

The Story of Passover

Israel's bondage in Egypt

Predetermined by God

After these things **the word of the LORD** came to **Abram** in a vision,...

God said to Abram, “Know for certain that **your descendants** will be **strangers** in a land that is not theirs, where they will be **enslaved and oppressed** four hundred years. But I will **judge** the **nation** whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with **many possessions**.
(Genesis 15:1a, 13-14)

Perpetrated by a “new king” in Egypt

Now these are the names of the **sons of Israel** who came **to Egypt** with Jacob; they came each one with his household:...

All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were **seventy** in number, but Joseph was *already* in Egypt. Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the sons of Israel were **fruitful** and **increased greatly**, and **multiplied**, and became exceedingly **mighty**, so that the land was **full of them**.

Now a **new king** arose over Egypt, who **did not know Joseph**.
He said to his people,

“Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are **more and mightier** than we. Come let us deal **wisely** with them, or else they will **multiply** and in the **event of war**, they will also **join themselves** to those who hate us, and **fight against us** and **depart** from the land.”

So they appointed **taskmasters** over them to **afflict them** with **hard labor**.

And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.

But the more they **afflicted** them, the more they **multiplied** and the more they **spread out**, so that they were in **dread** of the sons of Israel.

The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to **labor rigorously**; and they made their lives **bitter** with **hard labor** in **mortar** and **bricks** and at all *kinds* of labor in the field, all their labors which they **rigorously imposed** on them.

Then the king of Egypt spoke to the **Hebrew midwives**,... ; and he said, “When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see *them* upon the birthstool, if it is a **son**, then you shall put him **to death**; but if it is a **daughter**, then she shall live.”

But the midwives **feared God**, and **did not do** as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live....

...So **God was good** to the **midwives**, and the people **multiplied**, and became very **mighty**. It came about because the midwives **feared God**, that He established households for them. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every **son** who is born you are to **cast into the Nile**, and every daughter you are to keep alive.”
(Exodus 1:1, 5-17, 20-22)

Pitied by a responsive God who heard their anguish

Now it came about in *the course of* those **many days** that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel **sighed** because of the **bondage**, and they **cried out**; and their **cry for help** because of *their bondage* **rose up to God**.

So **God heard** their **groaning**; and **God remembered His covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
God saw the sons of Israel, and **God took notice** of *them*...

The LORD said,

“I have surely **seen** the **affliction** of **My people** who are in Egypt, and have **given heed** to **their cry** because of their **taskmasters**, for **I am aware** of their **suffering**.

So I have **come down** to **deliver them** from **the power** of the Egyptians,...
(Exodus 2:23-25, 3:7-8a)

Personal Discussion

Seeking an understanding as to “**why**”,
there is *suffering, oppression, and affliction*

1. **Suffering** and **affliction** are the **direct** result of being born as “**sons of Adam**”, as **human beings**, into a **sinful condition**. Along with a **fallen world** we also **suffer**, as those “**in bondage**”, to **complete corruption** and the **condemnation of death**. (Psalm 51:5) (Romans 5:12-19)

For since by a man *came death*,
by a man also *came the resurrection* from the **dead**.

For as **in Adam** *all die*,
so also **in Messiah** *all will be made alive*.
(I Corinthians 15:21-22)

For the anxious longing of the **creation** waits eagerly
for the **revealing** of the **sons of God**.

For the **creation** was subjected to *futility*,...in **hope** that the **creation** itself
also will be **set free** from its **slavery to corruption**
into the **freedom** of the **glory** of the **children of God**.

For we know that the **whole creation groans** and **suffers** the pains of
childbirth...

..., even **we ourselves groan** within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our*
adoption as sons, the **redemption of our body**.
(Romans 8:19-23)

2. Among **believers**, God allows **suffering** and **affliction** for the purposes of **spiritual growth** and the establishing of **our faith**. Oftentimes we are **tested** in a “**furnace of affliction**” that we might **learn** to look to **Him alone** for **strength, comfort, deliverance, and healing**. (Deut. 8:2-3) (Psalm 119:67, 71; Psalm 121) (I Peter 1:6-7) (Hebrews 12:5-11). In the book of I Peter we read:

After you have **suffered** for a little while, the **God of all grace**,
who **called you** to His **eternal glory in Messiah**,
will Himself **perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you**.
(I Peter 5:10)

3. Sometimes God may bring about **affliction** and **suffering** to move His people away from **stagnation** and an attitude of **complacency** towards **obedience** and the **fulfilling** of **His intended purposes**. (Psalm 105:23-27, 42-45) Perhaps the children of Israel might have **stayed put** had it not been for a **season of affliction** that prompted them to realize that their future was not in Egypt but the **promised land**. (Acts 7:17-20a, 36) (Ex. 16:2-3) (Acts 8:1-4)
4. As the **people of God**, **suffering and affliction** can be due to the fact that we face a continuing **adversary**, and a **world** led by **forces contrary** to God and **hostile to His purposes**. (Psalm 27:1-3, 11-12, Psalm 140) (Isaiah 41:10-12) (John 15:18-19) (Ephesians 6:11-12) (James 4:4) (II Timothy 2:12)

In his letter Peter warns us:

“Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert.
your **adversary, the devil**, prowls around like a roaring lion,
seeking someone **to devour**.”

But **resist him**, firm in **your faith**, knowing that the same experiences
of **suffering** are being accomplished by your brethren who are **in the world**.”
(I Peter 5:8-9)

5. **Suffering** and **affliction** are also the result of **personal sin** and **willful disobedience** to the **will of God** in our lives. The **Bible** openly *declares* and *records* the tragic history (and future) of **men** and **nations** that have chosen to walk **contrary** to the will and purposes of their Creator. The results have been untold *suffering, corruption, lawlessness, ungodliness, and death* along with God’s own intervening **judgments** upon **men** both in **the past** and in the **future** to come. (Genesis 6:5-7) (Job 15:16) (Proverbs 8:36, 5:21-23) (John 3:19-20) (Romans 1:18-32, 6:23) (Galatians 5:19-21, 6:7-8) (II Peter 3:7-13)

Closing Commentary

How should we then **respond to and live**,
in a *suffering, corrupt, and oppressive* world??

