

Lesson 13: Exodus 1–6, “I Have Remembered My Covenant”

How Long Were the Israelites in Egypt?

The common belief that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt for more than 400 years comes from a verse in Exodus

Exodus 12:40

Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

But the numbers don't work when you add up the ages of Moses' ancestors

Moses was the Great Grandson of Levi; Levi → Kohath → Amram → Moses

We are told how old Kohath and Amram were when they died:

Kohath was one of the 70 Israelites who joined Joseph in Egypt (Gen 46:11) and he lived to be 133 (Exodus 6:18)

Amram lived to be 137 (Exodus 6:20)

Moses delivered the Israelites from Egypt when he was 80 (Exodus 7:7)

If Kohath was a newborn when he came to Egypt

And if Amram was born the year Kohath died

And if Moses was born the year Amram died

$$133 + 137 + 80 = 350 \text{ years in Egypt}$$

More realistic – If the fathers were 60 when their sons were born

$$60 + 60 + 80 = 200 \text{ years in Egypt}$$

And Exodus 12:40 doesn't really say they were in Egypt 430 years, it says they were not in the land of promise for 430 years

Paul references the 430 years that they were not in the land of promise

Galatians 3:16-17

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made...

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect

What Paul is saying is that the Law, that came to Moses 430 years later, does not revoke the covenant made to Abraham.

Number of years from the time that Abraham received the covenant until Israelites go to Egypt

Abraham was 75 when he receives the covenant and 100 when Isaac is born
Isaac was 60 when Jacob is born
Jacob was 130 when he goes to Egypt

$25 + 60 + 130 = 215$ years in the land of Canaan, etc.

It was 430 years from the time that Abraham received the covenant until Moses received the Law

$430 - 215 = 215$ years in Egypt

This time frame also fits with the first passage we are going to read

Israelites in Bondage

The Israelites became such a powerful force in Egypt that the Pharaoh feared they might help Egypt's enemies defeat them. So to control the Israelites the Pharaoh placed them in bondage.

Exd 1:5-12,22

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.

8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so 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 Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Why did the Egyptians feel that they needed to enslave the Israelites?

(children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.
the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew)

Mark E. Petersen

“The fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham required that Israel should become numerous. To accomplish this, the little family, numbering only 70 persons, needed sufficient time and a peaceful place in which to grow. Egypt was that place.

“Palestine was a battleground for warring nations that moved back and forth in their conquests between the Nile and the Euphrates. Israel would have found no peace there. They required stable conditions for their eventual growth and development.” (Moses: Man of Miracles, pg. 27–30)

Moses In Pharaoh’s Court

I think we all know the account of how Moses' mother hid him in an ark on the Nile to avoid the Pharaoh's decree of killing all Hebrew male babies. And how the daughter of the Pharaoh saved him and raised him as her own in Pharaoh's court.

Let's read some commentaries about Moses' early life from the New Testament

Hebrews 11:23-26

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

What do we learn about Moses' life and belief while he was in Pharaoh's court?

(refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt)

He knew that he was Hebrew

He had an understanding of the gospel of Christ

He was willing to sacrifice all in the name of Christ

Bruce R. McConkie

"Reared and taught amid all the wealth, splendor, and influence of Pharaoh's court; having at his command the prestige and power of the royal household; knowing he was assured of a life of ease and affluence-yet Moses, because of faith in Christ, chose to suffer with slaves and bondsmen of his own race rather than to accept the honors, wealth, and power of the

greatest nation then on earth." (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3: 213)

Acts 7:20-27

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

What do we learn about Moses from this passage?

(learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; mighty in words and in deeds he was full forty years old)

(he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them)

It appears that Moses knew while he was in Pharaoh's court that he was to be the deliverer

How did the Israelites act at his attempt to stop them from fighting among themselves?

(thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?)

Moses the Deliverer

From Egypt he goes to Midian where he received the priesthood from Jethro and his daughter as wife. He remained there for about another 40 years, until he saw the burning bush and the Lord told him it was time to deliver Israel

Exd 3:4-9

4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 ¶ And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

What work of the Lord was about to come forth?

(I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large)

He calls on Moses to do this work

Exd 3:10-14

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.

What questions and concerns does Moses have about delivering the Israelites?

(Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh,
and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' Subsequently, after experiencing difficulty, 'Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord,... why is it that thou hast sent me?' Nevertheless, after some needed tutoring, Moses loyally did as he was divinely bidden." (Men and Women of Christ, pg. 115)

Lorenzo Snow

"Moses felt his inability and incompetency to do that which was required of him. The work was too great. It was too profound in its

nature and character, and it required that which Moses felt he did not possess in power and ability; and he felt his weakness... So it is with the elders who are called to go forth to the nations of the earth as ministers of the gospel. They feel their inadequacy. They feel their insufficiency." (Brian H. Stuy, Collected Discourses, vol. 5, October 10 1887)

(when I come unto the children of Israel
they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?)

How could he convince the Israelites that he was called by God to be the deliverer?

Moses and the Elders of Israel

The Lord commands Moses to meet with the elders of Israel and that they will believe that he is their deliverer

Exd 3:16-17

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:
17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

In Acts we learned that the Israelites didn't believe that Moses was the deliver when he interacted with them while he was still in Pharaoh's court. He wonders why they should believe him now

Exd 4:1

1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.

In verses 2 thru 9 the Lord provides him with 3 signs to show the Israelites

The first sign was to turn the rod into a snake and then back again.
The second sign was to make his hand leprous, then whole again
Third, take water from the river and when you pour it out it will be blood

Moses states another concern he has in convincing the Israelites

Exd 4:10

10 And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

How does the Lord resolve this concern of Moses?

Aaron was called to be Moses's spokesman

Moses and Aaron meet with the elders of Israel

Exd 4:27-31

27 And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

30 And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Why did the elders of Israel now believe that Moses was the promised deliverer?

(did the signs in the sight of the people)

Given that we have been taught that faith proceeds the miracle -
What does this tell us about their faith?

Faith comes by trusting in God's word, not on miracles

The elders of Israel accepted that he was sent from God to deliver them because of signs and wonders. But, as we shall see, they had no depth in their commitment

Moses and Aaron meet with Pharaoh but Pharaoh responded by increasing the workload of the Israelites by making them find the straw for their brick production. This caused the Israelites to lose faith in Moses

Exd 5:19-21

19 And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.

20 ¶ And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh:

21 And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

The Lord responded by reminding the Israelites who He was and the promises He had made. But the Israelites were still slow to believe

Exd 6:6-9

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

9 ¶ And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Why do you think that the Lord allowed this additional hardship to fall on the Israelites?

Justify the plagues that He was about to launch on Egyptians

The Israelites would know that it was God that set them free

Mark E. Petersen

"There was purpose in all [God] did, and as he permitted Pharaoh to resist, he also was teaching the monarch that the God of Israel was mightier than the gods of Egypt. This lesson was not alone for the Egyptians, either, for the Israelites themselves had to learn that great fact, inasmuch as many of them had become worshipers of the Egyptian deities.

"The Lord was under covenant to bring his people out, and he would keep his word... But when Moses carried that message to the people, 'they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.'

"Between the complaints of the people and the resistance of the king, Moses had a difficult time." (Moses: Man of Miracles, pg. 61-62)