



R E A R R A N G E

S E R I E S R E A D I N G G U I D E

CROSSWALK
REARRANGED - SERIES STUDY GUIDE

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Greetings in a New Year!

While 2020 was a hot mess, 2021 holds the opportunity to be a year where we come out of our “time in the desert” in a very different way. How do you change your priorities when you are just leaving a situation that has been difficult. We could say that 2020 was our “Egypt Experience”. As we come out of this seeming oppression, we have to take a look at how we rearrange things in our lives so as to not fall into the same patterns that brought us to where we were before.

The story of the Children of Israel leaving Egypt is a complex story, full of successes and failures, with some miraculous instances, and some deeply troubling issues as well. How can a group of people who are seeking to follow God through difficult and trying circumstances find their anchor points to prepare them for the land that God has given them? We could and should ask ourselves the same questions. This series will take us through the Exodus of Israel and help us understand what changes need to be made in our lives so that we can continue to follow God. Hopefully, this series will also keep us away from some of the mistakes that they made in the preparation to take back the land God had given them.

Our series guides will look a little bit different. While not as much content, there will be a reading guide, questions, and a weekly small group guide for your small groups. I hope this is a blessing to you and your family. Happy New Year!

Grace to you, and Peace.

Pastor Timothy Gillespie

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Gillespie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

WEEK 1

EXODUS 1 (NLT)

The Israelites in Egypt

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel (that is, Jacob) who moved to Egypt with their father, each with his family: **2** Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, **3** Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, **4** Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

5 In all, Jacob had seventy descendants in Egypt, including Joseph, who was already there.

6 In time, Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire generation. **7** But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land.

8 Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. **9** He said to his people, "Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. **10** We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more. If we don't, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country.

11 So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. **12** But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. **13** So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. **14** They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.

15 Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: **16** "When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live." **17** But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king's orders. They allowed the boys to live, too. **18** So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. "Why have you done this?" he demanded. "Why have you allowed the boys to live?" **19** "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women," the midwives replied. "They are more vigorous and have their babies so quickly that we cannot get there in time." **20** So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful. **21** And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own **22** Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live."

DAY 1

“1 These are the names of the sons of Israel (that is, Jacob) who moved to Egypt with their father, each with his family: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, 4 Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5 In all, Jacob had seventy [a] descendants in Egypt, including Joseph, who was already there.

1- Do you know this story?

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2- When do you remember hearing it?

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3- What does it make you think of?

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DAY 2

“6 In time, Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire generation. 7 But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land.”

1- Do you think that the Israelites were perceived as a threat?

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2- Did the Egyptians think they were trying to take over Egypt?

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3- How well did the Israelites integrate into Egyptian Culture?

4- How well are we, as Christians to integrate into our culture?

“8 Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. 9 He said to his people, “Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. 10 We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more. If we don’t, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country. [a]”

1- The idea that there is a king who “knows nothing about Joseph or what he had done...” is a little ominous. Have you ever been in a situation where you don’t know a new boss, and they don’t know you? How did it turn out?

2- The ancient world was delineated by tribes. How has a tribal mindset worked in your life? Is this something that we should adhere to in today’s world, and as Christians?

3- Have you ever thought
about who your tribe is,
and if it is good to identi-
fy with a certain group in
such a fashion?

4- What would be the
name of your tribe?

“11 So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. 12 But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. 13 So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. 14 They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.”

These texts show us the
way that Egypt tried to
oppress the people of
God. However, it seems
that they thrived in the
midst of this oppression.

1- Why do you think the
Israelites were able to
thrive in the midst of
such adversity?

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3- Do you think you and your family would have been able to do so well even though things were so tough?

4- What do we see from those texts that give us a guide to thrive in difficult situations?

“15 Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: 16 “When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver.[a] If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.” 17 But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king’s orders. They allowed the boys to live, too.

18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. “Why have you done this?” he demanded. “Why have you allowed the boys to live?”

19 “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women,” the midwives replied. “They are more vigorous and have their babies so quickly that we cannot get there in time.”

These texts show us how
the Pharaoh was trying
to control and oppress
through the Israelites in-
crease and multiplication.
It was a brutal strategy.

1- How do people try to
control others in today’s
world?

3- Is there any correlation to social media that we could make here? Is there a way that the algorithms are “controlling” what we see, and therefore creating an oppression that we might not even understand. (I know that sounds kind of conspiratorial, but the echo chambers this creates in our lives are real.)

4- The interaction between the king and the midwives is fascinating. Take a moment to reflect on why the midwives were unwilling to kill the baby boys of the Israelite women. What does this say about enemies finding a common ground?

“20 So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. 22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live.”

The king was unwilling to stop there, and therefore he doubled down on the idea of killing the baby boys. Why do you think he was so adamant about stopping Israel's growth?

1- Doesn't scripture say we are not to oppress foreigners? (Exodus 23:9) Could this have been a reaction to how the Israelites were treated while in Egypt?

3- How should we, as Christians, interact with the idea of refugees in our lands? Is there a biblical precedent we should adhere to? (Obviously, this can become a political issue, but here are some texts to help: Matthew 25:35; Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Numbers 35:15; Deuteronomy 16:14, 26:11,14:28-29;Leviticus 23:22;Leviticus 25;35)

4- How seriously should we take the words of scripture in this regard?

Introduction - The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things. (Pastor Paddy McCoy, Pastor Mike Rhynus.)

OPEN

Which do you think you'd be more afraid of and why:

1. Standing on the ledge of a tall building and looking down.
2. Speaking in front of 500 people.
3. Killing a spider the size of your hand.

HEAD (digging into the passage)

SETTING: The Israelites settled into the area of Egypt and grew in numbers, so much so that the Egyptians became afraid of how many there were. So as to keep control, the Egyptians began to enforce rules and government to contain the Israelites. This great oppression from outside forces undoubtedly grew widespread anxiety as life changed.

Read as a group Exodus 1 and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage

What causes the Egyptians to fear the growing number of Israelites if they've been a peaceful people up to this point? What do you think it would have been like for the Israelites to go from living freely in the land, to suddenly being

forced to hard labor? How might their lives have changed?

Why didn't the Israelites just revolt if their numbers were so strong?

By disobeying Pharaoh, what are the Hebrew midwives risking? The Hebrew midwives lied to the Egyptians in order to save the children. Might this mean that lying may be ok for the right reasons?

HEART (lessons for us today/application)

Do you know someone like Joseph? Righteous and honorable? Who and what qualities do you admire

HANDS (in light of this study, what are we to do, how do we respond)

Immanuel, God with us, is not just a description of God's desire to be with us, it's also a call for us to be with others. How, in the new normal of following Christ, can you serve as the presence of Jesus for a friend or colleague in need today? Brainstorm ideas together as a group. Then, in your closing prayer time, ask for God to impress upon your heart someone to reach out to this week.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.