

12.01a Moses - Affliction of the People (Ex 1:1–21)

[The teacher might choose to combine this lesson with Lesson 12.01b, “Baby Moses.”]

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- I heartily recommend Herein Is Love Commentary Series; *Exodus, A Commentary for Children*, written by Nancy Ganz and published by Shepherd Press in 2002
- (optional) An Egyptian cartouche

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Goshen*: the land where the sons of Israel lived; it was up in the delta area, the most fertile land of Egypt [locate on a map]
- *dynasties*: successions of people from the same family who rule a land
- *Israelites*: descendants of Jacob/Israel
- *midwives*: women who assist women in childbirth

Scripture (NASB)

Exodus 1:1 Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was *already* in Egypt. 6 Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. 7 But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land.” 11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. 13 The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; 14 and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all *kinds* of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them.

15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; 16 and he said, “When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see *them* upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.” 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?” 19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them.” 20 So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty. 21 Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them. 22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive.”

Introduction/Review:

Joseph (✓perhaps the vizier and steward that history names Imhotep) had been so highly regarded that Pharaoh had given all authority of the government into his hands. Joseph had bought all the land for Pharaoh and ✓had built store houses and other magnificent architecture during his lifetime. The Pharaoh and the people venerated Joseph, saying, “You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord” (Genesis 47:20).

Israel (Jacob) had brought his seventy family members down to Egypt during the famine predicted by Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams. This migration had been prophesied when God promised Abraham, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be . . . four hundred years” (Genesis 15:13). How long had God said the people would live in a foreign land? [Four hundred years.]

Story:

Growing population

In today’s lesson the four hundred years God prophesied was drawing to a close. After this many years in one place, the population of Israelites had grown and grown. Exodus 1:7 tells us, “The sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.” “Being fruitful, being exceedingly mighty, and filling the land” sounds great, doesn’t it?

Sadly, after four hundred years, memories of Joseph’s accomplishments faded. Dynasties changed. In fact, ✓rulers from foreign countries reigned over Egypt. Therefore, “a new king arose over Egypt who did not know (care about) Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). How did this new pharaoh view the multitudes of Israelites who were “exceedingly mighty”? Oh, he thought they were a definite threat!

Growing concern

Pharaoh spoke to his people; “The people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. Let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply more. If an enemy comes against us in war, they might join that enemy, fight against us, and leave the land.”

✓One might think dealing “wisely” with the Israelites would mean being kind and helpful, but that was not at all what the Egyptians meant. Instead, “they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor.” What does this sound like? [They harassed them and made them work like slaves.] Indeed, the Egyptians did treat the Israelites like slaves, making them build storage cities named Pithom and Raamses.

I wonder how bad treatment worked to control the number and power of the Israelites. The Bible gives us the answer: “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that the Egyptians were in dread of the sons of Israel.”

Growing control

Maybe the Egyptians needed to change their ideas and become less harsh. But, no, that didn’t happen. In fact, they made life worse for the Israelites: “The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously, and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field.”

As if that were not enough hardship, the Egyptians came up with an idea to limit the number of Israelite babies that would be born. They ordered the midwives, “When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.” What?! This was murder of infants, called infanticide. How could they do this unthinkable deed—killing a baby?! Yet, some politicians today are advocating such a murderous practice—killing a child after it is born (<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2019/02/49302/>). What a horrible, wicked plan!

But the midwives, disobeying the king of Egypt, feared God and let the boys live. Didn’t they know they could get into trouble for their disobedience? Of course. When the officials asked, “Why do you let the boys live?” they were prepared with an answer—a lie—but an answer that excused them. They said, “The Hebrew women give birth before we can even get to them.”

God was pleased with the faith of the midwives and blessed them. Their names are recorded in Scripture (Exodus 1:15). In addition, the Bible states, “Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.” ✓This probably means that God made them fruitful with children themselves and with wealth beyond that of the ordinary Egyptian.

When the determined Pharaoh didn’t get the cooperation he wanted from the midwives, he commanded all the Israelites, “Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive.”

Can you imagine it—to bear a son and voluntarily cast that child into the River to drown?! What utter wickedness such murder would be! ✓Surely, the Israelites would not willingly do such a thing. Perhaps soldiers and spies were sent out to perform the murders.

Continued growing population

Were the Egyptians successful in their purpose? Did all of these actions—rigorous affliction, bondage, commands that midwives kill male babies, commands that Israelites kill male babies—make a difference and hold down the population of the Israelites? No, for the people continued to multiply and to become very mighty. God was growing a nation, His people.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
“Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). This pharaoh, not of the same blood as the previous Egyptian rulers, rejected the Israelites, who were not Egyptians. How much worse it was for Jesus, who came unto His own home, and His own people rejected Him (John 1:11).
- In this world we will have tribulation.
- God has bigger purposes in mind for His own than might be seen in a person’s present state.

Activities:

- Play dough: bricks; whips
- Snack: This site, <http://www.toddlerapproved.com/2017/06/easy-lego-brick-themed-food-for-kids.html>, has some great ideas for Lego[®]-like snacks.
- Watch the following YouTube video of brick-making in India, which might compare to the brick-making in ancient Egypt: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaNIydpOYYk>.
- Have children build buildings and even cities out of Legos[®] or other building blocks.
- Review questions: (Game: A correct answer allows a student to place a Lego[®] or other building block to make a tower.)
 1. Describe the growth of the Israelite population in Egypt. [They were fruitful; increased greatly; multiplied; became exceedingly mighty; the land was filled with them.]
 2. What was the problem with the new pharaoh? [He didn’t know Joseph.]
 3. What does it mean to say the new pharaoh did not know Joseph? [He didn’t care about Joseph’s contributions to Egypt; he didn’t regard Joseph’s descendants with respect.]
 4. How did the new pharaoh feel about the Israelites? [He was worried about their huge numbers because they might side with enemies of the Egyptians.]
 5. Name two ways in which the Egyptians tried to control the Israelite population. [Rigorous affliction; bondage; commands that midwives kill male babies; commands that Israelites kill male babies.]
 6. The more the Egyptians afflicted the Israelites, what happened? [The more they multiplied and the mightier they became.]
 7. Because the midwives feared God, what did they do? [Did not kill the male babies.]

8. How did God bless the midwives? [“He established households for them,” giving them children and wealth.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- (NASB) Exodus 1:20, 21—God was good to the midwives . . . because the midwives feared God.
- or (NIV) Proverbs 21:30—There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord.

Handwork:

- Print enough cartouches (pronounced “car TOOSH es”) found below on gold paper so that each student has one. Print enough hieroglyphic alphabets so that every two students may share one copy. On a separate sheet of paper, each student will spell his/her name vertically with hieroglyphic symbols. Then [s]he will cut out the symbols and glue them to the cartouche. If the cartouches are to be worn as necklaces, reinforce the top of the cartouche with tape before punching a hole in the top. String a two-foot piece of yarn through the hole. Tie the ends of the yarn in a knot.

Goshen

dynasties

Israelites

midwives



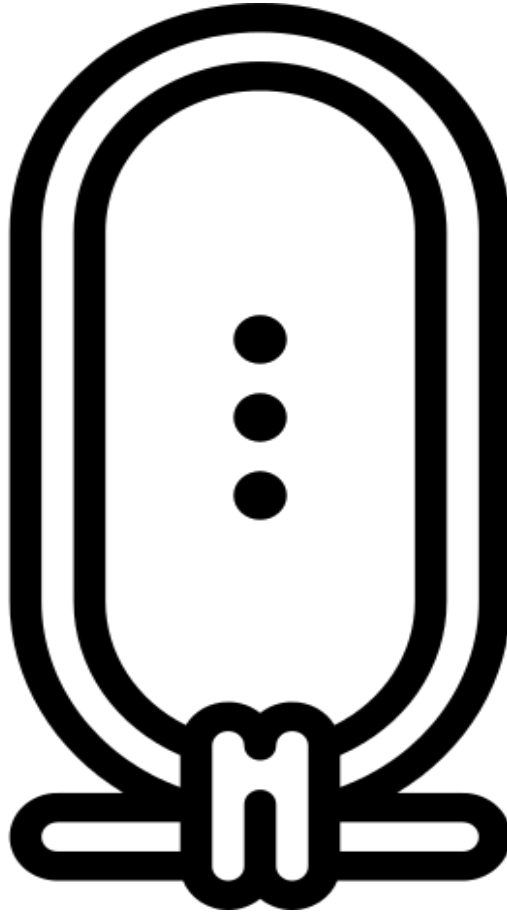
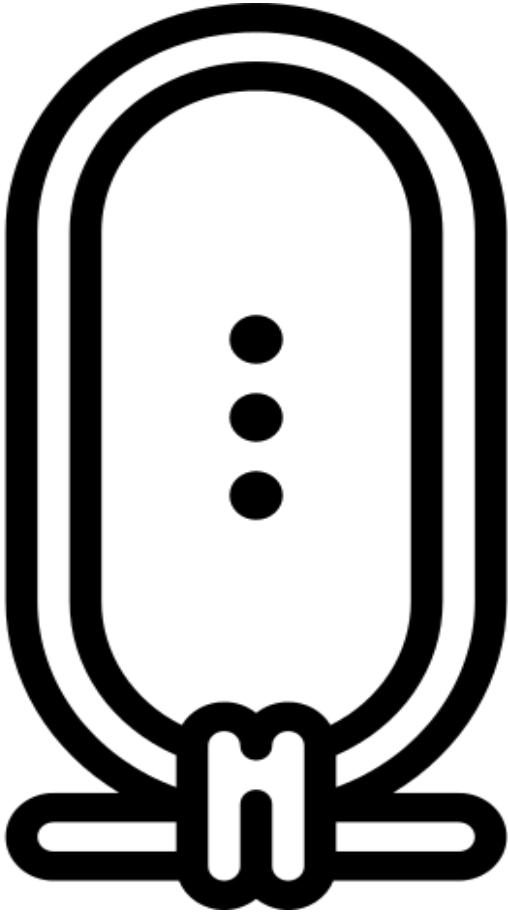
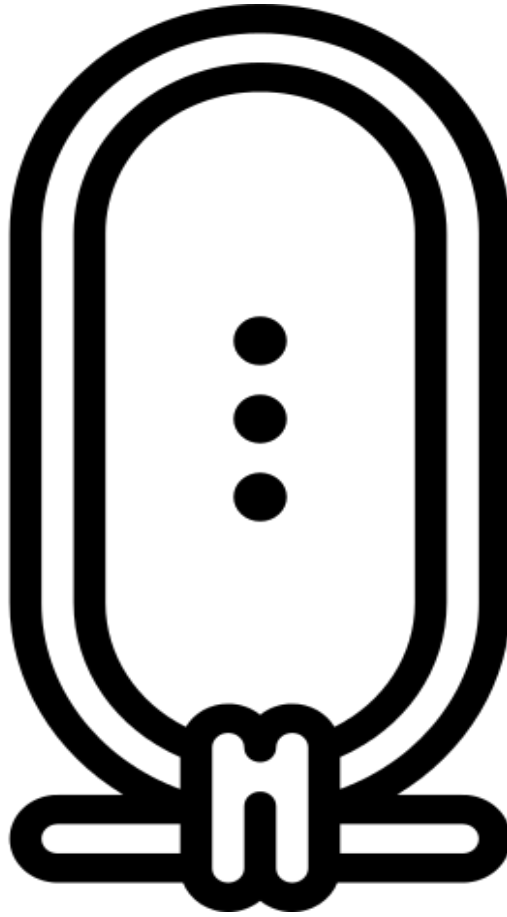
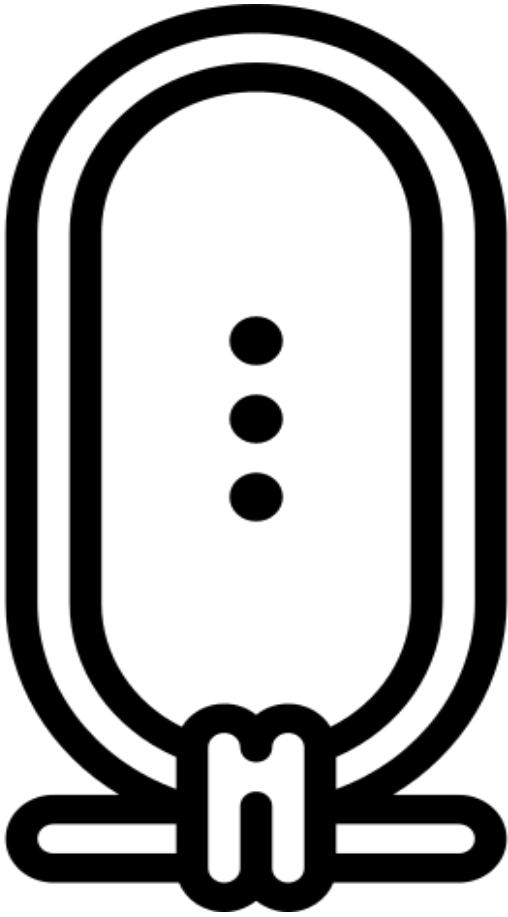
by James Tissot http://www.jesuswalk.com/moses/1_call.htm



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