

Exodus 1:1-22 (NIV)

These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family:

Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah;

Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin;

Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher.

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

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.

Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

“Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. 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.”

So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly.

They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah,

“When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.”

The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”

So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.

And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”