

Fruitful in Captivity: Exodus 1's Growth in Egypt

Scriptures for Today: Exodus 1:1–7

Exodus 1:1–7 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.

Introduction to Exodus 1: Growth in Egypt

The Book of Exodus is one of the richest books in all of Scripture. It picks up where Genesis leaves off and shows us God taking a small family and forming them into a great nation. But Exodus is more than history — it's prophecy in picture form. Almost every major event points us to Christ and God's plan of redemption.

We see Moses raised up as a deliverer to lead God's people out of Egypt — a picture of Christ leading us out of the bondage of sin. We see the crossing of the Red Sea — a picture of salvation, passing from death to life by God's power. We see God give His law at Mount Sinai — showing us His holiness and our need for a Mediator. We see the tabernacle built — every detail pointing to the presence of God among His people and ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, "the Word made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Exodus is not just Israel's story — it is our story in shadow form. It is packed full of prophecy, types, and pictures that reveal God's plan of salvation, culminating in Christ.

In Genesis, God made a promise to Abram:

Genesis 12:2-3 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: **3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

How is it possible that all families of the earth were to be blessed through Abraham?

Many people think they are blessed through Abraham because they are physical descendants;

Because of their DNA, their bloodline, because the location that they live...

Understand that Genesis 12 is defined as the moment that God preached the gospel unto Abraham...

Galatians 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen **through faith**, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

How are all nations of the world blessed? Through faith in Jesus Christ.

God preached the gospel to Abraham that through his seed, (that's Jesus Christ) all nations would be blessed. Salvation would come through faith.

And because Abraham believed God, it was counted to him for righteousness. The gospel has always been the same from the beginning.

So Abraham had Isaac in his old age. The same promise that God made to Abraham, he confirmed that promise with Isaac.

And Isaac had Jacob whom the blessing was passed down. And God reaffirmed the promise with Jacob and God gave Jacob a new name—Israel. Israel had 12 sons who became 12 tribes which would soon become the mighty nation of Israel.

Exodus means “a going out,” or “a departure” but before Israel could go out, they had to grow in. Before God would redeem them from Egypt, He would multiply them in Egypt. These opening verses in Exodus chapter 1 remind us that God’s promises don’t stop in hard times. Israel entered Egypt as a small family, but under God’s blessing they grew into a mighty nation — even while in a foreign land.

The lesson is clear: **God’s people can still be fruitful in captivity, because His blessing is not bound by circumstances.**

Outline of Exodus 1

Looking back at Genesis 50:

- 1–3. Joseph mourns and embalms Jacob.
- 4–14. Jacob’s burial in Canaan.
- 15–21. Joseph reassures his brothers.
- 22–26. Joseph’s final days and death in Egypt.

Exodus 1 Overview:

- 1–7. Israel’s growth in Egypt.
- 8–14. A new Pharaoh oppresses them.
- 15–22. Pharaoh tries to destroy them through infanticide.

Exodus 2 Preview:

1–10. The birth of Moses.

11–25. Moses flees Egypt but God remembers His covenant.

Focus on Exodus 1:1–7

So as we focus in on these first verses of Exodus 1, we see the beginning of the physical multiplication of Israel in Egypt. But this multiplication and growth as a physical nation is simply a foreshadowing of something much greater that will take place later in scripture.

Remember that everything in the Bible revolves around one person.
Who is that one person? Jesus Christ.

Keep that in mind as we study these verses and at the end, we're going to look at the gospel connection.

Exposition of Exodus 1:1–7

“Now these are the names”

Exodus 1:1 Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.

Exodus begins by naming the sons of Jacob, also known as Israel, tying the story directly to Genesis. This is not a new story, but a continuation of God's redemptive plan.

A lot of times when people read lists of names in the Bible, they often skip through all those names. But names are very important. Because remember, everything in the Bible is pointing to Jesus Christ. Even the lists of names.

There are just 12 names here. And one of these sons received a special blessing back in Genesis 49

Genesis 49:8-12 Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. 9 Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*. 11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in

wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: 12 His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

This is the blessing that Jacob gave Judah before he died. Not only is this a blessing for Judah, but it's also a prophecy of Jesus Christ coming and ruling.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah"

"he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: 12 His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

Revelation 1:14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

Revelation 19:12-13 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. **13** And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

"which came into Egypt,"

Exodus 1:1 Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel, **which came into Egypt**; every man and his household came with Jacob.

So when Exodus 1:1 says, "*which came into Egypt*," this isn't just a historical detail. This is **prophetic groundwork being laid**. This sets the stage for what is going to take place later on in this book of Exodus. Remember exodus means "a going out". And we are going to see that as we progress through this book and we'll see how it is a picture of many things regarding Jesus Christ.

The same way that Israel came into Egypt to be saved from famine and starvation, Jesus Christ came into Egypt to escape the hand of Herod.

Matthew 2:13-15 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. **14** When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: **15** And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

“Seventy souls”

Exodus 1:1-5 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*.

When Jacob entered Egypt, he had a good-sized family. The entire house of Jacob that entered Egypt was Seventy Souls, that does not include the wives of his sons. Even though this was a good-sized family, it was very small compared to the great multitude that this family would turn into.

This is a reminder that **God does big things through small beginnings.**

Last Sunday Josh preached a sermon titled, "God Makes the Small Mighty". If you were not here for that sermon, I encourage you to go back on our website and watch it.

In your own life it's important to remember that God takes small things and uses them in a mighty way. God can use this small church to reach millions of people with the Gospel.

Maybe you feel small and broken in this life. God can take your small and broken life turn it into something mighty for His glory.

“Joseph died”

Exodus 1:6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

Joseph was a man that God used in an amazing way, not only to save the children of Israel but also the entire world from starvation. All countries came into Egypt to buy corn under the leadership of Joseph.

Joseph went from being thrown into a pit and despised by his brothers, to being second in command in the most powerful nation in the world at the time.

Unfortunately, Joseph's days on earth came to an end, along with all his brethren, and that entire generation. Nevertheless, God's plan and promises did not stop.

Leaders and generations may pass, but **God's plan never dies.**

1 Peter 1:24-25 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: **25** But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

“The children of Israel were fruitful...”

Exodus 1:7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Notice the verbs: **fruitful, increased abundantly, multiplied, waxed exceeding mighty, filled the land.**

This is a fivefold description that emphasizes **supernatural growth**. God made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would make of them a great nation. This is both spiritual and physical.

Genesis 46:2-4 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am I*. **3** And he said, *I am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there **make of thee a great nation**: **4** I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

In Exodus chapter 1 verse 7, we see the beginnings of the physical fulfillment of this promise taking place.

Fruitfulness is not limited by geography, or hardship — it comes from God’s hand. The children of Israel were in a land that was not their home. But because they were inside of God's will for them, God was the one who allowed them to increase abundantly and become a mighty people.

And as we later continue through this chapter, we will see that the blessings and abundance are accompanied by oppression and affliction...

Doctrinal Truths in Exodus 1:1–7

1. **God is Faithful to His Covenant.** What He promised to Abraham is now happening hundreds of years later.

Numbers 23:19 God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

2. **God Brings Growth in Adversity.** Egypt was not home, but it was the place God chose to multiply His people.

Different stages in life bring opportunities for learning and spiritual growth. You might not know why you are going through a particular situation. Remember God is using it for your own good.

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; **3** Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. **4** But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

3. **Man is mortal, God's Plan is Immortal.** Joseph's flesh died, that generation passed, but God's purpose lived on.
4. **Fruitfulness is God's Blessing.** True increase — whether physical, spiritual, or eternal — comes from Him.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Practical Applications for Exodus 1:1-7

1. **Don't despise small beginnings.**

If God can take seventy souls and turn them into a mighty nation, He can take your life and use it in a mighty way. Stay humble and ask the Lord to use you. And He will.

2. **Expect God to work even in hard places.** Egypt was not ideal, yet Israel grew. God often uses trials to bring increase. When you go through adversity and rely on the Lord, your faith will increase, you will gain more patience.
3. **Anchor your hope in God's promises, not in human leaders.** Joseph died, but God remained faithful. God forbid if one of us dies, God's plan is not going to waiver. The command to preach the gospel does not change.

Many ministries and churches die with their leaders. But when you make God the #1 leader in your life and your hope is grounded in Him, His work will continue.

4. **Seek fruitfulness in your own life.** True fruit is not wealth or a comfortable life but abiding in Christ and multiplying in faith (John 15:5).

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Warnings and Encouragements From Exodus 1:1–7

Warnings:

- Don't measure success only by present circumstances. Israel was in Egypt — a land of captivity — yet God was working. Remember that in your own life...
- Don't put your hope in human saviors. Joseph was great, but he died. Only God's plan lasts.

Don't put your hope in us, we are fallible men, God is infallible.

Encouragements:

- God can bless you in a foreign land, a hard season, or a trial.

People miss out on God's blessings all the time because they are afraid to simply rely on the Lord. In my own life, if hadn't taken a step of faith last year and travelled across the country to visit Josh in Washington, I would have missed out on amazing blessings.

If Josh did not take a step of faith last year and pack up all of his stuff after just moving to Washington and come all the way back to Kentucky, he would have missed out on amazing blessings.

God gets all the glory. He brought all of us together. We thank God for this awesome church that he has given us.

Every single day the decisions you make will determine whether you receive blessings from God or not. You can choose to sin or choose to obey. You can choose to seek His will or to seek your own will. And remember, if you seek God's will, even when you are facing challenges and hardship, He will bless you. Don't miss out on those blessings.

The Gospel Connection in Exodus 1:1–7

Just as God multiplied His people in Egypt, Christ builds His church in a hostile world. Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18**: "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Joseph died, but Jesus lives forever. Through His death and resurrection, He brings not only physical life but eternal life. Just as Israel was fruitful in Egypt, believers are called to bear fruit in Christ even while living in a fallen world.

Jacob went into Egypt with his 12 sons. A great explosion of God's people came forth. In like manner, Jesus chose 12 disciples and through those 12 disciples and the preaching of the gospel of faith in Jesus Christ, a mighty spiritual nation came forth and is still increasing today.

Conclusion: Fruitful in Captivity

From seventy souls to a mighty nation, God proved that His promises cannot be stopped by death, distance, or difficulty.

Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

One-Sentence Takeaway: *If God could multiply Israel in Egypt, He can multiply grace, faith, and fruitfulness in your life — no matter where you are.*

Let's pray.