

September 4th, 2021

The Battle for Middle Earth

Exodus 1:1-7

Summa Theologica

Last week we introduced the book of Exodus by introducing its main character: God. We discovered that this God is **1) The God of History**. Just as a human author writes a book and determines the plot line, so God has determined every plot line in human history. **2) He is the God of every Nation**. Pharaoh thought that he didn't have to obey God, because Egypt had their own gods. But in the end when Egypt was ruined, He proved that there is no other God besides Him and every nation on earth must bow to His authority or perish. **3) He is the God of Covenant**. What is the plot line of God's story? The Covenant of Grace. All of history is an unfolding of God's covenant love to His people that He foreknew. Israel was saved because God is a covenant keeper. **4) He is the God who sent His Son Jesus Christ**. Exodus is a foretelling of the gospel. Just as the Israelites were slaves to Egypt rescued by God's man Moses, so we born slaves to sin, rescued by the God man Jesus Christ who like the Passover Lamb shed His blood for us. **5) He is the God who does all things for His glory**. God raised up Pharaoh and hardened his heart so that His name would be proclaimed in all the earth. "But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exodus 9:16).

The Battle for Middle-Earth

This morning the battle for Middle-Earth begins. I'm currently reading the Lord of the Rings to my boys, so you'll probably get a lot of Tolkien references throughout this series. But this isn't *just* a cute title. How did this language of Middle Earth come to be? Well Heaven is above, hell is below, earth is in the middle. And truly there is a battle raging. Raging since the garden when God put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Exodus is simply the next chapter in this battle. If we could read

Hebrew we would see that Exodus starts with the word “and.” Genesis ends then Exodus begins with “*and*” —*and* this is how the battle continues. It’s book two of God’s battle to reclaim Middle-Earth from the Seed of the Serpent. Moses is the head of the army of the seed of the woman. Pharaoh is the head of the army of the seed of the serpent. How does this chapter of the war begin? In these beginning verses. That should tell us immediately have crucial how vital these opening verses are. These verses tell us what the first shot fired was. What caused the seed of the serpent to attack? Israel was fulfilling the cultural mandate. v.7 tells us they were being fruitful, they were multiplying and they were having dominion.

The Big Idea...

God's people are to be fruitful, multiply and exercise dominion over the earth
and this is what the Enemy hates the most

★ Our Doctrine

★ Our Duty

★ Our Delight

I. Our Doctrine

The middle of the story

If you look down at v.1 you see that Moses—our author (**Mark 12:26**)—throws us right into the middle of the story. “These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob...” Like any epic tale. Think of the original Star Wars movie, it begins in the middle of a story that you have to piece together as the story unfolds. So here’s the background. It’s in the mid 15th century BC. Exactly 430 years after God made his covenant with Abraham

(**Galatians 3:17**). The 12 sons of Israel—the patriarchs as the NT calls them¹—are the grandsons of Abraham. It was Abraham, Isaac, then Jacob—whom God changed to Israel²—who was the father of the 12. The men listed in **v.2-3**. Now in introducing this family, Moses is telling us the most important thing that is happening in the ancient world at this time. Whatever else was happening in the 15th century BC, this was the most important. Why? Because it was through this family that the promised Child would come through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed (**Genesis 22:18**).

Why Egypt?

How did this family end up in Egypt? Look at **v.5** “All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; *Joseph was already in Egypt.*” There are two explanations of them living in Egypt.

The human explanation

First the human explanation. Jacob loved Joseph more than his brothers (**Genesis 37:3**) and because of this his 11 brothers were envious. So they sold him into slavery (**Genesis 37:28**) and told their father that he had been killed by a wild beast (**v.33**). Joseph became a slave to man name Potiphar (**Genesis 39**). Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph to sleep with her, and when he refused, she falsely accused him of rape (**v.14**). Potiphar then had him thrown in an Egyptian prison (**v.20**). But the LORD was with Joseph and he rose in the ranks in the prison system just as he did at Potiphar's house (**v.21-23**). Years later Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret, Joseph was summoned, and through the power of God gave the interpretation of a great famine coming (**Genesis 41:30**). Pharaoh seeing the finger of God in Joseph appointed him to second in command over all of Egypt so that he could prepare Egypt for what is coming. Years later when the famine touched every part of the land, Joseph's brothers the same who sold him into slavery came to Egypt to buy grain

¹ Acts 7:8-9

² Genesis 32:28

(**Genesis 42:2**). The end of Genesis has the family reconciling and all of Israel's children coming to live in the land of Egypt for the famine was far from over (**Genesis 45:6**). That is the *human explanation* of how Abraham's descendants, the family who would give birth to the One, ended up in Egypt.

The Divine explanation

Here's the *Divine explanation*. God drove them to Egypt. **Psalm 105:16-24** records it all. God summoned the famine (v.16). God sent Joseph ahead of his brothers (v.17). God raised him up to make him lord over Pharaoh's house (v.21). God brought Israel to Egypt (v.23). This was Joseph's own testimony. **Genesis 45:5** "And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, *for God sent me before you to preserve life.*" Loved ones, this is going to keep coming up again and again in Exodus. The LORD is not *merely* the Creator of all things. He directs the path of every man, woman and child. **Proverbs 16:9** "The heart of man plans his way, *but the Lord establishes his steps.*" Yes you may have a human explanation for where you are right now, but God is ultimately the author of your story. Which means this, if you are in a crisis, do not be afraid, fear not, for God has appointed this crisis in your life so you can see His power, His mercy, His love, His wisdom in turning it out for the good.

70 persons?

v.5 tells us that "All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons." This requires some explanation. The 70 mentioned here *were* the heads of households. Notice how v.1 says "these are the names of the sons...[end of the verse] *each with his household.*" This was Moses standard way of counting. In **Exodus 12:37** as they departed Egypt we read there was "...about six hundred thousand men on foot, *besides women and children.*" So 70 wasn't the total number Israelites in

Egypt.³ You had to add the women and the children. Furthermore the household servants—who would have also belonged to the covenant (**Genesis 17:12-13**) covenant members would have been in the thousands. Abraham alone had 318 fighting men in his household (**Genesis 14:14**) which means his number was probably at least a thousand if you count their wives and children. So the number of Israelites that actually settled in Egypt when Joseph brought over his family with all their servants and all their hearts and flocks was probably close to 10,000 people.⁴ This fact will be important later. For now, realize that at this point in the ancient world, there was only 10,000 people (give or take) in covenant with God out of all the peoples on the earth.

Our key verse

And so we are arriving at our *key verse*. In **v.6** Moses reports that Joseph and all that generation died. **v.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.”⁵

³ “In Acts 7:14, Stephen refers to the sons of Israel as seventy-five, whereas Moses gives seventy (v.5); this is because Joseph’s children are counted, i.e., Jacob’s three grandsons and two great-grandsons. This variation makes it clear that the count is over males, heads of households; all other males are subsumed under the heads, as are the women. The number seventy includes Leah and Rachel, together with Jacob, as the source of the seventy...” Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Exodus*, (Vallecito, CA.,: Ross House Books), pg. 6

⁴ “Thus, a very telling point is made: from its beginning, the chosen people, while initially descending from Abraham, was inclusive of far more than those with Abrahamic blood. Moreover, they are referred to by Moses as “the children of Israel,” by the covenant name, not as he children of Jacob. Israel is thus a religious, not a racial designation.” *Ibid*, pg. 6

⁵ Here I need to make a digression. Loved ones how should we interpret the Bible? This is such a vital question. Many of us don’t know how to interpret the Bible because we don’t know the rules! Here’s the *vital question*: “Shall our interpretation be Biblical or speculative?” “In the words,” as one author asked, “When I attempt to understand...something in the Bible, should I go to *the Bible itself* for answers, or should I come up with something “creative” on my own?” The WCF gives us a clear answer (1.9): “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture...*it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.*” So as we look at **v.7**, should we just come up with our own conclusions as to what this means, or should we search elsewhere in Scripture to see what Moses might mean? [David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion*, (Horn Lake, MS.,: Dominion Press, 2007), pg. 17]

The cultural mandate

Loved ones, where else in Scripture do you remember seeing that language? “But the people of Israel were *fruitful and increased greatly*; they *multiplied*...” Genesis 1. Please turn there with me. These words are from the very first command that God gave humanity. **Genesis 1:27-28** “So God created man in his own image... And God blessed them. And God said to them, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion...*” This command is absolutely central to the book of Genesis. This is God’s plan for Middle-Earth. Look with me elsewhere:⁶

Genesis 9:1 [God commands Noah] “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.*”

Genesis 28:3 [Isaac sends Jacob out from his house with these words] “God Almighty bless you and *make you fruitful and multiply you*, that you may become a company of peoples.”

Genesis 35:11 [God later commands Jacob now Israel] “And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: *be fruitful and multiply*. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.”

Genesis 48:4 [Jacob tells his son Joseph what God told him years before] “(He) said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you *fruitful and multiply you*, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.’”

This mandate to be fruitful, multiply and have dominion is called the Cultural Mandate.

⁶ Also see Genesis 15:2 - Abraham was concerned how to fulfill this mandate without any heirs; Genesis 26:2 - When Isaac finally dug a well that was undisputed he rested in being able to fulfill this mandate.

A seven-fold increase

Now turn to **Exodus 1:7**. This is the Cultural Mandate on steroids. In Hebrew there are seven distinct terms here. “But the people of Israel were *fruitful*(1) and *increased greatly*(2); they *multiplied*(3) and *grew*(4) *exceedingly*(5) *strong*(6), so that the land was *filled*(7) with them.”⁷ There was a seven fold increase—the number of perfection in Scripture—of the children of Israel. They grew from a small town of 10,000 people to a people of around 2.5 million—**Exodus 12:37**—600,000 men + women and children. That’s 3/4 of a million more people than live in Idaho. In spite of all the problems Israel had, they were obeying the cultural mandate, and God was blessing them 7-fold. Dear congregation, this is why Egypt turned on them. Fulfilling the cultural mandate always brings persecution from the world.

Our Doctrine: the Enemy hates dominion theology

And so we arrive at **our doctrine**: *God’s people are to be fruitful, multiply and exercise dominion over the earth and this is what the Enemy hates the most*. First we need to know what this *means* before I prove it. So let’s turn back to Genesis 1.⁸ God is doing two main things in Genesis 1. He’s *creating* and He’s *cultivating*.⁹ In **v.1** He *creates* the heavens and the earth; in **v.3** He *creates* light; in **v.11** He *creates* vegetation and so on. But God is also *cultivating*, meaning He is *improving*

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⁸ This is one of those cases where a paper Bible is superior to the Bible on your phone. The problem with the Bible on your phone is that you can only see just a small amount of verses at time, your looking at single trees. But with the paper Bible you can see all of Genesis 1 from 30,000 feet, you can survey the whole forest.

⁹ Just as farmer cultivates the soil, tilling it, dressing it, giving it manure so that it will be ready to bring forth a crop, so God cultivates the universe after He creates.

creation, refining it, developing it. In v.4 He *separates* light from darkness; in v.9 He *separates* land from water; in v.14 He *separates* day from night and so on. In summary, God *creates* clay out of nothing, and then He *cultivates* that clay, shaping it into something better.¹⁰

Imitate God

Now this is exactly what it *means* to carry out the Cultural Mandate in v.28. We are made in God's image. Part of what that means is we are to *mirror, copy, reflect* what God is doing.¹¹ Just as God created *we are create*. v.28 says we are to *be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*. The ***principle thing*** this means is that we are to have babies.¹² Christians, as much as God gives His grace, we ought to be baby making machines. *But* it doesn't stop with creating. Just as God cultivated, *we must cultivate*. v.28 continues, we are to *subdue and have dominion*. Meaning we must raise up our children in the covenant. We must cultivate their little hearts in God's word, shaping them with His law, encouraging them with His covenant promises. Now certainly the Cultural Mandate extends into our vocations. *But what I'm insisting on is that baby creating and baby cultivating is the essential building block of the cultural mandate.*¹³ Why? Because it gives birth to an alternative culture. In other words, if Christians are fruitful in the marriage bed and they cultivate their children's souls in the Covenant of Grace, discipling them, teaching them everything Jesus commanded, then a new culture is born. Families are the basic building blocks of culture. Family building is culture building. And that is what the Enemy hates most.

¹⁰ God didn't have to create the Heavens and the Earth like this. He could have done it all in a split section. Why then did He create like this? To teach us what the cultural mandate means.

¹¹ Ephesians 5:1 says "be imitators of God." God created man last (on the 6th day) in part so that we would know what it looks like to imitate God. God visibly exercised His dominion (by creating and cultivating) in days 1-5 so that we would know what Genesis 1:28 means.

¹² Genesis 41:51-52 "Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." ⁵² The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

¹³ If there are no babies, vocation is a mute point.

Prove it!

Now let me prove that second part of our doctrine: God's people are to be fruitful, multiply and exercise dominion over the earth *and this is what the Enemy hates the most*. Consider just two proofs.

Proof #1: The Old Egypt

Back in **Exodus 1:7** that the children of Israel *grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them*—2.5 million people strong.¹⁴ Why was Egypt threatened by this? They were not keeping up with Israel's population growth. Pharaoh says in **v.9** "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us." Nations who do not follow the Lord if they last long enough have reduced birth rates.¹⁵ They do not fill the land as God commanded. But Israel had built an alternative culture—a culture built on God's covenant¹⁶—and it threatened Egypt's existence. Clearly they were not assimilating into Egyptian culture. What happened? Pharaoh enslaved them and killed their male babies. Fulfilling the cultural mandate always brings persecution from the world. The Enemy hates it, because his seed—the seed of the serpent—is threatened when God's people are fruitful and multiply.

Proof #2: The New Egypt

The leftist culture of death today is the New Egypt. Consider the main weapons of the New Egypt: Abortion, Homosexuality, Transgenderism, and Pornography. Now what do they for things have in common? All four of them wage war against the command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Abortion murders *babies*. Homosexuality by definition can never produce *babies*. Transgenderism sterilizes people making them unable to have *babies*. Pornography offers fantasy sex without the baggage of *babies*. All of these are

¹⁴ To be increase in fruitfulness results in dominion - Exodus 23:30

¹⁵ Egypt essentially had a zero rate population growth.

¹⁶ Now we know Israel failed in many ways, but nonetheless their culture was founded in the covenant.

destroyers of families.¹⁷ The Enemy's aim is to undo God's command to be fruitful, multiple, fill the earth and have dominion.¹⁸ As one author says "The spirit of Pharaoh still lives"¹⁹ today.

Summa Theologica

That's **our doctrine**. When God's people are fruitful and multiply and fill the land, they give birth to an alternative culture. A culture built on God's Covenant of Grace. And this always invites the hatred and persecution of the Enemy.

II. Our Duty

1. Elenctic Use

Our **first duty** is answer an *objection*: Someone says: "Why are you talking about Christians giving birth to an alternative culture? That's not our task. Our task is simply to preach the gospel!" Dear congregation there is a battle for the heart of Evangelicalism today, just like there is in every generation. Essentially there are three groups. The **first group** are the liberal evangelicals—those advocating for social justice and wokeness; the **second group** are those evangelicals who have privatized their faith to the four walls of church—they have surrendered their prophetic voice to culture like the Lutherans when Hitler took over German. The **third group** are evangelicals who see that God is still calling us to be fruitful, multiply and exercise dominion—that Christ would be Lord over every part of life with no neutral territory.²⁰ It's the second group—

¹⁷ These are the weapons of Satan who came to steal, kill and destroy (**John 10:10**).

¹⁸ The culture mandate creates society. The anti-cultural mandate destroys society. The cultural mandate replenishes the earth. The anti-cultural mandate ruins the earth.

¹⁹ Gary North, *Moses & Pharaoh: Dominion Religion Versus Power Religion*, (Tyler, TX.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), pg. 27

²⁰ see Joseph Boot, *For Mission: The Need for Scriptural Cultural Theology*, (Grimbsy, ON.: EICC Publications, 2018)

those who privatize their faith—that bring up this objection: “Why are you talking about Christians giving birth to an alternative culture? That’s not our task. Our task is simply to preach the gospel!” How do we answer that? By realizing that when the gospel is rightly preached, it includes a transformation of culture. The gospel accomplishes two things: **1)** the gospel *creates* new life “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation”²¹ and **2)** the gospel *cultivates* that new life “...we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.”²² God created the world and cultivated it in Genesis 1, and that’s precisely what He does with gospel. Listen to how Wayne Grudem says it:

“Yes, forgiveness of sins is...the only way that people’s hearts will be truly transformed. But forgiveness of sins is not the only message of the Gospel. That is because Jesus is looking for transformed lives and through them a transformed world. **1 John 3:8** “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” The good news of the Gospel will result in changed lives, but Jesus wants that to result in *changed families* as well. And when the Gospel changes lives, it should also result in *changed neighborhoods*. And *changed schools*. And *changed businesses*. And *changed societies*...[And] *changed governments*].”²³

It is a form of gnosticism to believe that God only cares about our souls—the spiritual world—but not about culture around us—the physical world. The Israelites were not simply to teach their children to trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and then go live like Egyptians. No they were to bring *all things*, every square inch as Kuyper said, under His Lordship. The gospel doesn’t nullify the cultural mandate, it empowers it.

²¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

²² 2 Corinthians 3:18

²³ Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Zondervan, 2010), pg. 47. See also his excellent section on pg. 45 entitled “Too narrow an understanding of “the Gospel” and the kingdom of God”

2. Preparatory Use

Our **second duty** is that we need to *prepare* ourselves. The more faithful we are at this task the more we will be hated. Egypt's response to Israel's carrying out the cultural mandate is a paradigm for every age of the church. That's the enmity God promised between the two seeds. We are deceiving ourselves if we think that if we are just winsome enough that the seed of the serpent will be reasonable. If we are seeking the respectability of the Egypt, we will not be faithful at this task. We have to prepare ourselves for be vilified, slandered, smeared, despised, hated. Fulfilling the cultural mandate always brings persecution from the world. There is a great resurgence of dominion theology that is happening right now, just as there was a resurgence of calvinism at the turn of the century. And it is being absolutely vilified by the New Egypt. Their population rate is decreasing, and they are threatened by the Covenant people of God. So we need to recognize that faithfulness to God's command will bring the hatred of the world. **1 John 3:13** "Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you." If our church is going to be faithful in the Cultural Mandate, we have to prepare our hearts and minds for what is coming.

3. Experimental Use

That brings us to our **third duty**, let's *examine* ourselves. As I said before baby creating/baby cultivating is the essential building block of culture.²⁴ So let's examine ourselves. The first question is this: how do you view big families? Families with lots of kids? What's your gut level reflex? I've lived in Idaho my whole life, and I'll tell you what my response was for a long time "Oh they must be Mormon" Having multiple children is seen as a strange, perhaps even cultic thing in our culture. Is that how you view big families? Some of us are past our child-rearing years but for those of you who are not, what has informed your mind of how many kids you should have? Pharaoh or God? There can be multiple legitimate reasons why parents may only have a small number of kids. But if the reason is finances I want to tell you that God is faithful. My grandpa,

²⁴ Our children are the arrows that we are firing into the future (Psalm 127:4) that will topple Egypt.

my mom's dad, had 13 children including my mom. No he wasn't Mormon. The only time I ever talked about it with him, he testified to God's faithfulness. That with each kid God would either give him a promotion or a new job, something that would increase his income to care for his children. Beloved, why wouldn't God do that? He loves covenant children. It's like Israel's experience with the manna, **Exodus 16:18** "...whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack." God knows how much manna we need for our families and He will provide. **Psalm 37:25** "I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread."

The second examination question is this: are we cultivating the children that we have? Yes we have been fruitful, but are we nurtured them and discipling them in the Covenant or are we letting Egypt raise them? Will we be able to hand off this church to the likes of our children when we die? I'm a Calvinist so I believe God must give the increase, but are we planting and watering?

Summa Theologica

Those are our three duties. **1)** We cannot divorce the gospel from cultural transformation. The Son of God came to save the lost *and* destroy the works of the devil wherever they are found. **2)** We must prepare ourselves to be hated by the world as we are fruitful and exercise dominion. **3)** We must examine our attitudes of fruitful wombs, *and* examine how we are cultivating our own children's souls.

III. Our Delight

How long were the Israelites in Egypt?

The fruitfulness of Israel to grow to 2.5 million people is absolutely amazing (**Exodus 12:37**). But there's more to the story. I misspoke last week

when I said the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years. They *were* afflicted for 430 years. But they *weren't* in Egypt that long. **Galatians 3:17** tells us that it was 430 years between the covenant that God made with Abraham (**Genesis 15**) and the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai after the exodus (**Exodus 19ff**).²⁵ In other words, the 430 year clock starting ticking in Genesis 15.²⁶ If you are curious to how that reconciles with **Exodus 12:40**, come see me after or shoot me an email. So how long was Israel in Egypt? 215 years. From Abraham to Israel arrival in Egypt was 215 years. From Israel's arrival to their departure from Egypt was 215 years.²⁷ In other words, Israel was only in Egypt 215 years. Why does this matter? Because Israel's birthrate cannot account for this.²⁸ Israel grew from an estimated 10,000 to 2.5 million people in 215 years. What accounts for this inconceivable growth. Conversions. Their were conversions to ancient Judaism from the beginning. Abraham had one son Isaac who was the child of promise, yet in his household he had 318 circumcised men who weren't his descendants (**Genesis 14:14**). When Israel was in Goshen, Egypt, God must have converted thousands upon thousands of Egyptians to the faith. "They became Hebrew by circumcision."²⁹ In fact, when Israel left Egypt, there was a multitude of Egyptians who weren't circumcised yet who went with them. **Exodus 12:37-38** "And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth,

²⁵ I know Exodus 12:40 says they lived there 430 years. But Galatians 3:17 says that it was 430 years from the covenant with Abraham to the giving of the law. How do we reconcile? The LLX (Greek translation of the OT in 3rd century BC) translated Exodus 12:40 in this manner "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt *and the land of Chanaan*, four hundred and thirty years." Translated this way it fits with Paul's statement in Galatians 3:17. And make no mistake, even before Israel made it to Egypt, the spiritual seed was always under oppression. Isaac was afflicted by Ishmael. Jacob was afflicted by Esau. Joseph was afflicted by his brothers.

²⁶ See North, pg. 13-15

²⁷ The other problem passage is in Genesis 15:16 where God says that Israel will come back to this place in 4 generations. This leaves 55 years left over if we assume a generation is 40 years (215 - 160 = 55). Perhaps God meant 4 full generations. Meaning when the 70 came in the next generation didn't begin until their children starting having children, and then on the back end the kids of the exodus generation fled Egypt before their generation ended.

²⁸ "There is simply no way that this could have been accomplished by biological reproduction alone." (North 23) "Nothing like this has ever taken place in man's history." (North 21)

²⁹ North, pg. 24

about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. ³⁸*A mixed multitude also went up with them...*"

To a thousand generations (Celebratory Use)

What does all this mean? How is this our delight? It's our delight because God is the One giving the growth. He is the one who is opening up wombs, and converting hearts. Fulfilling the cultural mandate doesn't ultimately depend on us, it depends on God. **Genesis 17:6** "*I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.*" **Psalm 105:8** "He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, *for a thousand generations.*"³⁰ Beloved that's God's promise for us today. And He has sealed this promise in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why did Jesus die and rise again? To bring *many sons* to glory (**Hebrews 2:10**). The battle for Middle-Earth has already been won through Christ. He is the One who came to fulfill what the first Adam failed to do, what Israel ultimately failed to do, what you and I fail to do. He will be fruitful. He will have dominion. Nothing can stop Him. So loved ones, I exhort you be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth. Create babies and cultivate their hearts in the grace of Christ. He has already promised to bless us to a thousand generations.

³⁰ cf. Deut. 7:9