



The fourth generation would be equal to 400 years, since Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. Of course, a generation would be fewer years today. God also fulfilled the promise of multiplying the people (Gen. 46:3), & Jacob's original seventy became over a million! They increased in spite of persecution & suffering. See Acts 7:15-19.

*Notes for 1:1 Jacob's family grew into a large nation. But, as foreigners & newcomers, their lives were quite different from the Egyptians. The Hebrews worshiped one God; the Egyptians worshiped many gods. The Hebrews were wanderers; the Egyptians had a deeply rooted culture. The Hebrews were shepherds; the Egyptians were builders. The Hebrews were also physically separated from the rest of the Egyptians: They lived in Goshen, north of the great Egyptian cultural centers.*

B. A new king (vv. 8-14).

Acts 7:18 says this was "another king of a different kind" (literal Gk.). That is, the new king was from a different people. History tells us that about this time the "Hyksos" invaders took over in Egypt. They were Semites, probably from Assyria (Isa. 52:4). The new king warned his people that the presence of so many Jews was a threat to their own rule; so they decided to deal vigorously with the Hebrews. Since Joseph had been the savior of Egypt, it is unlikely that an Egyptian king would not know him, but this new king was an outsider.

the bondage in Egypt is but a picture of the sinner's spiritual bondage to this world. The Jews went down to Egypt & lived in the best of the land (Gen. 47:6), but this luxury later turned into trial & suffering. How like the path of the lost sinner today; sin promises pleasure & freedom, but it brings sorrow & bondage.

*Notes for 1:9,10 Pharaoh was afraid the Israelites were becoming so numerous that they would organize & threaten his kingdom, so he made them slaves & oppressed them to kill their spirit & stop their growth. Slavery was an ancient practice used by almost all nations to employ conquered people & other captives. The great pyramids of Egypt were built with slave labor. Although Israel was not a conquered nation, the people were foreigners & thus lacked the rights of native Egyptians.*

*Notes for 1:11 There were levels of slavery in Egypt. Some slaves worked long hours in mud pits while others were skilled carpenters, jewelers, & craftsmen. Regardless of their skill or level, all slaves were watched closely by ruthless slave masters, supervisors whose assignment was to keep the slaves working as fast as possible. They were specialists at making a slave's life miserable.*

help create a mighty nation. Because he was faithful to do the humble job of shepherding, God used him to accomplish greater tasks as liberator, lawgiver, & leader.

*Notes for 2:17 How did Moses handle these shepherds so easily? As an Egyptian prince, Moses would have been well trained in the Egyptian military, the most advanced army in the world. Even a large group of shepherds would have been no match for the sophisticated fighting techniques of this trained warrior.*

*Notes for 2:18 Reuel is also called Jethro in Ex 3:1.*

*Notes for 2:23-25 God's rescue doesn't always come the moment we want it. God had promised to bring the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt (Genesis 15:16; 46:3,4). The people had waited a long time for that promise to be kept, but God rescued them when he knew the right time had come. God knows the best time to act. When you feel that God has forgotten you in your troubles, remember that God has a time schedule we can't see.*

(Note: The text in Acts 7:24 may indicate that Moses killed the man in self-defense, but even if he did, he was still a criminal in the eyes of the Egyptians.) His only recourse was to flee from the land.

While we may justly criticize Moses for his misdeeds, we must admire his courage & convictions. As Dr. Vance Havner has said (commenting on Heb. 11:24-26): "Moses saw the invisible, chose the imperishable, & did the impossible!" Faith has its refusals, & these refusals lead to rewards. Unfortunately, Moses was too hasty in his actions, & God had to set him aside for further training. The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but spiritual (2 Cor. 10:3-6).

*Notes for 2:12-14* Moses tried to make sure no one was watching before he killed the Egyptian. But as it turned out, someone did see, & Moses had to flee the country. Sometimes we mistakenly think we can get away with doing wrong if no one sees or catches us. Sooner or later, however, doing wrong will catch up with us as it did with Moses. Even if we are not caught in this life, we will still have to face God & his evaluation of our actions.

*Notes for 2:15* To escape punishment for killing the Egyptian, Moses ran away to Midian. He became a stranger in a strange land, separated from his home & family. It took many years after this incident for Moses to be ready to serve God. But he trusted God instead of fearing the king (Heb 11:27). We may feel abandoned or isolated because of something we have done. But though we feel afraid & separated, we should not give up. Moses didn't. He trusted God to deliver him, no matter how dark his past or bleak his future.

D. A long delay (vv. 16-25).

Moses' life is divided into three equal periods: forty years as a prince in Egypt; forty years as a shepherd in Midian; & forty years as leader of Israel. Beginning this second period, Moses assisted the women as they tried to water their flocks, & this kindness led to his meeting Jethro & marrying Jethro's daughter Zipporah. Note that the girls identified Moses as "an Egyptian". This suggests that he was more like the Egyptians than he was like the Jews. Moses spent forty years as a faithful servant in Midian, & here God prepared him for the difficult tasks that lay ahead.

Rejected by his nation, he took a Gentile bride, & is thus a picture of Christ who is today getting a bride for Himself from the nations. "Gershom" means "a stranger" & suggests that Moses knew his real place was with the people of Israel back in Egypt.

It seemed that God was doing nothing, yet He heard the groans of His people & was waiting for the right time to act. Whenever God works, He chooses the right worker, uses the right plan, & acts at the right time. Moses was taking care of a few sheep; soon he would be shepherding a whole nation. The shepherd's crook would be exchanged for the rod of power, & he would be used of God to

*Notes for 1:12* The Egyptians tried to wear down the Hebrews by forcing them into slavery & mistreating them. Instead, the Hebrews multiplied & grew stronger. When we are burdened or mistreated, we may feel defeated. But our burdens can make us stronger & develop qualities in us that will prepare us for the future. We cannot be overcomers without troubles to overcome. Be true to God in the hard times; even the worst situations can make us better people.

C. A new strategy (vv. 15-22).

The king's plan to kill all the male babies would have met with great success except for the intervention of God. He used the midwives to confound the king, just as later He used a baby's cry to reach the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. God uses the weak things of this world to defeat the mighty. Of course, the king's strategy was born of Satan, the murderer. This was but another attempt on Satan's part to destroy the Jews & keep the Messiah from being born. Later, Satan would use King Herod to try to slay the baby Jesus.

Was it right for the women to defy the orders of the king? Yes, for "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When the laws of the land are definitely contrary to the command merits of God, then the believer has the right & duty to put God first. God blessed them for their faith. Keep in mind that this Pharaoh wanted to drown God's people; later, the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 15:4-5). We reap what we sow, even though the harvest may be slow in coming (Ecc. 8:11).

We also see in this chapter Satan's attempt to bring the people of God into bondage. Verse 1 calls the Jews "the Children of Israel" & Israel means "a prince with God" (Gen. 32:28) the prince of the world (Satan) defying the prince with God! But God's people are not of this world & will be delivered from Satan's bondage!!!

*Notes for 1:15-17* Shiphrah & Puah may have been supervisors over the midwives, or else these two were given special mention. Hebrew midwives helped women give birth & cared for the baby until the mother was stronger. When Pharaoh ordered the midwives to kill the Hebrew baby boys, he was asking the wrong group of people. Midwives were committed to helping babies be born, not to killing them. These women showed great courage & love for God by risking their lives to disobey Pharaoh's command.

*Notes for 1:17-21* Against Pharaoh's orders, the midwives spared the Hebrew babies. Their faith in God gave them the courage to take a stand for what they knew was right. In this situation, disobeying the authority was proper. God does not expect us to obey those in authority when they ask us to disobey him or his Word. The Bible is filled with examples of those who were willing to sacrifice their very lives in order to obey God or save others. Esther

& Mordecai (Esther 3:2; 4:13-16) & Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego (Daniel 3:16-18) are some of the people who took a bold stand for what was right. Whole nations can be caught up in immorality (racial hatred, slavery, prison cruelty); thus following the majority or the authority is not always right. Whenever we are ordered to disobey God's Word, we must "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

*Notes for 1:19-21 Did God bless the Hebrew midwives for lying to Pharaoh? God blessed them not because they lied, but because they saved the lives of innocent children. This doesn't mean that a lie was necessarily the best way to answer Pharaoh. The midwives were blessed, however, for not violating the higher law of God that forbids the senseless slaughter of innocent lives.*

## EXODUS 2

It seemed as though God was doing nothing. The Jews prayed & cried out for help (2:23-25) & wondered where God's deliverance was. Had they only remembered the Word in Gen. 15, they would have known that 400 years had to elapse. During these years, God was preparing his people, but He was also waiting in mercy & giving the wicked nations of Canaan time to repent (Gen. 15:16). God is never in a hurry; He had His leader chosen for the Hebrews & was preparing him for his mighty task. Note the means God used to prepare Moses:

### A. A godly home (vv. 1-10).

Read Acts 7:20-28 & Heb. 11:23. In Ex. 6:20, we learn that the godly parents of Moses were Amram & Jochebed. That they should wed during such difficult times was an act of great faith & love, & God rewarded them for this. Since they acted by faith (Heb. 11:23), they must have had a communication from God concerning the birth of their son, Moses. He was a "goodly child" (beautiful in the sight of God), & so they gave him to God by faith. Parents never know what God sees in each child that is born, & it is important that parents raise their children in the fear of God. It took real faith to put the child in the river, the very place where the young boys were being destroyed! Note how God used a child's tears to touch the princess, & how He arranged for the child's own mother to raise him. Read Job 5:13.

### B. A special education (Acts 7:22).

Raised in the palace as the adopted son of the princess, Moses was trained in the great Egyptian schools. Even today, scholars marvel at the learning of the Egyptians. There is nothing wrong with education. Certainly Moses made use of his training. But it

was no substitute for the wisdom of God that came through suffering & trial & his personal walk with God.

*Notes for 2:3 This tiny boat made of papyrus reeds was fashioned by a woman who knew what she was doing. Egyptian river boats were made with these same reeds & waterproofed with tar. The reeds, which grew as tall as 16 feet, could be gathered in swampy areas along the Nile. Thus a small basket hidden among the reeds would be well insulated from the weather & difficult to see.*

*2:3ff Moses' mother knew how wrong it would be to destroy her child. But there was little she could do to change Pharaoh's new law. Her only alternative was to hide the child & later place him in a tiny papyrus basket on the river. God used her courageous act to place her son, the Hebrew of His choice, in the house of Pharaoh. Do you sometimes feel surrounded by evil & frustrated by how little you can do about it? When faced with evil, look for ways to act against it. Then trust God to use your effort, however small it seems, in His war against evil.*

*Notes for 2:7,8 When Pharaoh's daughter had discovered Moses, Miriam, the baby's sister, quickly took the initiative to suggest a nurse (her mother) who might care for the baby. Their family was reunited. Special opportunities may come our way unexpectedly. Don't let the fear of what might happen cause you to miss an opportunity. Be alert for the opportunities God gives you, & take full advantage of them.*

*Notes for 2:9 Moses' mother was reunited with her baby! God used her courageous act of saving & hiding her baby to begin his plan to rescue His people from Egypt. God doesn't need much from us to accomplish His plan for our lives. Focusing on our human predicament may paralyze us because the situation may appear humanly impossible. But concentrating on God & His power will help us see the way out. Right now, we may feel unable to see through our troubles. Focus instead on God, & trust Him for the way out. That is all He needs to begin His work in us.*

### C. A great failure (vv. 11-15; Heb. 11:24-26).

Moses was forty years old when he made his great decision to leave the palace & become the deliverer of Israel. We admire him for his love for his people & for his courage, but we must confess that he ran ahead of the Lord in the way he acted. Verse 12 indicates that he was walking by sight, not by faith, for "he looked this way & that" before he killed the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew. Like Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane, Moses depended on the sword in his hand & the energy in his arm. Later he was to exchange that sword for a rod, & the power would be from God's hand, not his own (see 6:1). He buried the body, but this was no proof that the deed went unseen. The next day he found two Jews fighting & tried to help them, only to discover that friends & enemies alike knew he had killed a man.