

30 AMAZING BIBLE STORIES YOU MAY NOT KNOW

#7 – History’s Greatest Baby Boom | Exodus 1:5-22

AN UNEXPLAINABLE POPULATION (EXCEPT FOR THE EXPLANATION)

- Exodus 1:5 records that **seventy souls** came out of Egypt, in addition to Jacob himself. These 71 joined Joseph along with his wife and two sons, for a total of 75 people as the beginning of the Hebrew nation.
- Exodus 12:37 describes 600,000 **men, beside children**. Numbers 1:46 places the census of men at 603,550. Estimates are somewhere over two million for a total Hebrew population.
- Does the time frame allow for this population boom?
 - There are 430 years from the birth of Isaac to the exodus (Ex. 12:41). They spent approximately 215 years in Egypt.
 - Exodus 1:6-7: The death of Levi was 116 years before the Exodus. Therefore, the majority of the population explosion of verse 7 only had a 116-year timeframe. Israel’s slavery cannot have been more than 116 years nor less than 86, Miriam’s age at the Exodus (for she seems to have been named in *bitterness* and was young when Moses was born).
 - Whether over the entire 215 years or over a lesser time period, the growth rate is *astronomical* at 6-7% or even more.
- The “problem” of the firstborn:
 - The Levites were the replacement for the firstborn, and there were just over 22,000 Levites. Numbers 3:39. This requires an *astronomical* family.
 - From: *Got Questions*: “When Israel conducted their census of the Levites and the firstborn from the rest of the tribes (Numbers 3:39, 46), the number of firstborn males is recorded as just over twenty thousand. Using the traditional interpretation of 600,000 adult males implies that firstborns made up only 1 out of every 30 men. If that were the case, the average Israelite family would have about 60 children, boys and girls combined. This reckoning seems unreasonable.” (<https://www.gotquestions.org/Israelites-exodus.html>)
 - Looks like an *unexplainable* population growth (except for the explanation).

THE REAL FEAR OF THE EGYPTIANS

- Exodus 1:9 – the Israelites were **more and mightier** than the Egyptians.
- Exodus 1:10 – they feared that the Hebrew nation would align with Egypt’s enemies.
- Psalm 105:24-25 – The Psalmists commentary on the situation.
- Exodus 1:11 – the Egyptian way of dealing with the problem: **taskmasters**. The Hebrew is based on the word *tax*, implying that the Pharaoh brought the men into conscripted service.
- The final analysis: the Hebrew nation was an existential threat to Egypt.

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION RECORDED IN THE BIBLE

- The explanation of Exodus 1:7 has to be taken literally: *there was an unbelievable population explosion like the world has never known*.
 - **Increased abundantly** = יִשְׂרָאֵל
 - **Creeping things** (Gen. 7:21) = צָרָעַת
- The Jewish sages said that each Hebrew woman gave birth to at least 6 babies at a time.
- The problem for the Egyptians, is that **the more they afflicted...the more they multiplied** (Ex. 1:12).
- The Hebrew midwives (Ex. 1:15-22) serve as a vignette picturing the situation.
 - Exodus 1:17 – they **feared God** and disobeyed the King (see Rom. 13:1-2).
 - Exodus 1:21 – God’s blessing on the midwives. Could 2 Samuel 7:11 give insight?

THE BIBLICAL EXPLANATION STANDS FIRM

- Key principle: *when the Bible makes emphasis on some seemingly miniscule matter, there is some great work of God going on!*
- Key insight: *sadly, when some great work of God is going on, Christian “scholars” will often ridicule the veracity of the Scriptures.*
- Key conclusion: *rather than listen to the skeptics, search the Scripture for verification of the truth from God.*
 - Deuteronomy 1:10
 - Ezekiel 16:6-7
- God’s word can be trusted to mean what it says and say what it means!