

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, Zeb-u-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-raoh 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. 10:27

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.

Psalm 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.
