

Exodus 1

Israel's Suffering in Egypt

- Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob:
 - Exodus is continuing the story that we finished at the end of Genesis
- Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already).
 - Look at the orders of the children here. First, the children of Leah. Then Benjamin, son of Rachel, then the sons of the maidservants (Bilhah and Zilpah). Joseph is not included because he didn't come with them he was already in Egypt
 - They are seventy descendants. If we read in the Septuagint, we see that it says seventy-five and some people get confused. It's 70 descendants. But if you include Joseph and his wife and two kids, and Jacob himself, you get 75 total in the family.
- And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty;
 - Fruitful and multiply – this commandment was repeated many times. With Adam, with Noah when he came out of the ark. With Abraham. And now with the nation of Israel.
 - Look at the wording here “increased ABUNDANTLY” and “grew EXCEEDINGLY” – imagine that they came in as 70 people. And within 400 years, they are over 600,000 families.
 - So the people of Egypt realized this, and it scared them. When they came in the time of Joseph... Egyptians wouldn't be scared. It's just 70 people. Even if it's a thousand... that's not a lot. But 600,000 families? Over a million people? That's a whole other nation!
- and the land was filled with them.
 - We are starting to see here the promise that God had given to Abraham. That his descendants will be as the stars of the sky and the sand of the sea
- Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.”
 - More AND mightier
 - Genesis ended with a happy ending. They got to Egypt, Joseph is risen, everyone is safe, etc. It ends with comfort... but when they settled in Goshem, they thought that's it, we'll live in peace and calmness with our families until the end. But this is not what God intended – because we have to need God. The Old Testament makes it very clear – the moment God's people start getting comfortable, they forget God. Every time. And this is people in general – when we have problems or tribulations, we remember God. But when there is money and comfort and no problems, it's as if

God doesn't exist to us.

- They are called the children of Israel or the nation of Israel. Not the kingdom of Israel (not until Saul)
- Someone might ask "why not just cast them out??" Because they can benefit from their presence as slaves. They can do the dirty work that no one wants to do.
- Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.
 - The natural way is the more they are afflicted, the less they become... some might flee and run away, some might not be able to survive the affliction, but in God's wisdom and power, they multiplied
 - We find the same thing in Christianity – in the book of Acts, everywhere St Paul visited, when they would be persecuted, the numbers would increase. Same in more modern times – in Egypt, there have been many times of persecution sometimes lasting hundreds of years, but the number of Christians has only increased.
 - When a time of persecution comes, we never fear for the Church or the future of the Church because even as Christians are persecuted and even killed, more Christians are being baptized. In the story of St George, he was tortured for seven years and in those seven years, thousands who saw him became Christians. Same for St Demiana in the short time she was tortured, thousands became Christians because of her.
- And they were in dread of the children of Israel.
 - They started to fear the children of Israel, knowing that there was something supernatural about the situation
- So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.
 - The language here "bitter" and "rigor" – we will see that it's not out of faith that they follow Moses, but because they were at their end with work and bitterness and rigor. And this is why the minute they encounter problems in the wilderness, they say "let's go back"
 - God allows for his people to have bitter and rigor tribulation, so that they do not sin. We'll see that when they are in the wilderness and Moses steps away, they fall into sin... but because of the tribulation and rigor in Egypt, they did not sin. It's the same for us... sometimes when I'm going through something hard, it stops me from sinning.
- Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live."
 - Slavery didn't work. They kept having children and multiplying. So Pharaoh now moved to something more extreme.
- But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.
 - Their conscience did not leave them alone to do this. It was not something easy. There is no law yet that says "you shall not kill" but the fear of God moves through the conscience.

- So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?” And the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.” Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty.
 - God is not dealing with them well because they lied, but because they feared God and because they kept the babies alive
 - Again, the plan doesn’t work and people continue to multiply and grow mighty
 - And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.
 - It would be rare in those days for a woman to have her own house
 - So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.”
 - Pharaoh goes to an even more extreme solution
 - If a family kept their son, an Egyptian would come and kill him and kill the parents too because they disobeyed the law.
 - This is, of course, a type of the birth of Christ.
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