

Into Slavery (*Exodus 1-2*)

1. When Israel went into Egypt, it sure looked as though they were living large. In fact, Joseph tells his family, ‘leave your stuff behind because you can get even better stuff in Egypt! (‘All the riches of Egypt are at your disposal’ - Genesis 45:20). Read Exodus 1:1-7. **How are they fulfilling God’s command at Creation (Genesis 1:22)? How is God fulfilling His promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:2)?**

“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” (Gen 1:28 NIV).

The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.

2 “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

(Gen 12:1-3 NIV).

2. Genesis 46 though has an odd, ominous moment where God speaks to Israel. Read Genesis 46:1-4. **How is this message for Israel the person a message for Israel the nation? What does this tell you about God’s sovereignty – His knowing the first from the last?**

3. Exodus 1:8 represents a shift in Egypt’s politics and Israel’s fortune. ‘A new king arose over Egypt’ and he had no idea what Joseph and his family had done to preserve Egypt. He simply saw their overwhelming numbers as a threat and had them all enslaved. **Notice how quickly xenophobia can set in – the fear of someone else just because they’re different.** And yet look at verse 12 – **how does this illustrate the principle that no burden can thwart God’s blessing?**

4. Read Exodus 1:15-21. **What are the midwives' names? What is the king's name? What does this tell you about God's values? What does their experience tell you about fearing/honouring/revering God more than man?**

5. Nevertheless, Israel continued to under suffer Pharaoh. Read Exodus 2:23-25. **What does this tell us about God's concern for the suffering of His people? How does His promise to Abraham factor in?**

Translations often have God merely "knowing," but the Hebrew verb for "know" commonly implies acknowledging something, recognizing it, and doing something about it; this fits here. – John Goldingay (*Old Testament for Everyone: Exodus*)

6. From the Exodus onwards, the Bible uses the idea of slavery to describes sin's hold on humanity (see for example John 8:34, Titus 3:3, Romans 6). **Why is 'slavery' a useful metaphor when talking about sin? Read Romans 6:6-7 and 16-23. What does it mean to be a 'slave to righteousness'?**