

Oppression in Egypt

Exodus 1

Introduction

- With the death of Joseph, the Genesis record came to an end, and approximately **400 years pass** before another scriptural account focuses back on the descendants of Israel in Egypt.
- Exodus begins where Genesis ended: with a listing of Jacob's descendants.

ISRAELITES MULTIPLY (Exo. 1:1-7)

Exodus 1:1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, ³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, ⁴ Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵ All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt.

⁷ But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

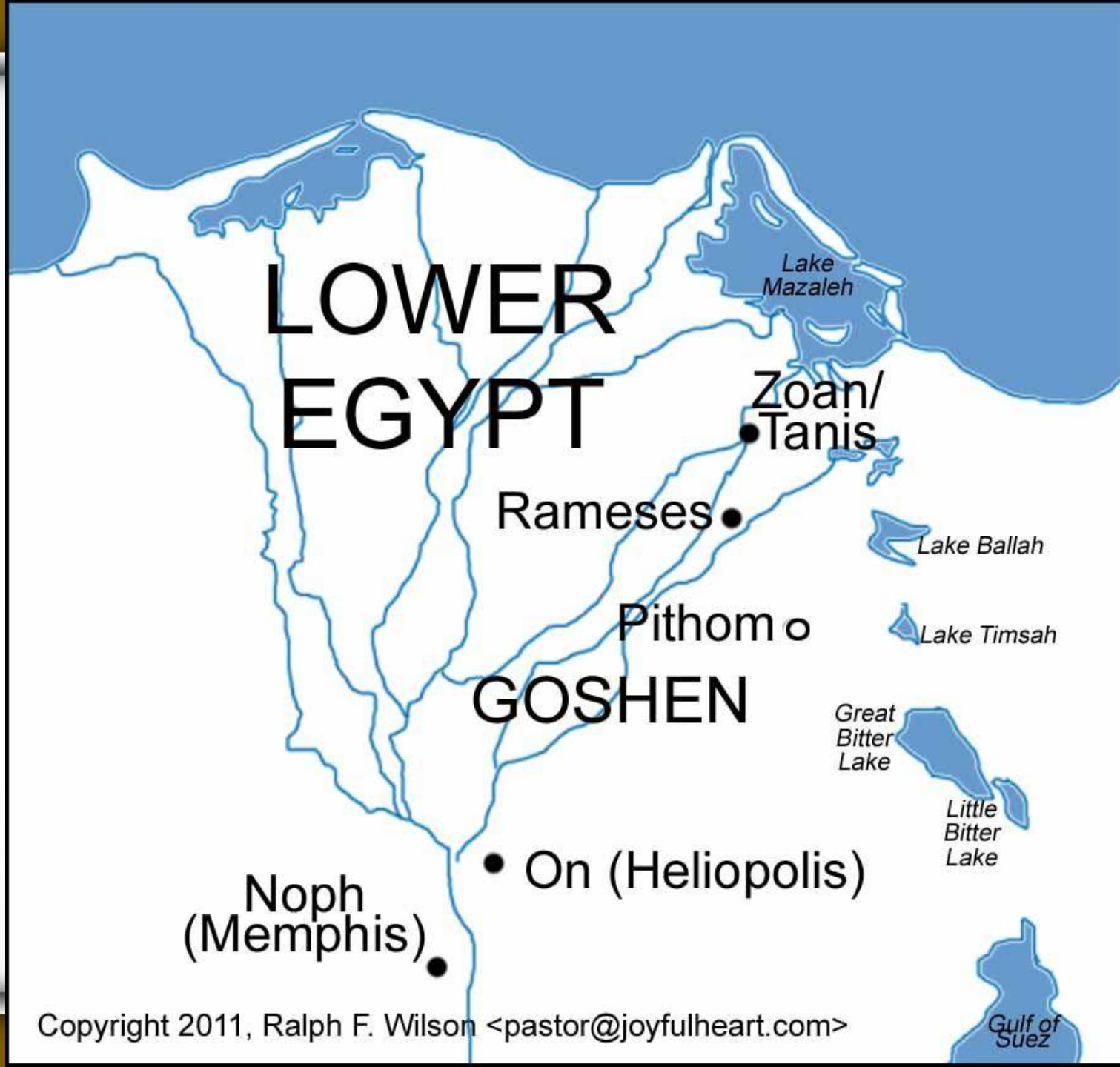
- Exodus begins by listing the names of the sons of Israel who went with him to Egypt.
- Joseph and all his brothers died, but the Israelites were fruitful and

- multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.
- From a small beginning numbering around 70, this little band of people became a great nation—probably in excess of 2 million (see Num. 1:46 – 603,550 men of war).

ISRAELITES OPPRESSED BY PHAROAH (Exo. 1:8-14)

⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our

enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.



LOWER EGYPT

GOSHEN

Lake Mazaleh

Zoan/
Tanis

Rameses

Lake Ballah

Pithom

Lake Timsah

Great
Bitter
Lake

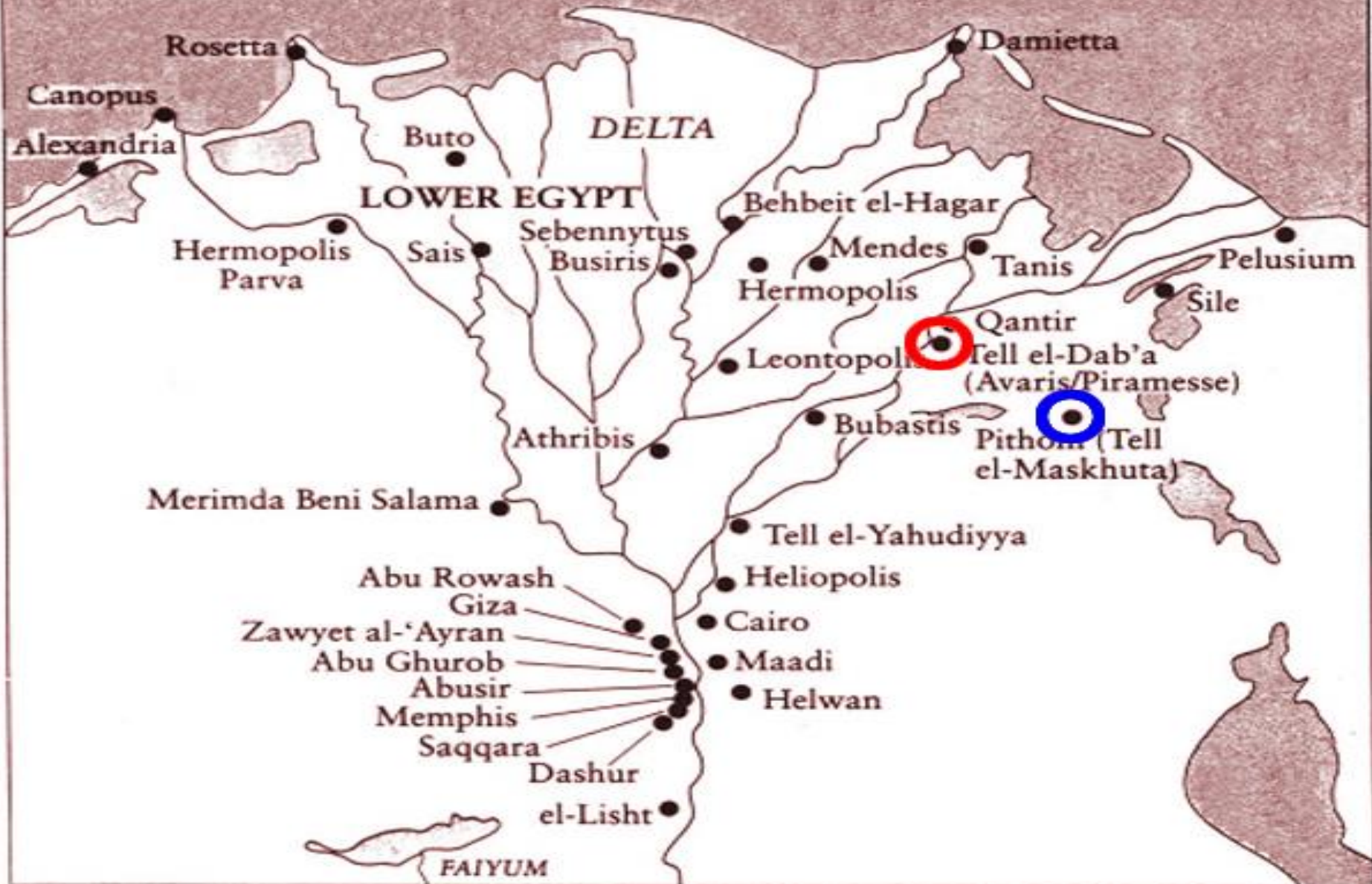
Little
Bitter
Lake

Noph
(Memphis)

On (Heliopolis)

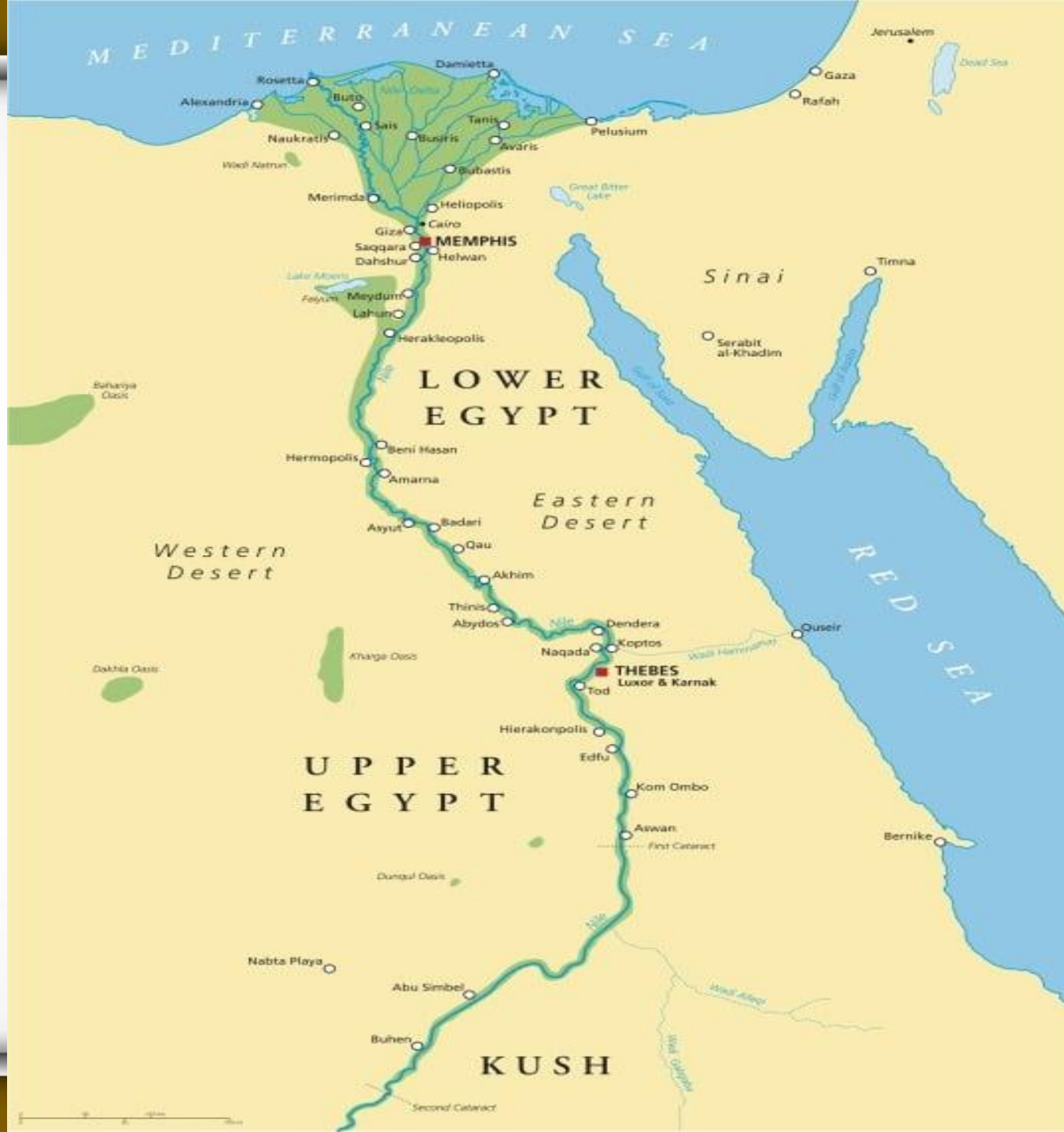
Gulf of
Suez

MEDITERRANEAN SEA



¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. ¹³ So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

- A few years after Joseph's death in 1805 BC, the prosperous 12th Dynasty of Egypt ended and an era began that historians call the 2nd Intermediate Period.
- During this time, the land of Egypt fragmented into two parts—Upper (North) and Lower (South) Egypt.



- Lower Egypt eventually came under the domination of the **Hyksos**, an **Asiatic people** whose true nature is still hidden in the shadows of history.
- “**Hyksos**” – a term used by Egyptian historian Manetho (ca. 280 BC) to designate the foreign rulers of the 15-16th dynasties in Egypt (1730?-1570? BC).

- The Hyksos were Semites, probably entering Egypt from Syria and Palestine, though their exact origin is unknown.
- The Hyksos capital was probably established at Qantir in the delta region of northeastern Egypt. From there they could maintain ties with their cultural base in Palestine and

- Syria. Qantir was close to Goshen, the Egyptian territory inhabited by the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt



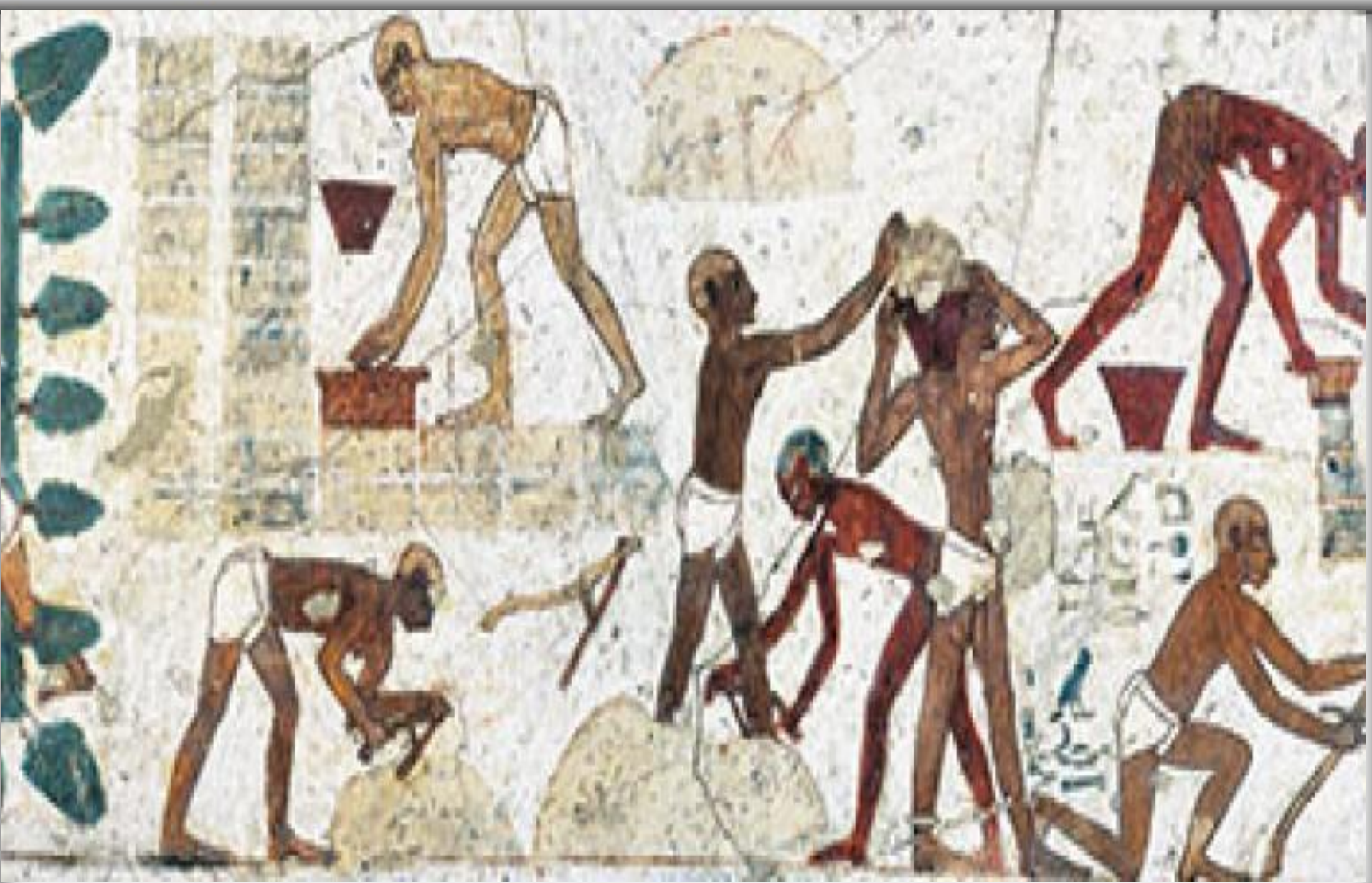
- The Hyksos introduced the war chariot into Egypt, a military device later used by the Egyptians to drive the Hyksos aliens out of Egypt.
- Horse and chariot warfare became the norm in the following centuries.
- The Hyksos were evicted by the Egyptian **Ahmose** in ca. 1570 BC, reuniting the land of Egypt under

- Egyptian control and thus began the 18th dynasty of Egyptian kings.
- Israelite oppression begin under the Hyksos rule and continued after Ahmose, King of Thebes, came to power in 1570 BC.
- Bible scholars and historians are still uncertain as to who was “the new king, who did not know Joseph.”

- It is most likely **Salitis** or **Khyan**, two kings who came to power at the end of the **12th Dynasty**.
- Whoever it was, the new king fears the rising population of the Hebrews and decides to act before they become a threat to his power.
- He forces them into slave labor and controls them through an organization

- of slave masters and work groups.
- The Israelites are forced to construct the store cities of **Pithom** and **Rameses** for him.
- However, the more the Israelites are oppressed, the more they grow in number.
- The Egyptians dread them and work them ruthlessly in hard labor.





PHAROAH'S ATTEMPT TO KILL NEW-BORN BOYS (Exo. 1:15-22)

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God

and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" ¹⁹ The

midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Then Pharaoh

commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."

- The midwives fear God and refuse to carry out the king's command.
- When questioned by Pharaoh, they lied to him and told him that the Hebrew mothers were more vigorous

- than Egyptian mothers, and gave birth before the midwives could arrive.
- Scripture tells us that God blessed the midwives, and because they feared Him, He gave them families of their own.

Lessons to Learn for Daily Living

- How could God bless **Shiphrah** and **Puah** for lying to Pharaoh (v.17,19)?
- Simple answer: God's did not bless them for lying.
- “God honored and blessed these two brave women for their willingness to incur personal danger in order to save the lives of innocent babies.”

- **Remember:** No Bible existed. They had not yet learned that God forbids His followers from telling lies.
- **They would learn that at Sinai in the 10 commandments.**
- **Principle:** It is never right to do wrong even if we are trying to avoid a “greater” evil.”

- There are times when we are forced to disobey man in order to obey God (Acts 5:29). In such cases, civil disobedience is not sin.
- **Psalm 120:2** Deliver me, O LORD, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.
- **Proverbs 6:16-19:** There are six things that the LORD hates, seven

- that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, ¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

- **Proverbs 12:22** Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight.
- **Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

- **Revelation 21:8** But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Summary – Exodus 1

- **ISRAELITES MULTIPLY (Exo. 1:1-7)**
- **ISRAELITES OPPRESSED BY PHAROAH (Exo. 1:8-14)**
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