

More and Mightier

Exodus 1:1-14, “Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: 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). 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; and the land was filled with them. 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.” 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. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. 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.”

Let’s pray. Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your Word. We thank You that You have brought us to this passage in Exodus, that You have seen fit to start us through this book. We ask that You would help us to understand it better, help us to understand how it applies to us and not just to look at the history of the book, but to remember that You have given it for our instruction. Please help us to walk in humility before You, help us to be cleansed and sanctified by it. We pray in Jesus’ name, amen.

As we start the book of Exodus we should review the context of the book. God made and is fulfilling a covenant with Abraham, Genesis 15:13-15, “Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.” At the first reading of this, especially with the support of Exodus 12:40-41, “Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.” It can sound like they will be afflicted for four hundred or four hundred thirty years or that they were in Egypt that whole time. There are many people who hold that view, but that doesn’t match Scripture. It is that they will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, they will serve them and they will afflict them for four hundred years. Their sojourn, the time that they wander was for four hundred and thirty years. Let’s lay out the timeline for the four hundred and thirty years. Abram leaves Ur at age 75, at age 100, 25 years later he is given then covenant. Genesis 17:17, “Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, “Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”” That’s when he’s given the promise that they would have Isaac, so that’s when he’s 100 years old, 25 years he has been sojourning in a land that was not his. Then the affliction of Isaac starts with Ishmael and it seems pretty clear that Ishmael is 5 years old when he is being weaned, and that’s based upon the difference

between the 430 and 400 years. That puts the age of weaning at five years. Isaac marries at 40 and has Jacob 20 years later. He is born 85 years of the four hundred and thirty years have already passed after the promise. Jacob meets Pharaoh when the Israelites come into Egypt in Genesis 47:9, "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."" The Israelites move into Egypt 215 years into the 430 years of the covenant with Abraham and 185 years into the four hundred years of affliction. We know that Joseph was 39 when Jacob came to Egypt, he was thirty when he got out of prison. Add to that seven years of plenty and two years of famine from Genesis 50:26. We know that Joseph died at 110, seventy-one years later. In other words, from the time of Joseph dying to them leaving Egypt was 144 years. We also know that Moses was eighty years old when he led them out of Egypt, which means this first chapter covers 64 years. It also means that it is not surprising that in the giving of the covenant God had continued. In Genesis 15:16, "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."" They're only in Egypt for four generations. We'll find out in Exodus 6, Jochebed was Moses' mother, her father was Kohath, Kohath's father was Levi. Moses' father was Levi's great grandson in the fourth generation they left Egypt to return to Caanan. It's not 400 years, it's 64 years between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses. Paul also affirms the timeline in Galatians 3:16-17, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "AND TO YOUR SEED," who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect." The giving of the law was in the first year when they left Egypt, four hundred and thirty years after the promise was made when Abraham leaves Ur. That's the time frame. So let's start considering what happened in those 64 years.

Verses 1-7, "Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: 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). 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; and the land was filled with them." Moses lists the names of those who came with Jacob according to their birth order and according to which of his wives. So Jacob had four wives, two by covenant and two not by covenant. A concubine is a wife not by covenant. So his wives were Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah. By Leah, Jacob had Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and finally Zebulun. By Rachel, the only one who came with Jacob was Benjamin because Joseph was in Egypt already. By Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, which was the next one he married not by covenant but as a concubine was Dan and Naphtali. By Zilpah, his last wife, he had Gad and Asher. So Jacob and all his physical descendants are 70. The first point that Moses wants to make is the incredible increase of Israel while they were in Egypt. When they leave Egypt, in Exodus 12:37, "Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children." The words translated "children" is really besides other parts of their families. This is six hundred thousand male heads of household, probably something like two or three million people. If you have an older man who could no longer care for himself, he wouldn't be counted in this 600,000. But that is not what they started with when they moved to Egypt. The number of people

from Jacob including Jacob was seventy. It's laid out in more detail in Genesis 46:26-27, "All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy." Jacob and his biological descendants were 70 and in 215 years they are two to three million people. Doing rough calculations that would indicate an average family size of around seven or eight depending on the average age when they got married. But that generation died off. When you think of the lifespan of Jacob was 147 years or 37 years longer than Joseph's, maybe there was someone who lived in that generation, but 110 years was probably a long life at that time. Even until the time of Moses God was shortening the lifespan of everyone. Psalm 90:10, "The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away." This was written by someone who lived to be 120 years old but that clearly was exceptional. That whole generation passed probably not that long after the death of Joseph. But the children of Israel were fruitful. God had promised to Abraham in Genesis 22:17, "Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies." God in His sovereignty was making this come to pass. The numbers of the Israelites were increasing quickly and as we will see, the Egyptians thought that their descendants would possess their gates. "They increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty;" the word translated increased abundantly really means "to swarm" like a bunch of insect's swarm, like locusts' swarm. There were so many of them and they seemed to be coming from nowhere, it was like insects swarming. They see them swarming and multiplying and they expect that the increase in their numbers is going to continue to go up rapidly, that every generation is going to greatly increase in numbers. It's not like there is just a bunch now, there are many now and they expect the numbers to increase rapidly. They saw them as powerful because even without authority and each individual being weak, together if they are in agreement can be very strong. It is easy to see the power of the police, but if a mob forms it is also really easy to see them overwhelmed by numbers. Where they do not stand a chance, they have real might. That is how the Egyptians began to see the Israelites. How can we control this mass of people? "And the land was filled with them." I think Moses is recording the Egyptian perspective, all of Egypt was not filled with them. They were in the land of Goshen but their numbers were increasing. They were also taking control of the land which made the Egyptians afraid that they would be forced out. If you consider this, this is happening probably at least a hundred years before the millions leave. If the distribution of children per family is even over the 215 years that they are in Egypt. Verse 12 would indicate that the rate increases, but if it was even they would be something like 30,000. But he is looking and saying the land is filled with them. Obviously a hundred years later that land is holding something like a hundred times more people. So the land was not nearly filled with them. This is a lie that humanists have said for thousands of years. There was a man in 1968, who wrote a book called The Population Bomb which was very popular that said the population was going to destroy the whole world, there won't be any food left. England would not exist by 2000. The world is not filled, but it is one of the reasons that the birthrate is so low among developing countries. It's happening in France, and England, and America. America has to get immigration or our population will not be stable. A lot of it goes back to this book and this lie that the world is going to be filled and we are going to starve to death. That's the same thing Pharaoh tells to his people, there are 60,000 people there, there is no way

the land of Goshen can hold more than that, but 100 years later it's holding several million. Other than that detail, it sounds good. Don't believe the hysteria. The reality is that God commanded us to fill the earth. We don't have any indication that the Israelites are doing this out of faithfulness to God. God in His sovereignty is filling the earth. In rebellion to that, people will always say that the earth is filled when it is not even close to being filled.

Verse 8-11, "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." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses." "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." A Pharaoh arose who didn't feel an obligation to Joseph. The famine years would have ended when Joseph was 44, he still had 66 more years of life ahead of him. We don't know if he continued to serve the Pharaoh's, this seems likely, but we don't know for certain. But he seemed to continue to have some prominence because it isn't until he and those in his generation die, then the Pharaoh forgets him, forget that God through Joseph saved many nations during the famine. Part of my point there is that of those 64 years, some of those would be spent in waiting until a Pharaoh came the didn't remember how Joseph saved all of the people. That probably didn't happen on the day that he died, it's after his brothers and that generation died. The length of time they were enslaved in Egypt is not that long if you look at the amount of time they were sojourning. "And he said to his people." This is probably not all of the people, they are common slaves. This is probably referencing speaking to the rulers and leaders, he is probably speaking to his counsellors. "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." Rather than Pharaoh seeing an opportunity, he is being blessed because these people are prospering. Like the previous Pharaoh who goes to Abraham and says, 'Bless us, because I can see God has blessed you.' That's not what this Pharaoh did. Rather than seeing a blessing he says, "There is a lion in the streets, they are getting more powerful and they might mistreat us so we should get the jump on them and mistreat them. It is faulty reasoning, but it is common among the unjust. They say, 'I know what I would do if I got power over someone', so they assume that everybody else would do the same thing. "Come, let us deal shrewdly with them." It is translated "shrewdly" which we tend to give a negative connotation to, but the word is really neutral. Let us be wise in relation to them. The Pharaoh, since he rejects the idea of a sovereign God, believes that his wisdom will prevail. It's not that the Pharaoh was a fool, he was ruling the most powerful nation at the time, Pharaoh was no fool, but yet it produces exactly the opposite results that Pharaoh expects because God is sovereign and ruling in heaven. It is important for us to always remember that God's will prevails not the wisdom of man. A plan that seems so wise will only produce fruit if God so deems. There is clearly the concept of sowing and reaping that God applies to the world, but it is God's causing it, that is why the pattern exists. They decide to deal shrewdly with them "lest they multiply." If they are 30,000 here, but Pharaoh is seeing how they are multiplying and understands that if they keep at the same rate that it will cause problems, it also should give us an idea how empty the world was then because Egypt was a mighty country. And consider how small their population must have been in order to be afraid of 30,000 people. "And it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us." The Israelites are increasing in rate

far faster than the Egyptians. There is no evidence that the Israelites were rebellious toward the Egyptians, but it is likely that Pharaoh would think that they would be and what he would do in that situation. Which is also probably why his counsellors go along with it, they lived peacefully besides them for a long time, but now, because they are different, they consider them their enemy. They realize this is what they would also do in the situation. "And so go up out of the land." He just said it was filled, where are they going to go? And his fear is that they will go up out of the land and leave. His concern is not that they will overwhelm them, that they will enslave them and take what they have. It is that they will leave. Which, if Pharaoh was concerned about them becoming over populated you would think that he would want them to leave. His shrewdness is mixed with hypocrisy but it probably indicates a couple things. One is that the Israelites were a blessing to them. They were not slaves at this point, but they might have been prosperous and the Egyptians didn't want to lose their taxes or some other benefits for having the Israelites near them. They probably had some idea of the prophesy. The Israelites would have had to spread knowledge of the promise among themselves that after 400 years they would leave, which would mean that the Egyptians would hear of it. They are teaching the next generation that they are supposed to leave. We know that they know they were supposed to take Joseph's bones up, so this is being passed down to the next generation at some level. You can't inform thousands of people without some of the Egyptians knowing what's going on. They're afraid God's covenant will come to pass, they're not thinking the Israelites are going to overthrow them, they are thinking that God's Word is going to be fulfilled. When they do this, understand they are doing this because they want to say God is not God. All of the events that lead to the Exodus were because Egypt was working to thwart the will of God. As we think about the results of their actions it is important for us to consider that God said what was going to happen. They do everything they can to stop it and it happens anyway. Everything that they try gets turned on its head because God has said they would go up. Remember that when you see people rise up against the church. Remember that the rock cut without hands, will rule the earth. It doesn't matter that they start to burn Christians at the stake again, it doesn't matter, the church will become the mountain that fills the whole earth. It will just increase the speed with which it happens. That's the pattern of history. As Paul says, who has resisted His will? In the end they accomplish His purpose trying not to accomplish His purpose. "Therefore they set taskmasters over them." Because they are afraid that God's will will come to pass, they do God's will. God said they would be slaves to them and serve them so they do exactly what God said. They make the Israelites serve them just as God said that they would. Of course, this part of the prophesy they would have desired it to come to pass. The point of the taskmaster, people who would be in charge over their labor, would have been claimed because they needed some service. They needed cities built, but the hidden purpose was to try to stop the increase of the Israelites. When we think of a task master we think of someone like an overseer of slaves that would have directed each individual in what they did. But these taskmasters were more masters of tribute, telling them what they must supply in terms of labor, like the count of the number of bricks that they must provide not to go here and there. They made them tributaries to the Egyptians. They were more like tax collectors than they were slave masters "to afflict them with their burdens." By increasing their taxes greatly, they probably claimed that the taxes had to increase because the nation needed something. But the reality was that they were doing it because they had an ulterior motive, they were trying to suppress the Israelites, to cause them to have less children. This word "afflict" is the same word that was used in the covenant with Abram where God said that they would be afflicted. Pharaoh

afflicts them. Another comment, a lot of times government does things with taxes where they have a completely different agenda than what they claim. Their agenda was to suppress the Israelites, but I highly doubt they said that. They said they needed to have supply cities in case there is another famine. We're going to tax people, just like Joseph did, he taxed the people a certain percentage during the seven years of plenty to store up food for the famine. They're not saying they are afflicting them so they don't rise up, instead they are telling them a different story. Understand, that happens all the time. It's happened many times in American history, they will have the people pay a tax that has nothing to do with the reason they are trying to sell the tax because this is what people do. They have an ulterior agenda, but they spin it in a way that it's most palatable to the people. "And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses." We do see the results of that affliction, they are able to build supply cities for Pharaoh. It is interesting that even as the Pharaoh does not remember Joseph, He still is doing what Joseph started. So, while the Pharaoh doesn't remember Joseph, he's still doing what Joseph did and creating those supply cities. The KJV says 'treasure cities', but the idea here is very much more supply cities. He set up supply depots in various places, just like in Genesis 41:48, "So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them." Now Pharaoh says we will have cities dedicated to this so he has the Israelites build those cities, whose primary purpose is to be a supply depot. Scripture doesn't really say anything else about Pithom so we don't really know anything about it, but we do know about Raamses. It becomes the major city in the land of Goshen when they leave Egypt. Numbers 33:2-3, "Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these are their journeys according to their starting points: They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians." The Egyptians had them build the city so they would stop increasing in number, so they would not leave the land, but that was the very place that they gathered in order to leave the land. Man cannot thwart the will of God.

Verses 12-14, "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. 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." "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Pharaoh thought he was so shrewd, that he came up with this plan that would certainly stop the Israelites from multiplying, but they don't get the result that they want. But they cannot say this isn't working we should try something else, instead they just keep trying to afflict them more. We have this idea that if something doesn't work, to try harder. We will hand out these checks to eliminate poverty, but poverty's not eliminated so what do you do? Give out more checks obviously. This is what governments do. Instead of saying this didn't work so we should do something else, they double down and increase everything. The more they afflict them, the more it has the opposite results of what they want. This so often happens out of pride, you can see it in history so clearly. Do you do the same thing? When someone isn't working do you say, 'Well, I will do twice as much work.' That isn't how God ordered the world, the basic principle God gives is sowing and reaping. If you sow something and reap a result, that doesn't mean that sowing twice will give you a different result, it means you will get twice of the same results. This is generally how God ordered the world, but

out of pride, just like with Pharaoh- the first fifteen chapters of Exodus are about the pride of the Pharaohs- when you say your plan didn't work so I'm going to do more of it, make sure you're not like that. That's not how we're supposed to think the world is ordered. Pride is a terrible taskmaster which we will see as we consider the plagues of Egypt, but it was already happening before. But God uses their wisdom to get the results that He has decreed, not for them to get the results that they expect. "And they were in dread of the children of Israel." The KJV translates it 'grieved', but I don't think either really conveys the meaning. They saw what was happening and it made them very anxious because everything they did to stop the Israelites from increasing just results in them increasing more. That anxiety turns into loathing and hating the Israelites, so this word means that their concern is producing ill will toward the Israelites. "So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor." Their anxiety toward them makes them desire to punish them. When you go back in modern history of slavery, over the last 2-400 years, the worst slavery by far are the blacks in the Caribbean, and the Chinese in Western United States. No question that those were the worst treated slaves. The average lifespan in the Caribbean was like 4 years, the average lifespan out West when they were building the railroads was like 6 years. The average lifespan in American slavery before the Civil War is like 70 years, they had the same lifespan as everyone else. The slavery that was cruel, destructive I should say, is the Caribbean slavery and the slavery out West with the Chinese. None of that was done with a desire to be cruel, it was a desire to get rich. That's not what the Egyptians were like. When you think of the worst slavery you can imagine, because of modern descriptions of slavery, that's not like the slavery the Israelites were put under. The purpose of that slavery was not for them to get wealthy, the purpose of that slavery was for them to be cruel to the Israelites. They see them multiply so they start to treat them with cruelty. Before the assumption was that you take away their wealth through heavy taxation, you take away their time through requiring their labor, and they won't have the resources to continue to increase. It wasn't really done with cruelty toward them but as they continue to increase, the response of the Egyptians is that they start to treat them with cruelty. This is a pretty normal result. Remember that this is the type, the antitype is the church. What happens in an area where the church starts to blossom, where the gospel goes forth with power, where people start to change, where people are blessing, where they start to multiply and grow? That's when you get the persecution. You don't have people put to death when the church is weak, you have people being put to death when the Reformation starts. When you think of times of martyrdom in the church it is really because of fear. The blood of the martyr waters the tree of the church. All of a sudden there is this new religion that is everywhere in Rome, especially among the women and slaves, those who are mistreated by the society, and because of their fear the Romans start to persecute the church of Jesus Christ. Or at the time of the Reformation, the powers that existed in the church and the state see the changes that were coming on the people as the word of God was faithfully preached and they were filled with fear that their system was going to be overturned. Out of their fear they started imprisoning and killing people. Hatred and attacking those that make the natural man anxious are the typical response. God has given us these pictures so we know what He is doing with His church. He didn't just do this with the Israelites in Egypt, He does this with His church in the world. I don't know how accurate the story was, but there was a story on Fox News that the gospel is exploding in Iran ever since the shah was thrown out and they've tried to impose strict Islam and the gospel is exploding there. I don't know if that's true, but I know that is the pattern, that is what God does. That is the standard response to martyrdom in the church, when the world starts to treat the church with

cruelty. The normal thing that God does is He causes the church to increase. "And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage." No longer were they just trying to stop them from increasing, now they were trying to make them miserable. They weren't responding in the way that the Egyptians wanted so they wanted to punish them for it. And here is where we see them fully enslaved, they have fully been put under bondage and this is where they become slaves. It's different than the slavery that the Egyptians have towards each other because remember the Egyptians were slaves except priests, because those slaves they were trying to get benefit from like American slavery or even in the Caribbean. Here, the point of the slavery is to make them suffer, it's to make their lives bitter. There are many slaves where the slavery is not that difficult, consider that Joseph was a slave in Egypt but being second in authority in Egypt would not have been a hard life. Slavery is not inherently associated with a hard life, but the purpose of this slavery was not to get the production of their labor, the purpose of this slavery was to be cruel toward them. The word translated 'hard' is also translated 'churlish', 'cruel', 'grievous'. They want their lives to be bitter because they see their numbers growing. When we get to them saying that they just want the 'leeks and onions of Egypt', remember this verse. Their bondage was intended to make them miserable. "In mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." What had started as taxes had become full slavery that the Egyptians would use them for whatever service that they wanted. All the most grueling work was required from the Israelites. According to Josephus, they had to build pyramids, they built the irrigation system from the Nile. We know from Moses this is how the watering worked in Egypt from Deuteronomy 11:10, "For the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot, as a vegetable garden." They made all the irrigation systems in Egypt and God is saying that they are going to go to a place where the rains come and you don't have to irrigate. This is probably the hard bondage they were in, watering and setting up all these irrigation methods. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor. The purpose for which God gave slavery was to be a blessing to the slave. The goal of the Egyptians was to make it as miserable as possible.

Applications:

1. Remember that slavery in Egypt is the picture of slavery to sin. All slavery isn't bad, slavery to righteousness is a tremendous blessing. Slavery is not good nor bad, it's who you're a slave to that's good or bad. Egypt is a picture of being a slave to sin. Don't forget the picture here as well, the bondage in Egypt is used throughout the Scriptures as a picture of the bondage to sin. It starts by looking like it won't be bad, it is just a tax that you need to pay, but it gets words and worse and the end of it is cruelty, the end of it is destruction. We can see it with a drunkard who has a hangover in the morning and says that's the price to have a good time until he is laying in the gutter because he is drunk all the time because that's where slavery leads. That's the picture of slavery in Egypt. It can start out not bad, but can become miserable. Don't give sin an opportunity in your lives. Christ came to break to bondage of sin because this is the kind of slaver that sinners are under. Slavery to sin just grows worse and worse and the purpose of it is not beneficial. It can be tempting to think how hard it is to follow Christ. Always remember the picture of slavery to sin, where it's point is to make you miserable. The point of being a slave to Christ is to make you blessed and to make you joyful. When you think it's hard to be a Christian, it's a lot harder not to be.

2. God has given us a model of begin fruitful. It means to prosper and to be delivered, that's what fruitfulness produces. That was true at the time of the captivity in Egypt, and that was true during the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah 29:6, "Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished." Jeremiah 52:28-30, "These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons were four thousand six hundred." The number of people taken to Babylon from Israel was 4,600 people. Seventy years later, in the first return from captivity, Ezra 2:64-65, "The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers." A small remnant comes back seventy years later and it's roughly ten times bigger than the total number of people taken into captivity. This is how God delivers His people. We're called to be fruitful. It's really easy to think that somehow the way the gospel grows is by someone like Billy Graham going before all these people and many getting saved. No, that's not how the church grows. The church grows by one here, one there, and one there. We're a country that is going into bondage to sin, going insane because of sin. Delivery from it is the same way that the people of God are always delivered. It's that the people of God are fruitful. If you want to sold the problem as a nation that we've embraced sodomy, the solution isn't to figure out which official to elect. That won't solve the problem. What solves the problem is telling the gospel to your neighbor, it's preaching the gospel to your children. That's the pattern of how God delivers a people. We should not expect the kingdom of God to grow from the top down. You see it with Josiah, as soon as he dies they flip back. The way people get delivered is from the bottom up. Make sure you are faithful to preach the gospel to your children and the people you meet. It's not by these great shows that the church gets delivered, it's by small things happening day by day, it's by faithfully trying to follow Scripture, it's to be willing to speak up and say 'the reason I have 8 children is because God said to be fruitful and multiply'. The reason I do this is because God. That's how the church gets delivered, that's the pattern of Scripture, that's the picture here. In Exodus 1, God gives us this picture, the kingdom of God doesn't come with great flash and great pomp and circumstance. The kingdom of God is a rock that is cut without hands and fills the earth by people being faithful in the simple things they have been given to do. Are you being faithful in the simple things God has given you to do? He's given us all the duty to preach the gospel to our children, to the other people that we come into contact with.

3. God is kind to His people. It is really easy to hear that they would be afflicted for 400 hundred years, and then to hear that they were slaves in Egypt and think that for four hundred years they were having to make straw without bricks and to think that was the picture for 400 years. But that wasn't the case. They had Ishmael who mocked Isaac, they had Laban who deceived Jacob. God is kind to His people. They were strangers in other people's lands for hundreds of years, but the cruel and oppressive slavery was for a relatively short period of time. When persecution starts in the church, it's usually for a short time and then God uses it to cause the church to grow rapidly. When those things happen, make sure you remember that God is kind to His people. We should have an expectation that that our afflictions are not going to last forever.
4. Are you resisting the will of God? That's what Pharaoh wanted to do. It sure seems that he had an idea that they were going to go out of the land so he does things to stop them from going up out of the land. We'll certainly see that with a later Pharaoh, but don't expect things to go well if you resist the Word of God. Don't think that you can cause what God said will happen, that you can cause it to reverse and it not happen. It doesn't work that way. God is sovereign. Make sure you recognize that in your own life. Are you resisting the will of God in some area in your life? Don't think that somehow this will turn into blessing and you are going to succeed. Nobody can resist the will of God; nobody wins against God. God does His good pleasure. If there's an area of your life where you say you are just going to hold onto this sin, don't be a fool. It doesn't work, it never works.
5. We are commanded to honor civil magistrates, but at the same time that's not a requirement for us to be foolish. We should realize that rulers give false explanations all the time, where they have different agendas than what they say. I think of WWII where they did food rationing. They said it was so there would be more food for the troops. A total lie. They knew that you do price controls and you get less of something. This isn't rocket science, this is basic economics and the people in FDR's cabinet knew that, that wasn't the point. The point was to make people feel involved in the war so they said one thing but their purpose was something completely different. Pharaoh says one thing, he says we need taxes but his purpose was to cause them to have fewer children. Don't think that doesn't happen now, that still happens with those who are worldly. Just because someone gives you an explanation of something, take it with a grain of salt, people frequently have other agendas that are completely different than the agenda they are trying to sell you. The opposite of that is that as Christians we have an obligation to walk in the light and not be shrewd in our motives, to not say one thing when we really mean another. Make sure you're not like that. That is what the world is like, where the world deceives and tries to make something palatable by saying you should focus on this and forget the rest when what they are really trying to do is accomplish the rest. We're supposed to be a straightforward people, a people that walk in the light. You can be shrewd without being deceitful. Make sure you're not deceitful. If our desire is to truly love our neighbors, we should not be trying to manipulate them. Manipulation is not a form of love.
6. Let's not miss the picture here. Israel is the type of the church. We are supposed to look at what happens to them and understand that it applies to Christ and to the body of Christ. This is what

salvation looks like when we see the plagues, this is what freedom looks like when they try to curse the Israelites. It's the picture of the world trying to curse the church and it just causes the church to grow bigger. The more that the Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus Christ, the more people followed after Him. The more that they suppress and afflict the church, the more the church increases. Times of affliction should not discourage the church. As we saw in 1 and 2 Peter, it is during those times of affliction that we take on the suffering of Christ and God uses that to build His people just like He did in Egypt.

7. How do you respond to suffering? We need to remember; we have a better covenant than they had. Their covenant was that they would get to go to the land their father had. So when they suffered, we can understand that they wanted an easy life instead of going up to the land of Canaan. But we have a better covenant, we have a better hope. Our hope is eternal life. We can suffer and see the world rise against us and we can say this is a blessing because we have a better covenant. We can rejoice in suffering for the name of Christ because we know that suffering is the means that God will cause His kingdom to come. We're not just focused on the here and now, but focused on eternity. When we suffer in the here and now, we can rejoice because we have a better hope, it is a better covenant and we can look forward to Christ's kingdom coming and expanding and we can do that with great hope and expectation because we were taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." We can know this is going to happen, we can know what God is doing so when we suffer we suffer with hope. They suffered just with the hope of the promise that they would be delivered. We suffer with the hope and the knowledge and the guarantee that God will use the suffering to expand His kingdom and fill the whole earth.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Exodus, we pray that we take the right lessons away from it. We see the shadows and understand the substance, we understand how we are to apply it to our own lives. We thank You for Your kindness in what You did for Israel. Lord, we do pray that we see how kind You are to us even at times of difficulties, even in times of chastisement where You turn us from our sin. Lord, let us see what a great blessing You are to Your people. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.