



NEWSCAST 4. EXODUS

After Joseph brought his family to Egypt, the Hebrews prospered in the land of Goshen (see map). But trouble lay ahead.

A Pharaoh arose 'who knew not Joseph' which perhaps refers to a great revolution which took place in Egypt during that period. The Hyksos, who had ruled Egypt for over a century, were finally overthrown by a native Egyptian ruler from Thebes in the south. Eventually, the Hebrews, along with other foreigners in the Delta, were cast into slavery.

The biblical narrative picks up again under Pharaoh Rameses II, who was well-known in Egyptian documents for his ambitious building programs. Under his regime the treasure cities of Pithom and Rameses were constructed – massive projects on which Hebrew slaves were employed.

There was good reason for Pharaoh's reluctance to let the Israelites go, since his building program would be badly hampered – but the mighty Rameses II was no match for Moses and the supreme power of the God of Israel.

As well as witnessing a major turning point in Israel's history, this period sees the beginning of dramatic events which will soon change the face of the Mediterranean world. Great cities like Babylon and Troy were under attack and other peoples, like the Israelites, were on the move. But, ironically, none of these great powers would have anything like the same impact on world history as a disorderly band of slaves going out into the treacherous Sinai – with only their faith to guide them.

Biblical references: Genesis, Chapter 47, Exodus Chapter 12