

This week's Audio, Video, and Teaching Notes are posted here.

The Pentateuch: A New Look – The Birth of a Deliverer – Class Fourteen (An Ancient Story; Abram's Dark Vision; Names of the Sons of Israel; Israel Becomes a Vast Multitude in Egypt; The New Kings Oppressive Measures – Forced Labor, Enslavement, and Infanticide; Righteous Gentile Midwives; Dating the Exodus; The Book of Names Lacks Names; Moshe is Raised by His Mother until He Gets Big; The Etymology of Moses Name; Moses – A Defender of the People; Encounter at the Bush; Horeb – The Mountain of God – Har HaElohim; God Selects Moses – I Will be With You; Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh; A Three Day's Journey; Moses Refuses YHVH's Assignment; Moses will be For God and Aaron will be For A Prophet; Israel – God's Firstborn Son; Thus Says YHVH; Gather Up the Elders; Moses and Aaron's First Visit with Pharaoh)

**December 25, 2021 – Ross Nichols**

**Torah Portion: Shemot: "Names" – Exodus 1:1 – 6:1**

**Haftarah Reading: Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23**

**Audio/Video Links:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KT-1\\_6BUr4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KT-1_6BUr4)

<https://unitedisraelworldunion.com/the-pentateuch-a-new-look-the-birth-of-a-deliverer-class-fourteen/>

**Teaching Notes Link:**

<https://unitedisraelworldunion.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021.12.25-The-Pentateuch-A-New-Look-The-Birth-of-a-Deliverer-Class-Fourteen.pdf>

**TODAY'S INTRODUCTION**

-Welcome to United Israel World Union, this is our Sabbath morning scripture study coming to you live from the United Israel Center in Saint Francisville, Louisiana. Thank you so much for joining us today. Many of you are in your own place today, alone, Shabbat Shalom and thank you for joining us this morning. We need one another to help us go through what the world is going through today. I pray that all of you and the ones that you care for remain healthy today and throughout the coronavirus.

-United Israel is pleased to announce a new teaching series for the Jewish calendar year 5782 (October 2021 – October 2022). The entire year will be dedicated to a careful study of the words of the Bible's first five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) based upon an honest and objective new look at the Pentateuch. The materials for the weekly lessons will be arranged according to the annual cycle of readings that are followed in most Jewish Communities.

-We're going to talk about some of the theological motifs and some of the things that inspire and move us to connect with God and the spiritual aspects of these texts. We'll also talk about some of the historical, critical, scholarly, and academic approaches to the text to help understand how this book came together. These are the most remarkable stories in all of history. So, how did we get these books and what makes them up?

## TEACHING NOTES

-Today's class on The Pentateuch – A New Look is on Torah portion Shemot, (Exodus 1:1 – 6:1) which is translated as, "Names". This is the first reading in the annual Torah cycle of readings from the Book of Exodus. Thank you for joining us today. Today, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, literally around the world, people are discussing the birth of a deliverer and today, we are as well.

-The birth of this deliverer was in this wise. There was a tyrannical leader who rose to power and one of his edicts he put out was that all male babies should be killed. With this one family, a plan was put in place to protect a child in Egypt from being killed and it proved successful. This particular child grew up and at the appointed time, was called by the God of his fathers to a very special task. A task that demanded nothing less than the deliverance of his people. We find in this ancient story also other things of importance such as, that God's firstborn son is in Egypt and will remain in Egypt until the death of this tyrannical leader who sought to kill this deliverer, is dead.

-Only after the death of this tyrannical leader, does the God of heaven call his son out of Egypt. The deliverer's name and the name of God's firstborn son is given in this most ancient story which goes back 3,500 years. The deliverer's name as we've come to know it, is Moses, and the name of God's firstborn son that is given in this ancient story, is Israel. Welcome to the first class in the Book of Exodus. Today begins an 11-week series within the larger series which is called the Pentateuch – A New Look. Today is class fourteen in that larger series. Today's class on The Pentateuch – A New Look is on Torah portion Shemot, (Exodus 1:1 – 6:1) which is translated as, "Names". The title of the Book of Exodus comes to us from the Greek in which Exodus means departure. The Book of Exodus does deal with the departure of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. The stage is set for this story in the Book of Exodus which was set centuries before this by a word that we get in a previous narrative at least as far as the chronological setting goes.

-Gen 15: 13 Then YHWH said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

-The setting of this is in a vision where God appears unto Abram and in this vision, you've got several things going on, but this particular promise is something dark and foreboding. Abram is told of a great struggle and of a dark time in the history of his descendants. Yet at this time, Abram doesn't even have any children and he's told that his seed will be a ger, a stranger in a land not theirs and that they will serve the people of the land and be afflicted by them for some four hundred years. Ultimately the land that they serve will be judged and after that the seed of Abram will go forth with great possessions and will return to the Promised Land in the fourth generation. This then is the beginning of the fulfillment of that vision and Exodus 1 is the beginning of that getting out. The time has come for Israel to go forth from the land. Exodus 1 begins with a list of names of the sons of Israel that went to Egypt.

-Exo 1: 1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt.

-Here is a listing of the names of the children of Israel. This is not the first time that we encounter the names of the sons of Israel. See Genesis 35:23-26 and in Genesis 30 it recounts the birthing's of the sons of Israel. See also Genesis 46:8-27 where you get a breakdown of the entire family. If you like getting into the details, you can count all of the descendants of this son and their children and see if you come up with seventy. There is a lot of literature written on this and about people disputing the number seventy. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, some one-thousand years older than the Masoretic texts, in Hebrew, it says that there were seventy-five which aligns with the Septuagint and with the Christian Bible in the Book of Acts. The numbering of the sons of Israel is not the main point, it's not so much the number of people who went down into Egypt, the story focuses on how vast and multitudinous group it has now become.

-Exo 1: 6 Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. 7 But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

-It is this proliferation of this foreign group that lives among the people of Egypt that causes a concern for this newly risen king or ruler of the land of Egypt. So, he sets forward a strategy by which he can ensure that this multiplying foreign group within his midst doesn't in some future conflicts side with potential enemies. I like to stress that the children of Israel have been in the land of Egypt their entire life, and this is all their parents and grandparents knew. The children of Israel are Egyptians for all intents and purposes, this is all they've ever known. It doesn't mean that they don't have stories and customs that they've retained.

-This new king comes up with a set of strategies, oppressive measures that he puts in place to ensure that this proliferation doesn't result in rebellion against his rule. The first thing he puts into place is forced labor which evolved into enslavement, servitude. A few weeks ago, we talked about Joseph's plan to save the people of Egypt and the children of Jacob later results in the enslavement of Egypt. Ultimately, they traded everything that was within their possession just to survive. At first it was just to get their food and ultimately, they ran out of bartering means and so they made themselves indentured servants to the throne in order to survive. Joseph's plan put everybody in Egypt in slavery. Now the new king who rises will return the favor and do the same to the sons of Joseph's family.

-The third oppressive measure that the new king puts in place beyond forced labor and enslavement is something that is quite criminal although only mentioned at the beginning of Exodus and nowhere else in the Bible. It says that this new king puts an edict in place whereby the male children are to be killed. Elsewhere when these people cry out in the Book of Exodus (2:23, 6:6), when the people cry out to God, they don't mention the fact that all the male babies are being killed, which you would think they would mention. However, they do mention this slavery and oppression which is what they are ultimately crying out about. This particular drastic, cruel crime of infanticide is first charged to be carried out by the midwives. If it's a boy – kill it and if it's a girl – let it live. As you read further, the charge is put forward to everyone, not just the midwives.

-Who are the midwives for these Hebrew women who are giving birth? Are they Hebrew, Egyptian or foreign? What we find in our ancient sources such as the Septuagint and Josephus, is that these midwives are not Hebrew women, but righteous gentiles and that they feared God. When they were told to kill the boys, they didn't do it because they

feared God. We even know the names of two of these Hebrew midwives. This can't be all of the Hebrew midwives when we are talking about all of the vast numbers that the bible gives us for the number of the children of Israel. Two people working full time couldn't keep up with all of this.

-One thing we encounter is the difficulty of coming-to-a-conclusion as to the dating of these events because we don't have a lot of internal evidence to go on that gives us the exact date and there are somethings that might throw us off a bit. We have the names of places that are anachronistic, meaning that a later author has updated the text. In the early part of Exodus, it says that the children of Israel built two store cities, Pithom and Raamses, and these names are much later than what we would suspect in terms of biblical timing. Pithom and Raamses are 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century, but we have another internal clue as to the dating of the Exodus. Let's talk about the bible's date for the Exodus and we have one clear clue. There are a lot of dates out there from the early Bronze Age all the way up through the Iron Age. It's that vast in terms of differences of opinion. The bible gives us one clue.

-1Kin 6: 1 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of YHWH. 2 The house that King Solomon built for YHWH was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high.

-If we can determine with any degree of certainty when the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomon's reign was, the beginning of the building of the house of YHWH, then we ought to have a date that we can just compare and go back and figure out when the Exodus was. We do actually have that on the basis of chronology that we have external to the bible. If you track the Tyrian king list, the kings from Tyre, which is provided in Josephus; or the Assyria Tyrian synchronism's, the date for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomons reign it's at 968 BCE. If we take 968 BCE and go back 480 years, this gives us the timing of the Exodus and gives us a date of 1448 BCE give or take. We are going to be going through quite a few things and we want to get as accurate a picture as we can of the time and the circumstances.

-The names Pithom and Raamses throw us off because those come about in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE and weren't even known when the children of Israel left the land of Egypt. Names are rarely provided in our opening section of the Book of Exodus, and this is a point not missed by readers who know that the Book of Names is the name of the book that lacks the names. Exodus comes from the Greek, but the Hebrews call the book, Shemot. It begins, and these are the names of the sons of Israel... In a book that's titled according to the ancient method of naming a work, based off the first significant word in the book itself, it's called Names, yet we find ourselves at a loss for the names. For instance, we don't get a name for the Pharaoh. Why is the name for Pharaoh not given? No name is given for the daughter of Pharaoh, and she plays a significant part in this story. There is no name given initially in the opening of our story to the Levitical parents. We learn later in the story that the Levite parents have a daughter who's older than the deliverer that's born and we don't get her name either.

-When the scribe put this together it begins, these are the names of the people that you know, then you get a new king that doesn't know Joseph and there are a lot of other unknowns which follow. It's a method of writing that makes you ask, what do we know

verses, what don't we know. Further, when we talk about names in the Book of Names, there are two Hebrew midwives and we know their names, Shiprah and Puah. We know one person in this story, even in the first six chapters we get three different names for a certain Midianite priest, and he's introduced to us as the father-in-law of our deliverer. When we are first encounter the father-in-law of our deliverer, he's called Ruel, then he's called Jethro, and finally he's called Jeter. Later, we'll encounter yet another name for our Midianite priest. We do learn the name of our deliverer, but that name, Moshe, comes to us by way of what the scribe is using here as sort of a Hebrew folk etymology. When the story is told it's presented as if the name Moshe has a Hebrew background. There is also another meaning of the name that comes to us from the Egyptian. Is it meant for us to see that the name means one thing in Hebrew and another thing in Egyptian? That could very well be the case, but we want to draw out the true meaning of these things as we look through the text. We learn the name of the deliverer's wife or woman and her name is Zipporah. The name of one of the two sons of Moses and Zipporah we get, Gershom. We get the name of a brother of Moses this week whose name is Aaron. With Moses, we learn a name for the God of the fathers and in next week's class we learn that that name wasn't known until the time of Moses. We also learn the name with the exalted title of God's son, his firstborn, Israel.

-Exo 2: 1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. 3 When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. 4 And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. 5 Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

-Notice what I touched upon earlier about the unnamed characters. The first name we get as if the writer wants to draw your attention to the name of this deliverer. Like the deliverer named Noah in Genesis 6-9, this new deliverer like Noah, is associated with the Hebrew word *tevah*, which is translated ark. As Noah brings in a covenant and he is a deliverer, so to our next deliverer Moshe, he too is associated with the *tevah*.

-Here, an unnamed mother puts a child into a basket, she slips it into the river and an unnamed sister keeps watch to see what's going to happen. An unnamed daughter of an unnamed Pharaoh recognizes that the child is a Hebrew child and the unnamed sister of the yet to be named baby offers to get a wet nurse from the Hebrew women. The edict is that the children will be cast into the river and the language is very similar to what she does, putting forth her baby in the river. Many commentators suggest that these boy babies would be put into the river, perhaps in baskets, and that whatever happened to

them happened to them. The idea is that this child is put forward into the water and ultimately his own mother raises him. Many people think she raises him for a couple of years and sends him to Pharaoh's daughter and she raises him, and he goes to Egyptian schools and learns all their secret arts. We don't see that in the text. Where it says after the child is grown, or he gets bigger, or gets older as translated in the English bible, in Hebrew, it says that Moshe stays with his mother until he's big. Does it mean when he was a small child or when he grew up? We just don't know. We don't have an age. The idea is that when he's big he goes to the court of Pharaoh.

-Exo 2: 10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

-This doesn't connect for us in English. There is a Hebrew play that's common when we deal with the etymology of names, the origin of a name. In Hebrew, and she called his name Moshe because from the water I drew him out. There's an Egyptian connection as well, Tuthmose means, born of Tut, or the son of Tut. Raamses means the child of or born of, or son of Ra. Moshe in Egyptian means born of? Which makes sense if you find a child in a basket.

-Exo 2: 11 One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. 12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

-Moses is also grown up in this story and it says he went forth to his brothers. How does he know who they are? Is he raised among his people as we can maybe get from the text here?

-Exo 2: 13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" 14 He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." 15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

-Here we are only given glimpses, so we have to make use of the data points as we're given them. We see that Moses is a defender of people. He defends a Hebrew who's beaten by an Egyptian and then he sees two Hebrews, so it's not a racial thing where he's only protecting his own people. If he sees someone in trouble, Moses is the guy who would step in.

-Exo 2: 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. 18 When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come home so soon today?" 19 They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock." 20 He said to his daughters, "Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. 22 She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

-In the last three verses we've covered quite a bit of time, from the time that he defends the girls until he has a baby. This tells us that we don't have a lot. We have a snapshot of these ancient stories that are pulled together to give us a picture that emerges with a careful look. When the seven daughters of the Midianite priest Ruel see Moses, they don't say a Hebrew saved us, they say an Egyptian saved us.

-Exo 2: 23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel--and God knew.

-This brings us into one of the most fascinating passages in all of Hebrew scripture.

-Exo 3: 1 Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the angel of YHWH appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." 4 When YHWH saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And he said, "I am the God of your 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 at God. 7 Then YHWH said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." 13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, 17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, YHWH, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the

wilderness, that we may sacrifice to YHVH our God.' 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, 22 but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

-Horeb, we learn is the place of this encounter and according to the text it's on the far side of the wilderness. Where is Horeb? Is it in modern day Saudi Arabia? We'll follow the clues. The mountain of God is called Har Ha-Elohim and it's known by this title only in the Book of Exodus. Horeb is associated with the phrase Har Ha-Elohim, only in Exodus and one place in 1 Kings.

-1Kin 19: 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

-We know it here because Elijah is fleeing from the wicked Jezebel and he goes on this long journey to Horeb and there it is called Har Ha-Elohim and it's called this before there is the giving of the ten commandments, the ten words. It's not the mountain of God because God was there at Sinai / Horeb and gave the ten commandments. It's already known as the mountain of God. Why is Har Ha-Elohim only used in Exodus and 1 Kings? Why isn't it called this Deuteronomy?

-When this encounter happens at the bush, there's a mysterious switching back and forth. In Exodus 3:2, it says that the malak YHVH, the angel of the LORD, the messenger of Yahweh, the malak yod-hey-vav-hey is in the bush. Then in Exodus 3:4 it's YHVH and later in the same verse, it's Elohim. So, is malak YHVH also YHVH also Elohim? In Exodus 6 he says, I am the God of your father (singular), then he lists Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Exodus 3:7-10, God has taken note of the oppression of the Israelites, and he selected Moses. Does he select Moses because he sees Moses as a defender of the downtrodden? It could be. The scribe wants us to know this and makes a very strong point of this. Then Moses goes into a series of reasons to refuse the offer, to refuse the job and God tells him, I will be with you. It doesn't matter who you are if God's with you, and that works for us too. God says, I will be with you. In Exodus 3:12 it says, and you will serve / worship God on this mountain.

-In Exodus 3:13 he says, what's your name he says, Ehyeh asher ehyeh, typically that's translated, I will be whatever I will be. This is not very specific, he just tells him, I'll be whatever I will be. Then he gets more specific and tells him to say to the people, tell them Ehyeh sent me to you. In Exodus 3:15 he says that the name YHVH, this is my name forever unto all generations. According to one source, this name was not known until the time of Moses. He's at Horeb where this encounter takes place and God tells him to back to Egypt, you're going to gather the elders and fill them in on everything that I've told you and then you and then you and the elders are going to go to Pharaoh. Tell Pharaoh to let us go three days into the wilderness. Where is their destination? Their destination is not some random place in the wilderness where they can find a campground on the side of the road, their destination is Horeb. Come back to this mountain. Is this a clue?

-Exo 3: 18 And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, YHVH, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and



now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to YHVH our God.'

-Exo 5: 3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to YHVH our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

-Exo 8: 27 We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to YHVH our God as he tells us."

-Here, Moses mentions this three-day journey that the children of Israel want to take. Where is the three-day journey going to put them? Does this give us any idea of how far it is from the place of departure to Horeb? It took them longer than three-days. In antiquity you measure a distance based on the number of days it would typically take to travel. If you have extenuating circumstances such as, 603,550 males plus women, children, goats, and all the animals you're going to bring, you can expect that it's going to take longer, but it's still a three-day journey. In Exodus 3: 21 it says that they are not going to go out empty handed, and you'll recall what Genesis 15 said.

-Gen 15: 13 Then YHVH said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

-The idea that they will not go out empty handed was promised to Abraham that that was to be the case. In Exodus 4, the reasons to refuse this assignment continue. Moses says they're not going to believe me. So, God gives him some signs and miracles to perform in order to convince those to whom he appears that everything that he's saying is true.

-Exo 4: 10 But Moses said to YHVH, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue."

-What does that mean to have a heavy tongue? Does it mean he has a speech impediment? We have one other place in scripture that might give us a clue.

-Eze 3: 4 And he said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. 5 For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel-- 6 not to many peoples of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me: because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart.

-Conveyed in the Hebrew here it uses the same language, a heavy tongue. I'm not sending you to a people with a heavy tongue, but to people who do understand you, they just don't listen. Since this is the only other occurrence of this language, it could be saying that Moses excuses himself by suggesting that he doesn't speak the language of the people and that he has an inability or difficulty in communicating to the people of Israel.

-Exo 4: 13 But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." 14 Then the anger of YHVH was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. 16 He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you

shall be as God to him. 17 And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs."

-It doesn't mean to imply that Aaron is right there. He does tell him, Aaron your brother the Levite is headed this way and when he gets here, he's going to be your prophet and you're going to be for him, for God. Moses is going to hear from God, and because he has a heavy tongue, he's going to tell Aaron what to say, and then Aaron is going to give the people the message. Moses is going to be, for God, and Aaron is going to be, for a prophet. We don't even know Aaron at this time, your brother the Levite. How is Aaron going to find Moses at Horeb?

-Exo 7: 1 And YHVH said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.

-Exo 4: 18 Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." 19 And YHVH said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead." 20 So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

-In Exodus 4:18 Moses requests to go back to his brothers in Egypt and in verse 20 it says that he heads out with his two sons. Last we heard; Moses has one son named Gershom. Now at this time he has a second son, but we don't know his name yet. Gershom and child two are going to go back to the land of Egypt.

-Exo 4: 21 And YHVH said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says YHVH, Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'"

-Israel is called God's firstborn son. In Hosea Chapter 11 it says, out of Egypt I called my son.

-Hos 11: 1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

-Hosea Chapter 11 is talking about Israel and the Exodus, which is what we are talking about here. Moses is told to go tell Pharaoh that Israel is my firstborn son. As far as we know, Moses never told those words to Pharaoh. He was supposed to start it with, thus say YHVH. This is the first of 291 occurrences of the Hebrew phrase, thus says YHVH. In the 5 books of the Pentateuch, it only occurs in the Book of Exodus. "Thus says YHVH" occurs 10 times in Exodus.

-Exo 4: 27 YHVH said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of YHVH with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. 30 Aaron spoke all the words that YHVH had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed; and when they heard that YHVH had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.

-Earlier we asked, how does Aaron know where Horeb is? Then there's all these mentions of three days journey. Then later in the text there's Aaron whom we must have assumed was in Egypt, gets out of Egypt and meets Moses at Horeb. Is Horeb in modern

day Saudi Arabia? Did he make it from the Nile delta to meet up with Moses and cross the sea to get to him? Then they are told to go gather the elders and that's got to happen in Egypt. From the time that they meet up at Horeb, wherever that is, not Saudi Arabia, they go to Egypt where they gather up and Aaron does the talking. In Exodus Chapter 5 is the first encounter with Pharaoh.

-Exo 5: 1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says YHVH, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" 2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is YHVH, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know YHVH, and moreover, I will not let Israel go." 3 Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to YHVH our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

-They want to celebrate a hag, a festival in the wilderness. What festival do you think they're celebrating? Why do they need to go to the wilderness a three-day's journey to celebrate a festival and what festival are they going to keep? Why is it that Pharaoh has never even heard of YHVH? This first encounter that Moses and Aaron have with the Egyptian court of Pharaoh turns out to make matters worse. They have several subsequent meetings after this first one, and not only do you have to make bricks with mud and straw, but they have to go get their own raw materials and bring them to the work site and not let any of their work quota diminish.

-The deliverers, the team Moses and Aaron have their work cut out for them. In the coming weeks, we will finally have some but not all of the missing names to plug into our Book of Names study. Next week, we will face a mystery concerning the name of God communicated to Moses at Horeb. Specifically, when I talk about the mystery, why has Pharaoh never heard of it? Furthermore, who among the people of Israel knew it and when? But that is next week as we continue our journey to look at an ancient author or the ancient authors of the book named Names are going to tell us more and more about the Exodus.

Shabbat Shalom, Shavua Tov, have a beautiful week and many blessings.

## **THIS WEEK IN TORAH**

DECEMBER 25, 2021

This week's Torah Portion Shemot: "Names" (Exodus 1:1 - 6:1) Israel increases greatly in Egypt; The generation passes; Pharaoh's plot/oppression; The birth of Moses; Moses identifies with his people; Moses flees to Midian; Moses marries; God concludes that the time of salvation has arrived; God hears Israel's groaning; Shepherd and liberator; The burning bush; Moses doubts and God's reassurance; The names of God; The request to the Egyptians; Moses doubts the people's faith; Moses desperate plea; God's response; Moses given powerful signs; Moses objections are overridden; Moses returns to Egypt; Zipporah circumcises her son; Moses and Aaron come to Pharaoh; Making bricks without straw; Egyptian taskmasters and Jewish foreman; Protesting in vain; the Jews complain to Moses and Aaron; Moses complains to God; Portent for the future.

"Shavua Tov" and Have a Great Week!

"This Week in Torah" FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/571648826269105/>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

-Blossoming Rose Israel Tours (2022): <https://blossomingrose.org/>

-Walking the Ancient Paths – (2022): Tabor – Nichols Israel Tour March 4-15, 2022;

<https://unitedisraelworldunion.com/israel-tours/>; [https://blossomingrose.org/2022-](https://blossomingrose.org/2022-walking-the-ancient-paths/)

[walking-the-ancient-paths/](https://blossomingrose.org/2022-walking-the-ancient-paths/)

-UNCC Mt. Zion Archaeological Project, Dig Mt. Zion (2022): June/July 2022;

<https://digmountzion.uncc.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/digmountzion/>

-Accessible Adventure Israel Tour – (2022): Nichols – Young; October 17 – 27, 2022;

<https://blossomingrose.org/accessible-adventure-israel-tour-2022/>

& <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyUGXC4fUvU> -