

**“BEGINNINGS: A New King”
from Exodus 1:5-2:24 (selected verses)**

Exodus 1

5 The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.

6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, **7** but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.

9 “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. **10** Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.” **11** So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites **13** and worked them ruthlessly. **22** Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

Exodus 2

5 Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. **6** She opened it and saw a baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This is one of the Hebrew babies,” she said.

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?” **8** “Yes, go,” she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother.

9 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” So the woman took the baby and nursed him. **10** When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, “I drew him out of the water.”

11 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. **12** Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian.

23 During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. **24** God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.

Introduction

“*The Turkish Army Topples Erdogan* was the headline on July 16th of Al-Ahram's front page. That’s the leading state-owned newspaper not in Turkey, but in Egypt. It reflected the wishful thinking of the ruling regime in Egypt, which came to power after plotting a brutal coup against the first democratically elected Egyptian president three years ago. According to some reports, the representative of the regime in the United Nations Security Council attempted to block a statement to respect the democratically elected government of Turkey. There were no surprises there...” So writes Omar Ashour for Aljazeera news. “Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.”

It was July 3, 2013 when Mohamed Morsi was overthrown by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi after massive protests. In 2011, Mohamed Hussein Tantawi deposed Hosni Mubarak and transferred power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of Egypt and then the Muslim Brotherhood.

Back in 1954, it was Gamal Abdel Nasser over Muhammad Naguib; 1952 Muhammad Naguib over King Farouk. “Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.”

Going way back, the Assyrians conquered Egypt in 669 B.C. Then the Persian conquest in 525; Alexander the Great in 332; then Rome in 31 B.C. Fast forward to 1517 A.D. The Turkish Ottoman Empire takes over Egypt. In 1805, Ottoman Albanian commander Muhammed Ali established rule before English control took over in 1882. “A new king over Egypt.”

In the 1780s, some thought that George Washington should be the colonies’ king. Washington flatly refused the idea as the Constitution of the United States was being formed. So, every four or eight years since 1789, “a new president” has come to power. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and on to the 44th and soon 45th president.

In every country, in every government the world over, there’s always the rise of a “new king” in some form. Some good, some not-so good, some downright evil.

I. Life in Egypt Was Good (Exodus 1:1-6)

Over the millennia of Egyptian history and the two centuries of U.S. history, there have been good times and bad times. The Book of Exodus begins with the good times described at the end of Genesis. For Exodus is really the sequel to Genesis. The first word in Exodus is “And...” a continuation of the story.

Remember when the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh said, “Bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.” But now “Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died. The Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.” So over about 400 years, the Israelite population grew from the 70 in Joseph’s family to about 3 million.

It seemed that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph was fulfilling the covenant promises. “Be fruitful and multiply” in the Genesis 1 Creation. To Abraham – “Count the stars! So shall your offspring be” in Genesis 15. To Jacob – “Be fruitful and multiply” in Genesis 35.

God is faithful. You and I can depend on him. If you are a believer, you are in covenant with God. Exodus, *ex-hodos* means “the way out.” The Lord’s salvation covenant was sealed with the blood of the Passover Lamb. That was looking forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Savior being the perfect sacrifice, saving us from the judgment of sin and death. As Paul writes in I Corinthians 5: “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast.”

Whatever is going on in our lives today, whatever adversity you may be experiencing, whatever sorrow or pain comes your way, friends, don't give up. The Lord who delivered Israel out of bondage, the Exodus – the way out, he has done, is doing, and will do the same for us by faith in Jesus Christ.

II. Always a New King (Exodus 1:8-10)

Then it says, “A new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. ‘Look,’ the pharaoh said to his people, ‘the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. We must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.’ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor... But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread.”

The number of Christians in Communist China is growing so steadily that by 2030 it could have more churchgoers than America. Officially, the People's Republic of China is an atheist country but that's changing fast as many of its 1.3 billion citizens seek meaning and spiritual comfort that neither communism nor capitalism seem to have supplied. Christian congregations have skyrocketed since churches began reopening when Chairman Mao's death in 1976 signaled the end of the Cultural Revolution. Less than four decades later, some believe China is now poised to become not just the world's number one economy but also its most numerous Christian nation.

By 2030, China's total Christian population would exceed 247 million, placing it above Mexico, Brazil and the United States as the largest in the world. Professor Fenggang Yang is a leading expert on religion in China at Purdue University. He said “Mao thought he could eliminate religion. He thought he had accomplished this. It's ironic – they didn't. They actually failed completely.”

When will powerful leaders realize? When God's people are oppressed or suppressed, their numbers grow and grow. Someone said, tongue-in-cheek, that this pharaoh (probably Ramses I) was “several bricks short of a load.” It turns out that a boy is, in fact, thrown in the Nile but hardly to die. Rather that child grew up in pharaoh's own house, being nursed by that boy's own mother who was paid for that motherly task by pharaoh's own daughter! If pharaoh thought that he would ever get the best of the Israelites, the Hebrew author of Exodus wants us to know for certain that that would never happen.

III. From Palace to People (Exodus 2:11-24)

Then in Exodus 2, “One day, after” Charlton Heston grew up, I mean, “After Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor.” Somewhere along the way, growing up in the palace, Moses learned that he was adopted. He was a descendant of Joseph.

When did you come to know faith in Jesus? How did you become a Christian? For when you and I trust in Christ, we are “adopted” into the family of God. We become descendents of Abraham! Speaking

about Jesus, the apostle John said, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

Then it says, “Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled and went to live in Midian” (Saudi Arabia).

The Midianites were distant relatives of Moses. Remember that Midian was the son of Abraham by Keturah (that’s in Genesis 25). God is again working out his plan through the convoluted, dysfunctional families of the patriarchs. Perhaps Moses insight into the nature of Yahweh came in this time of exile in Midian.

Then we read the end of Exodus chapter 2, “During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.” And story unfolds over the next 12 chapters to the exodus itself with the crossing of the Red Sea.

Conclusion

So, what do you think God wants you to learn, to know, to live in the light of Exodus 1 & 2? I mean, 1) if things in life for you are going well, things are good, do you take it for granted? Or do you regularly give thanks to the Lord in prayer, in reading his word, in talking with family and friends, in serving others with your blessings? Or, 2) Who or what are the new kings “to whom Joseph meant nothing,” to whom Jesus means nothing? What demands do they place on you that pull you away your faith or your participating in the church, your faith community? Or, 3) With your new identity in Christ, are you moving from the comfort and convenience of the “palace” to spend time and energy and love with the people of God?

These are the kinds of question to ask and answer when you read the Bible. This is the Word of God written. We read the Bible not only to know, but to understand and live it. May you know and personally understand the meaning of Exodus.

Let us pray together.