

Oppressed But Multiplying: Exodus 1 Explained

Scriptures for Today: Exodus 1:8-14

""Exodus 1:8-14

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. 9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.""

Introduction — When God Blesses, the World Responds

For the first sermon in Exodus 1:1-7, we saw Exodus open with God multiplying His people in a foreign land. Seventy souls entered Egypt, and by Exodus 1:7, they were “fruitful,” “increased abundantly,” “multiplied,” and “waxed exceeding mighty.”

Joseph died, his brothers died, that entire generation died—but the promises of God did not die. Now the scene shifts. A new king arises. A new attitude forms. A new hostility begins. That's what we're going to see today. Exodus 1:8–14 teaches a foundational truth:

When God begins to bless His people, the world begins to fear His people. When God multiplies, the enemy reacts. When God strengthens His people, the world attempts to weaken them.

This passage does not simply record oppression rising — it reveals a God who cannot be stopped. The enemy reacts, but God overrules. Pharaoh plans, but God multiplies. Man oppresses, but God increases. Even in bondage, God proves that His promises do not break under pressure — they shine under pressure.

Verse 8 — A New King With No Regard for Joseph

""Exodus 1:8

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.""

This does not mean Joseph's history was unknown in Egypt. It means it was **ignored**. Joseph saved Egypt. Joseph preserved life. Joseph was raised by God.

But this king had no gratitude, no memory, no reverence for what God had done. This is a picture of the world: 1) It benefits from God's people, 2) It uses God's people, 3) Then it turns against God's people.

Favor with man is temporary. Favor with God is eternal.

For example, we have helped people here greatly in their toughest days. Those people, just like the world, used us to get things from us. And then they disappeared while lying and stealing from us. They forget about what we did for them. They forget about what God did for them.

That's a picture of the Egyptians.

The world loves Joseph when he is feeding them, but forgets Joseph when he is no longer useful to them. That is human nature without God — use, discard, forget. Don't be like that. Remember the people who have done good to you in your life. Don't use, discard, and then forget. And then we you need something again: use, discard, and forget. Don't be like that. Same thing with God. Don't use, discard, and forget.

Verse 9 — Fear Misinterprets God's Blessing

""**Exodus 1:9**

And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: ""

He was absolutely right. "The people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." God's people with always be more in might than God's enemies. Always. They were "mightier" not because of numbers, but because God was with them. Ten with God are stronger than ten thousand without Him. Pharaoh feared Israel's strength without ever recognizing that their strength came from the LORD.

Israel wasn't threatening Egypt. They weren't plotting rebellion. They weren't building an army. But Pharaoh sees **multiplication** and interprets it as **danger**.

The world fears what it cannot control. The enemy fears anything God is blessing. Pharaoh feared growth—not because Israel was harmful, but because God was with them.

In this world, we aren't a threat. We love the people in this world. We aren't against them. We are for them. We want them to be saved. We want them to receive everlasting life. But the world sees us a threat because we are against evil. We are against sin. We preach against sin. And they don't like that. They think that people doing less evil is a threat to them. It's not.

Verse 10 — Human Wisdom Against Divine Promise

""Exodus 1:10

Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.""

This is not wisdom. This is rebellion disguised as strategy. Pharaoh probably doesn't understand that he thinks he can stop God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Many people with power get lifted up with pride. And they even think they can stop God.

His concerns are all imagined: 1) They may join with enemies. 2) They may fight against us. 3) They may leave the land.

Fear invents threats that do not exist. Fear creates enemies where there are none. Fear leads to cruelty.

Many pastors in churches are very threatened by men of God that know the Bible. The pastors don't know the Bible as well so they fear these people. And they see them as a threat when they weren't a threat. And they begin to imagine things against those people. It's fear that does this. You can see this right here.

Pharaoh thinks he is being strategic, but he is actually fighting against the very God who saved Egypt through Joseph. This is the insanity of sin — sin makes people fight the very blessing that protected them.

Verse 11 — Taskmasters and Affliction

""Exodus 1:11

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.""

Affliction begins with burdens. Oppression begins with pressure. Slavery begins with control.

Israel was forced into hard labor. They built treasure cities—Pithom and Raamses—not for themselves, but for Pharaoh.

The world always tries to extract from God's people what benefits itself. Sin is a hard taskmaster. The flesh is a cruel ruler. Bondage is always bitter.

Sin never gives — it only takes. Satan never builds — he only steals. Pharaoh never lightens the load — he always increases the load. That's how bondage works: what starts as "just a little work" becomes slavery.

Israel carried burdens that were **never theirs to carry**. That is exactly what sin produces today — people handing you burdens that *they* created through *their* rebellion. Egypt is doing here what sinners still do: placing the weight of their failures on someone else.

Think of this way. If you look closely at the end of the verse, you'll see: "To afflict them with their burdens." The Bible says for every man to bear his own burden. So, look, Egypt is placing their burdens on someone else. So now Israel is bearing their burdens.

So, when you do wrong and you sin, you are creating more and more burdens. These are heavy loads placed on someone to carry. Those heavy loads can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. The more you sin the more you create burdens for someone. For example, let's say a man won't work and he wants his grandmother to take care of him. He is creating a burden because of sin and placing it on his grandmother.

Let's say you've done wrong in the past. You will bring that heavy burden to others. That's why you shouldn't sin. When you sin, you create a burden. And that burden will hit others. And you bring others down with those burdens. So, get it fixed. Take responsibility. "To afflict them with THEIR burdens." The Egyptians did this. Don't be like the Egyptians.

Verse 12 — Affliction Cannot Stop God's Blessing

""Exodus 1:12

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.""

This is the turning point. Pharaoh's plan doesn't just fail—it backfires. This is what God can do. God is our secret weapon here. Affliction becomes the fuel of multiplication. Suffering becomes the soil for growth. Pressure becomes the platform for God's power.

This is God's pattern throughout Scripture: Joseph was afflicted → God exalted him. Israel was oppressed → God multiplied them. The early church was persecuted → the gospel spread. Paul was imprisoned → Scripture was written. Jesus was crucified → salvation came.

The more people place their burdens on us and afflict us as we do the work of God, the more God helps us. Affliction cannot stop God's blessing! The enemy cannot defeat the blessing of God.

And the world's reaction? "And they were grieved because of the children of Israel." The more God blessed Israel, the more Egypt resented them. That's what happens in this world. Many people will look at you and hate you because you have a Bible in your hands.

Affliction multiplied Israel — and affliction multiplies believers. Persecution never shrinks God's people. It purifies them, strengthens them, spreads them, deepens them, and increases them. The death of Stephen in Acts 7 didn't weaken believers. His death makes us stronger. The death of Jesus didn't weaken believers. His death makes us stronger.

Egypt thought pressure would weaken Israel, but the pressure became the very environment where God displayed His power. Man's attacks become God's tools.

Verses 13–14 — Bitter Bondage Under a Cruel King

""Exodus 1:13-14

And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: 14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.""

“Rigour” means harshness, cruelty, severity. They were serving with rigour. And I want you to think about this as we serve God today. It can be tough at times. But God will take care of us. And it's nothing like what the physical children of Israel went through.

Israel's life becomes: bitter, exhausting, burdensome, relentless, controlled, pressured. We get our own choices today. We get to choose what we want to do. But right here, they didn't get that.

Brick. Mortar. Field labor. Every part of life became bondage. And that is hard work. Working hard in a physical job all day long is tough. Pouring concrete in July and August with no shade is tough work. Putting up hay in a hay field in the hot sun is tough work. Imagine that every day all day long. "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage."

But this is not the end of the story. This suffering is not the conclusion—it is the **setup** for deliverance. God told Abraham this would happen:

""Genesis 15:13-14

And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.""

God is always ahead of the enemy. The oppression of Exodus 1 is preparing the deliverance of Exodus 12. Same here. If you believe yourself to be afflicted, just keep working hard and God will reward you. He will bring you out of all of that.

Egypt made their lives bitter — but bitterness does not break the promise of God. Hard bondage does not erase covenant blessing. God sees, God hears, and God remembers, even when the people feel forgotten.

Application — What Exodus 1:8–14 Teaches Us

1. Expect opposition when God begins to bless. Pharaoh arises at the moment Israel grows.

2. The world misinterprets spiritual growth as a threat. Israel was not dangerous—God’s blessing was. God will continue to bless us as we do His work. And we will grow in many different types of ways.

3. Affliction cannot stop the work of God. It only strengthens it. The more this world tries to afflict God's people, the more we grow.

4. Hard seasons often prepare God’s greatest deliverances. Before the Red Sea comes Egyptian oppression. The tough times make the times of deliverance even better. For example, when it's freezing outside, the heat within your home feels even better. Before every great deliverance in Scripture, there is always a season of pressure. Before the resurrection — the cross. Before the promised land — the wilderness. Before the Red Sea — Egyptian cruelty. God lets the night fall so His light shines brighter.

5. God sees every burden and hears every cry. Even when it looks like nothing is happening, God is at work.

Conclusion — The Enemy Presses Down, God Lifts Up

The enemy presses down — but God lifts up. The world burdens — but God strengthens. The flesh enslaves — but God delivers. Pharaoh rises — but Pharaoh falls.

Because when God purposes multiplication, no one can stop it. Not a king. Not a nation. Not a system. Not the devil himself. Israel grew in chains — and believers grow in trials.

If God could increase Israel in slavery, He can increase you anywhere. Egypt could not break them. Your trials cannot break you. God's promise stands higher than your burden.

“The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” This is not just Israel’s story — it is the pattern of God’s power.

Let’s pray.