



## A Closer Look at Exodus

You can watch Pastor Andy's introduction to this study [here](#).

### Exodus 1:1-16: Oppressed in Egypt

Welcome to *Becoming God's People*, a Bible Study on the Book of Exodus. In this 5 session study during the season of Lent we'll look at five important passages of the book. Because we'll only be able to focus on five relatively short passages, Pastor Andy's introductory videos to each session will try to give the context for the passage and fill in the gaps to the story.

If you know the story and themes of Exodus and have a general sense of the Gospels that tell the story of Jesus, chances are you will be able to give meaningful witness to what God has been and continues to be up to in the world: freeing people from all that holds them back and shaping these free people to be God's people. It also happens to be our call as the church.

Today's text, the very beginning of the book, sets the stage: the Israelite people who came to Egypt with Joseph for relief from the famine have been enslaved by a new King who is scared of them – so scared that all the boy babies are going to be killed.

#### **Read Exodus 1:1-16**

**1** <sup>1-5</sup> These are the names of the Israelites who went to Egypt with Jacob, each bringing his family members:

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,

Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

Seventy persons in all generated by Jacob's seed. Joseph was already in Egypt.

<sup>6-7</sup> Then Joseph died, and all his brothers—that whole generation. But the children of Israel kept on reproducing. They were very prolific—a population explosion in their own right—and the land was filled with them.

<sup>8-10</sup> A new king came to power in Egypt who didn't know Joseph. He spoke to his people with alarm, "There are way too many of these Israelites for us to handle. We've got to do something:

Let's devise a plan to contain them, lest if there's a war they should join our enemies, or just walk off and leave us."

**11-14** So they organized them into work-gangs and put them to hard labor under gang-foremen. They built the storage cities Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh. But the harder the Egyptians worked them the more children the Israelites had—children everywhere! The Egyptians got so they couldn't stand the Israelites and treated them worse than ever, crushing them with slave labor. They made them miserable with hard labor—making bricks and mortar and back-breaking work in the fields. They piled on the work, crushing them under the cruel workload.

**15-16** The king of Egypt had a talk with the two Hebrew midwives; one was named Shiphrah and the other Puah. He said, "When you deliver the Hebrew women, look at the sex of the baby. If it's a boy, kill him; if it's a girl, let her live." (*The Message Translation*)

### **Questions for reflection and discussion**

- What's the most striking part of the story for you, the part you remember the most? Why do you think that is?
- Have you ever seen this story play out in modern times? Give some examples.
- What makes the Israelite people so scary to the Egyptian leaders all of a sudden?
- Why does Pharaoh have all the boy babies killed by let the girl babies live? How many months or years do you think he wanted to do this? Does this story have relevance to our day?
- What did you learn from reading this part of the story again?

**Prayer:** *God, thank you for this community of faith that gathers to reflect on your Word. Inspire us with your Word this Lent and renew our faith. You see the oppressed people in our world. You see our fear of others, our fear of losing power, our fear of a future we can't control. Ease our fears by giving us real hope and promise. Hear the cries of your people, close-by and around the world, and rescue all who are oppressed. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

**Next week:** Exodus 12:21-32 (Passover). If you have the time, read everything between tonight's scripture and next week's, maybe a couple chapters each day.

To be part of our Zoom Bible Study Wednesday's at 7:00 PM, click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5596136118?pwd=SSStXODZYdk4yOXdYTVdEYWJpUFBFQT09>