthrown and Egyptians took control of their own land - possibly with the 18th (XVIII) dynasty.

In all candor, the Jews should not have still been in Egypt. God had promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan. What were they still doing in the land of the Nile?

Is it possible that the Jews of that time considered PROSPERITY an evidence of God’s blessing? One would think so by watching much of today’s alleged Christian television. In their lap of luxury at that time, they felt safe in the foreign land near Goshen. Why, then, should we move?
If you are physically or materially blessed, ask yourself if you use your blessings to serve the Lord and enhance His influence in the world – or are you using them to increase your own best interests? Pastor John prayed over his flock, 3 John 1:2: **Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.**

When he believed Egypt was threatened by the burgeoning Jewish population, the Pharaoh decided on a dastardly plan:

Exodus 1:15-21

> And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:  
> (Don’t construe this as two individual women but rather two organizations of Hebrew midwives whose names mean “beauty” and “splendor.”)  
>  
> [16] And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; 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 Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. [18] And the king of Egypt 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 Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. [20] Therefore 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 houses.

These women would not obey Pharaoh’s edict to kill babies because they feared God (verse 17). It doesn’t seem like many American have any vestige of the fear of God. This is a certain fulfillment of Romans 3:18: **There is no fear of God before their eyes.**

Some years ago, TIME magazine carried an article by Mother Teresa in which she was quoted concerning abortion on demand: “You have spoken out against life-styles in the west, against materialism and abortion. How alarmed are you? If a mother can kill her own child, then what is left of the West to be destroyed? It is just that.

When Pharaoh could not get the midwives to kill innocent male babies, he went to plan #2:

Exodus 1:22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

The main river, of course, was the great and longest one in the world, the River Nile. When a Jewish mother gave birth to a male child, she or someone that family was required
by law to pitch it into the Nile. Were you to hitchhike a ride on a satellite, you could see the Nile River in its entirety. For almost 4,250 miles, the White Nile snakes through nine countries, from the Delta region of Lower Egypt all the way to Lake Victoria, the biggest of the African Great Lakes. Pharaoh meant for this waterway to be clogged with the corpses of dead male Jewish babies.

A number of civilizations throughout recorded history have attempted genocide of the Jews. All have failed and all have themselves been defeated, subdued or vanished from the human scene.

As we shall see in this study, one woman - whether intentional or not, we do not know - went against the royal edict and the child she pulled from the reeds was Moses. It was none other than a daughter of the Pharaoh himself.

THE SLAVERY OF THE JEWS IN EGYPT WAS A FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

God informed the Patriarch Abraham that Israel would have times of hardship in Israel - this warning coming hundreds of years before the actual happening. Note it: Genesis 15:13: And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger
in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

How remarkable! God said the Jews would one day land as strangers (foreigners) in a land that was not theirs (Egypt), and that they would be slaves (servants) and that they would be afflicted for 400 years. That is precisely what happened!

The Bible is filled with hundreds of divine prophecies (over 200 in the Old Testament alone foretelling Jesus birth and life as “God-become-man”, or, as John put it, “The Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.” (John 1) You will not find such fore-goings in the Koran. It is not a divine book, written by a mere man about seven centuries AFTER Christ and over 2,000 years AFTER the Jews lived in the Holy Land of Israel (hardly the ‘johnny-come-lately’ some Muslims would loudly proclaim).

SIDEBAR: I find it fascinating that there are several strange periods of 400 years each throughout scripture:

- From Joseph’s rule as Grand Vizier of Egypt to the birth of Moses, a period of 400 years was experienced during which the fabled Hyksos line of Pharaohs (who knew Joseph) fell and the Egyptians regained control of the Land of the Nile. Hence there came a ruler who was a stranger to the Jews and Joseph’s progeny: Exodus 1:8: Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

- We have just recently studied the books of Judges and Ruth, covering the time between the death of Joshua and the great prophet Samuel. That period lasted four hundred years (roughly).

- There was a period of 400 years between Malachi (last book in the Old Testament) and the birth of Christ. These were the alleged “silent years” when God never spoke to humankind until the angel appeared to Zechariah in the Great Temple in Jerusalem: Luke 1:5-13 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. [6] And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. [7] And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. [8] And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course, [9] According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. [10] And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. [11] And there appeared
unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.
[12] And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
[13] But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard;
and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

HOW IS IT THAT HISTORY IS TIL NOW FAIRLY
SILENT ABOUT JOSEPH, MOSES AND OTHERS?

That is a valid question and one that is often thrown into the faces of Christian witnesses.
Let’s consider the question of the Pharaoh:

Why didn’t the new Pharaoh know about Joseph and the Jews of that earlier day?  His
ignorance is understandable.  The names of the earlier Hyksos rulers who were so
cordially detested by Egyptians have hardly been recorded, far less the names of their
dignitaries and officials.  Even if this pharaoh of the new dynasty had known of
Joseph, that is as far as he would have wanted it to go.  Joseph was bound to be an
object of contempt to any nationally-conscious Egyptian for two reasons:

1.  He was an Asiatic and a miserable “Sandrambler”
2.  He was the highest official of the hated occupying power.

From the latter point of view any appeal to Joseph would hardly have been a
recommendation for Israel in the days of a new pharaoh.

THE BIBLE AS HISTORY / WERNER KELLER / BANTAM BOOKS / PAGE 109

This should not come as any surprise to any of us who now see commonly taught in public
schools and colleges “historical revisionism.”  I recently taught a class of college students
— NONE OF WHOM COULD GIVE NAMES AND DATES OF ANY U.S.
PRESIDENTS BEFORE JOHN F. KENNEDY.  The ignorance of history among
Americans is breathtaking!

Should we then be surprised when the Bible informs us there arose a Pharaoh who did not
remember Joseph of 400 years earlier?  Today that would be like remembering a leader in
the 1600's.  Historians might recall, but the rank and file of people today would have no
clue.

Next week, we learn of the BIRTH and DIVINE CALL of one of history’s greatest
leaders:

MOSES!