

Israel in Egypt

Exodus

Good morning, saints.

SLIDE: Sovereignty

We’re continuing with our venture into the Book of Exodus, and as we discussed last time, God’s Sovereignty over all creation is being demonstrated. **Is God in control or is He not?** Are things just happening by chance and God is forced to scramble to react to them, or is there a Plan? Why do bad things seem to happen to good people? These are questions that the Israelites undoubtedly asked themselves during the hundreds of years of miserable slavery.

SLIDE: Job

I’m going to start off with a reading from the Book of Job. Job is questioning God as to why certain things are happening in his life because he does not understand. He is miserable; his friends have told him that he must have sinned for God to do such things to him. Job wants to know...as we often do.... *"Why me?" I've been good, says Job, why are you making me suffer?* **God answers Job with a series of questions that he did not expect:**

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding,
Who set its measurements? Since you know.
Or who stretched the line on it?
“On what were its bases sunk?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?...
“Have you ever in your life commanded the morning,
And caused the dawn to know its place,...
Have you gone to the springs that fill the sea,
or walked about in the recesses of the deep?
Have the gates of death been revealed to you?
Have you seen the gates of deepest darkness?

Job 38:4–7, 12

In other words, God told Job that he wouldn’t understand even if He told him. Job states, “Though He slay me, in Him I will trust.” (Job 13:15)

I open with these words expressing God’s Sovereignty because we’re going to come across many examples of it in the Book of Exodus.

- Why so many years of slavery – weren’t these God’s people? Why did He wait so long to rescue them?
- Why the grueling process of the Ten Plagues? Why Ten, why not Five?

- Why, exactly, did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Was that really FAIR?
- Why did so many innocent Egyptian firstborns have to die?

The fact that God *did not* pursue an easier and quicker road to freedom indicates that there is some other agenda at work in Exodus. And part of that agenda is to show the world that He Alone is Sovereign in all creation.

Before we begin, I want to call your attention to today...

SLIDE: Tisha b'Av

You may have noticed on the church’s calendar that today is Tisha b'Av, the 9th day of the Jewish month of Av. It is a day of mourning... it is not one for the seven Biblical feasts in the Torah.

- Spies and Refusal to go into Promised Land (*Crying over nothing – I’ll give you something to cry about.*)

<Click> Destruction of 1st Temple by Babylonians (586 BC)

- Destruction of 2nd Temple by Romans (70 AD)
- Jews expelled from Spain (1492) -> **COLUMBUS**

- Hitler orders ‘Final Solution’ of the Jews on 9th of Av, 1941

Either these occurrences are just Coincidences, or Someone is in control of human history.

I do note that – according to one Jewish tradition – the Messiah was to be born on Tisha B’Av—as if to say that God’s deliverance will turn a traditional day of mourning into joy.ⁱ

- So, since we don’t know what day Jesus was born on, **TODAY MIGHT ACTUALLY BE CHRISTMAS DAY!**

SLIDE: Chapter 1

Ok – let’s continue with the Book of Exodus. Lord willing, I think you will find to be an exciting and eye-opening, adventure. Paul wrote:

For everything that was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.”

Romans 15:4

ⁱ JT Berachot 2:4

Scripture pulls back the curtain for us to get a glimpse of Him. Exodus shows God as the Holy, Faithful and Sovereign One.

I’m reading from Exodus Chapter 1:

“And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 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 filled with them. Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power over Egypt.”

From the last chapter of Genesis, hundreds of years have gone by. The text here says “seventy in number” from the loins of Jacob came to Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan.ⁱⁱ The Book of Genesis provided the details of that 70 male individuals: there were 66 people plus Jacob plus Joseph plus Joseph’s two sons already in Egypt. However, **70 is usually a symbolic number in Hebrew**. At the Tower of Babel, there were 70 basic nations of humanity (Gen. 10–11).

ⁱⁱ Acts 7:15 says there were 75, which is based on a Greek translation of the passage. [The Reformation Study Bible](#), comment on Acts 7:14

- We know that 70 is **symbolic** here because the genesis list includes two sons of Judah (Er and Onan) that God had previously killed in Canaan because of wickedness. (Gen. 38:6–10; Gen. 46:12)
- Also, Benjamin at this time would have been in his 20’s, and yet the Genesis list includes **10 sons of Benjamin** – highly improbable at this time.

So, the number 70 here means *completeness* – it means that the whole of Jacob’s family came to Egypt – **nobody was left behind**.¹

It is likely that Jacob’s band was about 250 individuals when you include women and other people in the household – small in number compared to what they would become. **And nobody was left behind in Canaan.**

Now – several hundreds of years earlier, God had made a promise to Abraham – Jacob’s grandfather – that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars (Gen. 15:5), and that the land of Canaan would be given to them, but that this would only happen in the future.

Genesis 15: “God said to Abram ‘know for certain that your descendants will be **strangers** in a foreign country. They

will be **enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years**. But I will execute judgment on the nation that they will serve. Afterward they will come out with many possessions... In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the sin of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Genesis 15:13–16

Exodus is the story of how – against all odds – God brought this company of people together. He will bring them out of the land of Egypt, and He will bring them to Sinai. At Sinai, He finally announces them to what He’s doing – *He really hadn’t told them up until then*. He now would tell them that they will be HIS PEOPLE. They are now established as a HOLY NATION.

Exodus Chapter 1

Just a housekeeping note: Jacob is also called *Israel*, which is a name given to him by God.² So don’t get confused if sometimes he is sometimes called ‘Jacob’ and other times ‘Israel’ – **it’s the same person**.

It needs to be mentioned that Jacob had been *reluctant* to relocate his family to Egypt, even though there was a severe famine in Canaan. He knew that God’s covenant promise to Abraham of land referred to Canaan, *not* Egypt. But God assured him that he go down to Egypt.

SLIDE: GOD SPEAKS TO JACOB

God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." He said, "I am God, the God of your father; **do not be afraid to go down to Egypt**, for I will make you a great nation there. **"I will go down with you to Egypt**, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes."... Genesis 46:2-4

➤ There are two important points here in God’s statement. \

- First, He is **telling Jacob to go to Egypt**. Jacob was not there of his own accord!
- Second, **God said that He would accompany Jacob** when he goes – this is totally contrary to the standard protocol of gods in the ancient world – gods were territorial and madding such a journey into another god’s territory was just not done in the normal course of events.

As you may remember, Jacob’s favorite son was Joseph, was already in Egypt. Joseph had been sold into slavery as a teenager by his brothers out of jealousy. They told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal, so Jacob thought Joseph was dead. While in Egypt in slavery and later in prison, Joseph gained a reputation of interpreting dreams. Pharaoh

heard of this and asked him to interpret two dreams that troubled him, both of which dealt with a coming severe famine. Joseph said the dreams were about seven years of plenty and then seven years of a great famine. Pharaoh put Joseph – then only 30 years old (Gen. 41:46) – in charge of preparing for the famine and made him the #2 person in authority in all of Egypt. Jacob comes to Egypt during the foretold famine and is overjoyed to see Joseph alive. The family settles in. All this is in Genesis. Then, hundreds of years of *complete silence* pass.

The story picks up in verse 6 of Exodus chapter 1:

“... 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 filled with 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’s 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.”

SLIDE: EGYPT

The Hebrew name for the land of Egypt is 'Mizrim'. Egypt was composed of two sections: **Upper Egypt** and **Lower Egypt**.

<ONE click> It probably seems strange that ‘Upper Egypt’ is to the south and Lower Egypt is in the north. That’s because the Nile River flows northward to the Mediterranean, so the higher terrain is in the south, toward the center of the continent. It might be more understandable to say ‘*Higher*’ Egypt and ‘*Lower*’ Egypt. The ancient Egyptians did not define the exact border between Lower and Upper Egypt. The major cities of Lower Egypt were Memphis, Giza, Avaris and **Tanis**. The main city of Upper Egypt was Thebes.

<click> The Israelites settle in the portion of Lower Egypt called Goshen.

<click> Anyone who has seen the Indiana Jones movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark* may remember the name ‘Tanis’. In the movie, the city was buried by a catastrophic sandstorm and rediscovered by Nazis searching for the Ark of the Covenant.

In reality, Tanis was a real city, but the Ark was never hidden in Tanis, the sandstorm didn't happen, and the Nazis never battled Indiana Jones in the site's ruins. But, I liked the movie.

How did they come to live in Goshen, which looks like a really choice piece of real estate, very green-lush land, while most of the other parts of Egypt, except for a small swath along the Nile River, is primarily desert?

It goes back when Jacob first came to Egypt. Joseph advised him what to say when he is introduced to the Pharaoh...

“When Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ you should answer, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, **both we and our fathers**,’ Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians”
(Genesis 46:33–34)

Shrewd...

You see, the Israelites were Semites, who like many other Semitic groups, tended to be shepherds. The native Egyptians saw shepherds as the lowest class of people, and their mere presence was offensive. An Egyptian would NEVER eat with a shepherd – Egyptians valued *cattle*, not sheep. That’s one of

the reasons that the Egyptian’s highest deity, Isis, was represented by a Bull.

Why was every shepherd loathsome (an abomination, disgusting, abhorrent, detestable) to the Egyptians?

G. J. Wenham says, “*Shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians probably reflects a common distrust of nomadic peoples by urban dwellers (cf. attitudes to gypsies and ‘travelers’ in modern society).*” (The New Bible Commentary)

Joseph’s advice to his father was also a piece of *diplomacy* – when Jacob tells the Pharaoh that the family had always been shepherds, it suggested that they had no further ambitions above that occupation.

So, the Pharaoh says to Jacob: “The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen.”

Genesis 47:6

Goshen was a rich, rich land that was in the Nile Delta, which is formed by the division of the branches of the River Nile as it flows northward to the Mediterranean.

- ◆ In fact, several Pharaohs chose to live there in a city called **Avaris**³ (pronounced ‘**A-varis**’) for a period of history. Capital cities frequently changed depending upon the preferences of the Pharaoh in office at the time. It is believed that the confrontations between Moses and the then-Pharaoh happened at Avaris. It was smack-dab in Goshen where the Israelites settled.
- ◆ Much of Egypt was a dustbowl. But Goshen was a rich and well-watered land.
- ◆ But more importantly, Goshen was far away from the native Egyptians who despised shepherds.

I. LIFE IN EGYPT

At the time, Egypt was a land of plenty and of beauty and art. It was a land to be envied, especially for the variety of food. Remember from the Book of Numbers some of the complaints of the Israelites in the wilderness:

SLIDE: ABUNDANCE OF FOODS IN EGYPT

Let me read Numbers 11:4–6:

⁴ The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, “Who will give us

meat to eat? ⁵ We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, ⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna.”

They’re complaining about the food: “*We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt.*” The river was right there; they had to put their fingers in and bring out the fish. It was free. And we also remember “*...the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic.*” Quite a land!

In the wilderness, they wanted water, and they wanted better food. We heard them longing for their life back in Egypt, but ironically, they never complained about their slavery back then! Is that the same with us?

SLIDE: BEER

Beer was very important to ancient Egyptian society. Beer was drunk by both adults and children; it was the staple drink of poor Egyptians as well as being central to the diet of wealthy Egyptians. Wages were often paid in beer and the workmen at the pyramids of Giza received beer three times a day as part of their rations.⁴ Beer dramatically multiplied the calories in harvested grains and delivered vitamins to the consumer; the alcohol was also effective at killing bacteria found in tainted

water supplies. Given the difficulty of producing food in the ancient world, beer gave a lot of nutritional bang for the buck.⁵

SLIDE: BUDWEISER

Recently discovered hieroglyph.

<click>

SLIDE: GOLDEN HANDCUFFS

So, the Israelites living in Goshen had a rich life. Maybe their diet wasn’t exactly our idea of a diet – unless you own a deli – but they enjoyed it. It was a rich land.

How attractive Egypt was can be seen in the story of Abraham and his nephew Lot visiting Egypt hundreds of years earlier (Genesis 12). However, that visit was not at the instruction of the Lord, and the then-Pharaoh eventually kicked them out because of a prophetic dream, and they came back to Canaan. They prospered in Canaan, so much so that their flocks became so numerous that fights were breaking out between the shepherds of Lot and the shepherds of Abraham. They agreed to separate, and Abraham gave Lot the first-pick of where to go. Genesis 13 states:

“Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere-- this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah-- like the garden of the LORD, **like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.**”

Genesis 13:10

Lot remembered Egypt and described it as lush as the Garden of Eden – an exaggeration of course, but it obviously was attractive. That had to be a reference to Goshen. Lot chose to go toward Sodom, and we know how that story turned out.

IMMIGRANTS

The text says that Joseph’s generation – Joseph and all his brothers –died prior to the persecution. We can think of Joseph’s generation as the **immigrant** generation.⁶

- Think about this for a moment. It is likely that most – if not all – of us in this room is a natural born Americans. But, it would not be that unusual that our parents or grandparents were born outside the country. My great grandparents were immigrants who came here from Ireland and Italy. Their experience in America as immigrants who just got off of the boat was quite different than for those of us who were born here.

- We have only known America, and American culture. The 2nd and 3rd generation of Israelites was quite different from those who had journeyed down from Canaan. Those who had come to survive the great famine thought of their stay as “just for a while”. The next generation had little to no thought of going to Canaan..... after all, Egypt was the only home they ever knew, and so were quite comfortable
- Yet, God’s prophecy to Abraham was that they would be strangers in a foreign land. (Gen. 15) Something had to change.

WHY did they stay after the famine was over? Why not move back to Canaan – after all, THAT was the land promised to Abraham by God.

Perhaps they were waiting for God’s promise to be taken out of the land. But, it can’t be overlooked that ...

Success and prosperity can slowly turn into MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL bondage. We can hear this in the complaints when they were in the wilderness. A person becomes accustomed to privileges and luxuries and begins to think of those things as necessities. Things that, at one time, you could not afford, and therefore did not worry about, become indispensable needs as you prosper. Your own wealth and success become

“**GOLDEN HANDCUFFS**” from which you find it difficult to escape. That is what Egypt became –Golden Handcuffs.

- ❖ **Now – it’s certainly NOT sinful to enjoy God’s provision.**
- ❖ **The issue was one of the heart!**

God said that they were to be strangers in a foreign land – but they were becoming just like the Egyptians.

Imagine the reception that Moses would have gotten if he had showed up during the time of *prosperity* for the Israelites.

- How many would have voted to leave? How many would have followed him to Canaan? Remember – **God’s Plan was to form a Holy People**, a Nation unto Himself. You can’t do that with reluctant participants.

And this explains WHY the Israelites had to go through the years of slavery.

Not only did God have to get the people out of Egypt, but He need to get Egypt out of the people. Stephen in Acts 7:39 states that: ‘Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him (Moses), but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.’

There’s a scene in the movie The Hunt for Red October that mirrors this situation. ‘Red October’ was the name for a new type of Russian ballistic missile submarine; the captain (Sean Connery) and officer crew want to defect to the U.S. However, they know that the rest of the crew will strongly resist if they knew what was happening. So, a CIA analyst – Jack Ryan – is wondering out-loud to himself how Captain Ramius might be planning to accomplish the feat. He says to himself, “*They (the crew) have to want to get off. How do you get a crew to want to get off a submarine? How do you get a crew to want to get off a nuclear sub?”* The answer – make them think there’s a dangerous radiation leak on the boat.

- So, how do you get people to leave an area where they’re presently living in prosperity and comfort? MAKE THEM WANT TO LEAVE.

God had announced to Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land. This was a peek into the future about what they would do to themselves. But God would be true to His promise and be there to take them out.

Joseph was 30 years old when Pharaoh made him #2 in Egypt (Gen 41:46), and it says that he died at the age of 110 (Gen. 50:26). That means that the Israelites had at least 80

years of uninterrupted good life before a hostile Pharaoh sat on the throne, perhaps as much as 150 years.

II. NEW KING

Their tranquil world collapses. I’ll read from Exodus Chapter 1, starting in verse 8:

SLIDE: NEW KING

Then a new king, **who did not know Joseph**, came to power in Egypt. 9 He said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are [f]more and mightier than we. 10 Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and [g]in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and [h]depart from the land.” 11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with [i]hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.

~~ Can you imagine new President of the United States who hasn't heard of Abraham Lincoln? And yet, Scripture tells us that only a few short years after Joseph dies, the new Pharaoh *“did not know of Joseph.”* The king's *“not knowing*

Joseph” means that he ACTED as if he did not know or appreciate Joseph's legacy.

So, you have ONE PHARAOH who raises Joseph up to the 2nd highest position in the land and grants his family the choicest land in Egypt, then then ANOTHER PHARAOH who is so afraid of the Israelites that he presses them into slavery and tries to reduce their numbers by infanticide.

Why the dramatic change?

III. HYKSOS

Well, there are two reasons, BOTH of which point to the sovereignty of God:

- The first has to do with EVENTS that happened just PRIOR to Joseph’s coming to Egypt – it is a little known fact of Egyptian history.
- And second has to do with ‘Occupy Wall Street’ ATTITUDES that we can see playing out today in some segments of our society. [We’ll get to that next time.]

SLIDE: HYKSOS PERIOD

First – when Joseph came to Egypt as a slave, Egypt was ruled by **Semites, not native Egyptians**. Let me repeat that – when Joseph came to Egypt as a slave, Egypt was ruled by Semites, NOT native Egyptians. The Pharaoh of Egypt with whom Joseph dealt was NOT a native Egyptian.

What had happened was that a Semite people called **Hyksos** had conquered Lower Egypt in the 17th century BC and dominated the Lower Egypt for probably 140–150 years. The Hyksos were the 15th, 16th and 17th Dynasties of Egypt. We don’t know very much about their history prior to the invasion, but we know that they were Semites and thus somehow were distantly related to the Hebrews. They may have been were a conglomeration of different allied peoples, perhaps similar to the four kings who jointly invaded Canaan during Abraham’s time and captured Lot. (Genesis 14:1)

This could help explain the warm reception that the then-Pharaoh gave to Joseph and his family – their peoples were both Semites – they were distant cousins. And the Pharaoh lived in his capital city of **Avaris**, smack-bad in the land of Goshen among the Israelites. The Old Testament refers to the site as Zoan. Psalm 78:12,43 identifies the "field of Zoan" as

where Moses performed miracles before a future Pharaoh to persuade him to let Israel go.ⁱⁱⁱ

SLIDE: POTIPHAR

The fact that the Pharaoh of Joseph’s time was not a *native* Egyptian would help to explain an unusual remark in the Book of Genesis chapter 39 regarding Potiphar – the captain of Pharaoh’s guards – who brought Joseph as a slave and whose wife tried to seduce him.

“Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard” vs. 1

The text notes that Potiphar was an ‘EGYPTIAN’. **Q: Why?** This remark makes very little sense UNLESS the Pharaoh himself was NOT an Egyptian. *“It would hardly be remarkable to mention that the head of the Secret Service guarding the American President is an American, would it? It would only be noteworthy if...(the President) was not an American.”⁷*

ⁱⁱⁱ The city is also mentioned in Isaiah 19:11, 13, Isaiah 30:4 and Ezekiel 30:14.

Was the Hyksos conquest of Egypt an example of a Trojan horse scenario? Some historians suggest that there was no major battle, just a steady influx of immigrants – settlers from Canaan and further north – who came to Egypt because of famine and economic reasons. They worked themselves into positions of power – while retaining their own cultural differences – and when the time was right, they engineered a coup with leaders of their native lands and took over most of Lower Egypt. They had chariots (unlike the Egyptians) and composite bows (unlike the Egyptians) and were able to defend their gains for about 150 years.

SLIDE: SONS OF NOAH

Let’s look at the lineage of the Israelites and of the Egyptians. Noah had three sons – Shem, Japheth and Ham.

<click> **Shem** had five sons, but we’re only concerned with the one named only *Arphaxad* (pronounced as ‘R-FOX-HAD’) because from him eventually came <click> Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob and his sons, including Joseph.

<click> **Japheth** had seven sons, who are not important on this point.

<click> **Ham** had four sons: Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan (Genesis 10:6). <click> You may remember from an earlier

slide that the land of Egypt was called '**Mizraim**', because Mizraim’s descendants settled Egypt. ⁸

<click> So, Joseph and the Israelites were descendants of Shem – they were SEMITES, and so were the Hyksos. The native Egyptians were HAMMITES, descendants of **Ham** through his son Mizraim.

After Joseph died, the new Pharaoh – Ahmose I – from Upper Egypt overthrew the Hyksos and founded the 18th Dynasty. Ahmose I was a **NATIVE** Egyptian – a descendent of Ham – who had no intentions of honoring the deals that the previous Pharaohs had with the Israelites. We don’t know if Ahmose I was the Pharaoh of this persecution, but it is likely. His was a new dynasty and it is understandable that he would fear another invasion of some Semite people from the north. He was suspicious that the Israelites, also Semites, might either side with invaders or just pack-up and go back to Canaan.

Pharaoh’s in a bind; he **FEARS** the Israelites but he **NEEDS** them to rebuild his kingdom into a regional economic and military power. His solution is to enslave them so they can’t leave or join with invaders. He used them as the national workforce, working them hard so as to keep their population in check by burdensome labor, and also not allow them to leave.

Now, this kind of slavery was NOT like we saw in the South prior to the Civil War. The Hebrews were not house servants or field hands on plantations – the government conscripted the Israelite males as work gangs for their building projects, canal construction and road construction. It was rather like being drafted into the Army, except there was no pay.^{iv}

Despite what Cecil B. DeMille depicted in his movie *The 10 Commandments*, the Israelites did NOT build pyramids. As we saw last time, by the time Jacob came to Egypt, the Pyramid building era was over 900 years ago. Instead, they made mud bricks, dug and restored waterways and canals, worked on construction of military forts, and built store cities – Pithom and Raamses, up in the area of Goshen.

A “stores–city” simply meant that a city was a regional supply depot and distribution center. These cities served both the civilian population and the Egyptian military, and were strategically located in Goshen because it was nearest Egypt’s eastern border and because that was a food–growing region.

- So, the reason why the new Pharaoh turned against the Israelites was that he was a native Egyptian, not a

^{iv} Tom Bradford, Torahclass, *Week 2 Exodus Chapter 1*

Semite, and he feared that the Israelites might side with future invaders of his county.

- The native Egyptians also turned against the Israelites – when Pharaoh ordered that the Israelite male newborns be thrown into the Nile, the order was carried out with and by the Egyptian neighbors. It was for a different reason (next time) but turn they did.

- **What was God doing?**

Exodus Chapter 1 tells us that: ‘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.’ (Vs. 13–14)

The Scripture does not go into detail about the sufferings the people endured. “We’re never told all we might want to know, but only what we need to know, and ... apparently considered that the words *slave masters... oppressed them with forced labour... worked them ruthlessly* were quite enough to sketch the picture.”⁹ But, even though that was difficult, the Israelites also endured the tremendous grief of newborn sons being thrown into the Nile.

- **AND THESE WERE THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

➤ **What was God doing?**

IV. SOVEREIGNTY

SLIDE: WHY GOD, WHY? ^v

It is at this very point where **the mystery of Exodus deepens**. WHY did He allow the hundreds of years of suffering of the Israelites? We know that Jacob was specifically told by God to take his family to Egypt. (Genesis 46:2–4)

➤ So, they were in Egypt by *God’s divine command*, under *divine promise*, awaiting *divine intervention*.

But, what are we to make of all the years of silence from heaven?

And, why do WE often experience a SIMILAR silence when WE’RE suffering? It’s like how I feel **when the electrical power goes out** – it’s a strange feeling – where everything is silent, not normal, and I feel almost powerless.

^v Concepts taken from J. A. Moyter, *The Message of Exodus*

- It would be easier to endure something if we know that it has a purpose or how long it would last. But... heaven was silent.

They must have asked themselves, like Job did and like WE do, – what did I do wrong to merit this? *“Experience without explanation, adversity without purpose, hostility without protection – that is how life may often appear.”*

- St. Theresa of Avila story

The majority of those Israelites – without St. Theresa’s insight and humor – must have felt abandoned by God.

This is a mystery. These were the special people of God. The Bible will not allow us to say that Jacob ‘got his guidance wrong’ when he went to Egypt with his family, although it might seem as a logical deduction from the way the events panned out. The Bible makes it plain that Jacob had been specifically directed to take his family to Egypt, even though what ultimately lay ahead was slavery (Gen 46:1–4). Furthermore, he went into a situation where the grace of God sent Joseph ahead. (Psalm 105:17–23)

Do you ever wonder what you did wrong to make your life so hard right now? The answer

may be: Like the Israelites in Egypt, you did Nothing wrong.

- Even after the promised rescue was finally fulfilled, God NEVER offers an explanation for the years of pain and loss. It remains a mystery, but we can speculate based on our understanding of God as all-powerful and all-good.

BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

A few years ago, a book was written entitled *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.¹⁰ The author was Harold Kushner, a Conservative Rabbi, and he wrote following the death of his young son, Aaron. Rabbi Kushner sought to offer comfort to other grieving people. He had believed, as many do, that God was all-good and all-powerful, but his son’s tragic death caused a reexamination of those traditional beliefs.

His dilemma came down to finding an answer to this: did God not care or was He somehow powerless to intervene? Kushner concluded that the latter is true – God wants the righteous to live peaceful, happy lives, but sometimes He *can’t* bring that about. Why? Because, although God is loving, He supposedly is hampered because there are limitations to His

power.¹¹ Kushner thus rules out Divine intervention in the lives of people and nations. As a matter of fact, Kushner says, “*There are some things God does not control...*”¹²

- Now – there are two problems; 1st: “*(i)f there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God’s sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled.*”¹³
- 2nd: the thought that God is powerless to intervene in the lives of people and nations is a thought with which I suggest that the Pharaoh of the Exodus would probably disagree.

Kushner understands that his revised views are a departure from Scripture, but he does not believe they are necessarily all bad. He says that there is a sense of relief in coming to the conclusion that God *may* want to help but *cannot*. He says, “*I can worship a God who hates suffering but cannot eliminate it, more easily than I can worship a God who chooses to make children suffer and die, for whatever exalted reason*”.¹⁴

- **What are we to make of this?** Is our choice between a limited God Who *wants* to help *but can’t*, verses a God who *can* help *but doesn’t*?

Where the Rabbi goes askew here is that his ‘either/or’ proposition is a fallacy known in logic as **the FALSE DILEMMA, or the Fallacy of False Alternatives.**¹⁵ The fallacy occurs when a person reduces possibilities or options to two and ONLY two, when in fact there may be MORE possibilities.

- There ARE situations when the possibilities can legitimately and rationally be reduced to two. For instance, either there is a God or there is not a God. There’s no third alternative. It’s one or the other. You are either going to die or you are not going to die.

But in this case, Scripture repeatedly presents A THIRD CHOICE – a Loving God Who is Sovereign over His creation and wills and works for His good pleasure for those who love Him. And He does things **for purposes that we may not understand, as He tried to explain to Job.**

OK – God is in charge, but people in pain often don’t want to accept an answer that says *“we just don’t understand God’s ways”*. They want an explanation.

It’s not wrong to ask ‘WHY, God?’ Anyone with an ounce of compassion is outraged by injustices and suffering. Abraham asked God, *“Should the Judge of the whole world not act fairly?”* (Genesis 18:25) Later on in Exodus, we’ll see Moses ask God: *“Why have You treated this people so badly?”*

(chapter 5). And today, WE can still ask, “*Why God, why?*” It’s OK to ask.

Job had friends who offered THE common viewpoint of “WHY”. They told him that he *must* have sinned for God to do such things to him. Job demands that God show up and explain all this. God does appear but the trouble is, God doesn't really explain Job's question of ‘*Why me?*’ *I've been good, so why are you making me suffer?*

God's answer is basically that Job was incapable of understanding if He told him Why. It is the divine version of a parent saying to their children... “*Because I said so.*”

- Job’s conclusion: “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.” (Job 13:15)

DO WE *WANT* TO KNOW THE EXPLANATION?

Before I get to an answer from Jesus’ perspective, I want to mention a related question posed by an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi in response to Rabbi Kushner’s question. Rabbi Moss asks:

*“Are you sure you **WANT** an explanation? Do you really want to know why the innocent suffer? I think not. You are far better off with the question than with an answer.”¹⁶*

Would we be better off if we knew someone gave us a satisfying explanation? *“What if the mystery were finally solved? What if we asked why, and actually got an answer?”*

Well, the Rabbi notes, if we knew the answer, many would then be able to make peace with the suffering of innocents. Many would watch their suffering *unmoved*. If we were to understand *why* innocents suffer, we would no longer be bothered by their cry, we would no longer feel their pain, because we would understand why it is happening.

Hinduism does just that. A Hindu holy man can walk past a dying person in the gutter and walk over to a pile of cow manure and rub it on his bald head because – in his worldview – a cow is a sacred animal. The Hindu doctrine of Karma says that people are suffering because of past sins, and their suffering will help atone for their past sins. So, you may be actually harming a person spiritually when you lessen that suffering.

- By the way – if you believe in karma from a past life, if you think that you’re working off sins from a past life, then you’re contradicting the absolute necessity of Christ’s death on the cross.

Now – you may think that such insensitivity as demonstrated by the Hindu holy man would never happen to us? Right?

Well, the Rabbi poses the following situation: *“Imagine you are in a hospital and you hear a woman screaming with pain. Outside her room, her family is standing around chatting, all smiling and happy. You scream at them, “What’s wrong with you? Can’t you hear how much pain she is in?” They answer, “This is the delivery ward. She is having a baby. Of course we are happy.”*

- *When you have an explanation, pain doesn’t seem so bad anymore. We can tolerate suffering when we know why it is happening.”¹⁷*

So the Rabbi argues that *not knowing* the answer is a GIFT of God. As long as the pain of innocents remains a burning question, we are bothered by its existence – and that’s a good thing. And as long as we can’t totally explain pain, we will try to alleviate it. If the suffering of innocent people is unacceptable to you, you are moved to eradicate it.

KUSHNER REVISITED

Getting back to Rabbi’s Kushner’s question: *Why do bad things happen to good people?* Jesus said that this type of question has a **basic flaw in his premise**. The question **ASSUMES THAT PEOPLE ARE INDEED ESSENTIALLY GOOD AND THEREFORE DO NOT DESERVE THE SUFFERING WHICH HAPPENS TO THEM**. But the OT Scriptures give quite a different view of mankind:

- King David said about himself and his parents, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5).
- Jeremiah stated: “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9).
- Solomon wrote: “there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

SLIDE: WHY DO YOU CALL ME GOOD?

Remember when the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked: “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus responded:

“Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone” (Luke 18:19)

Jesus knew at once that He was talking to a man who had a *superficial understanding* of the meaning of the word ‘good’. The man wanted to talk about salvation and was calling Jesus “good” because of His good works. Instead, Jesus turned the conversation around to a discussion about what ‘*goodness*’ was.

This young man was – outwardly – very much like Job. Before the law he is blameless...has kept all the commandments from his youth. Like Job, he was famous, wealthy, and a man of power. **And he evidently considered this as a badge of honor, that God was rewarding him for his goodness.**

There was a heresy in the early church called **Pelagianism**. It is named after a 5th century heretical monk Pelagius, who taught that **man's nature is basically good**. He denied original sin and taught that everyone is born with the same purity and moral abilities as Adam was. Thus, we can gain holiness with right choices. **We are all by nature Pelagians**. We like to think in our hearts that we are basically good.

This perception leads us to think that our WORKS make us good or bad, DESERVING or undeserving before Him — and this determines *whether good or bad things happen to us*.

God’s standard for a good deed is that it must flow out of a heart that loves God *perfectly* and loves our neighbor *perfectly as well*. None of us pass this standard, so all of our outwardly good deeds are *tarnished*. Without a perfect heart, one cannot perform a perfect deed. **No one is Good except God.**

- So, the question regarding WHY bad things happen to good people wrongly assumes that there ARE good people and thus what happened appears to be some kind of violation of cosmic justice. *God – explain Yourself as to why this could happen.*

Jesus says that a corrupt conclusion based on a sinful assumption – **No one is Good except God.** ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

- As Clint Eastwood said in the Unforgiven, “*we all have it coming, kid*”.

Actually, Rabbi Kushner’s question about why bad things happen to good people came up in Jesus’ time. I’ll read from Luke chapter 13:1–3:

“Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

We don’t know the details of the incident mentioned, but evidently Pontius Pilate had some people killed who had just brought sacrifices to the Temple to worship God. Jesus’ disciples were obviously concerned about this, especially since it occurred as these men were in the act of worshipping God. So, they came to Jesus and were wondering HOW God could have allowed it to happen. Their unspoken understanding was that – since God is just – there MUST have been some SERIOUS SIN in their lives in order to DESERVE THIS.

Just like God’s answer to Job’s questions, Jesus answered their question WITH a question that they didn’t expect: “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?”

Jesus turns their question around and asks *why they suspect* that what happened *must* have been because those who died somehow deserved it?

- *What kind of answer was this?* That’s *not* an answer to their question. They needed to know WHY.
- **But it was the perfect answer to their need! Jesus understood that they, like Job, were ultimately questioning the Sovereignty of God and looking for the hidden reasons WHY something happened.**
- They were saying, like Job had done, “*God – explain Yourself to me – because I certainly see no good reason for what happened.*”
- **Jesus said – MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS – God is in control; He does things or uses events for His Own purposes as HE decides. You should be most concerned with the state of your own soul than why that happened.**

Stop trying to reason out WHY something happened because we probably would never understand even if He told us.

SILOAM

Jesus then goes on to reinforce the point and talks about an incident when a tower in Jerusalem fell:

“Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the **tower in Siloam [pronounced 'SY-LO-am'] fell and killed them** were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Luke 13:4-5

What did these eighteen people – **who were just going about their everyday lives** – do to *deserve* this kind of death? Jesus answered: **Nothing worse than anyone else!**

- So – those who were killed by the Roman troops while worshipping God – *an act of man* – and those who died when the tower fell – *and act of nature* – **may have been upstanding citizens – but compared God’s holiness, NONE of them were innocent.**

Jesus was hammering home the idea that their **mistaken understanding of goodness** and **their preoccupation with “WHY” was causing them to miss the reality of their situation.**

- It’s like questioning *why* the deck chairs of the Titanic were painted white while their ship was sinking.

In effect, Jesus was telling them: *“Instead of asking Me why a good God allowed this catastrophe to happen, you should be thanking God that it didn’t happen to YOU instead of them.”* You’re no holier than they were.

- *So, use this time He has given you to draw closer to Him.* The Galileans who died had NO chance to repent at the time they were killed. The disciples should repent NOW while God is giving them the opportunity.

The tower in Jerusalem fell killing 18 people– and we are familiar with another example of “When towers fall”.

SLIDE: WHEN TOWERS FALL

When Towers Fall – this is a picture from ground zero at the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. About 2,600 died there that day; they were just going about their everyday lives when the situation from which there was no escape manifested itself. Some had been redeemed by Jesus and they saw Him that day; others had not been so redeemed and suffered a different fate.

I was scheduled to be there that day on the 82nd floor of the North Tower – Tower #1 – the first Tower hit. However, because a representative of the Federal Transit Administration was visiting our office that day, I decided that morning to skip the meeting and pick up the person at the AMTRAK Station in

Rensselaer. Now, I would not have been caught in the Tower, as the plane hit at 8:48am and I would not have arrived at the site until about 10:00am. However, I did know three people who died in that incident.

Was the WTC attack a warning by God to wake people up to the great sin in the nation, just like Isaiah warned ancient Israel that the sporadic attacks by Assyria were warnings of a coming disaster unless they repent? What is our national sin? Well, I believe that the almost 1 million abortions performed each year in the U.S. with government permission. I suggest that the approximately 58 MILLION innocent children have been killed since 1973 might qualify for God’s judgment.

Did Israel repent? No, they did not. I’m quoting from Isaiah chapter 9:

“The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
And it has fallen on Israel.
All the people will know—
Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—
Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:

*“The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will replace them with cedars.” Isaiah 9:8–10*

Rebuild the structures with stone to replace those that had been made with the less-sturdy brick; rebuild the wooden structures with stronger types of wood. Israel’s response was not repentance but defiance, vowing to rebuild the destroyed towns bigger and better. That’s exactly the same response from our political leaders to the WTC destruction, even citing the passage from Isaiah as a guide.

Judgment vs warning? “**Judgment**” implies a certain *finality* – a destructive sentence is imposed and carried out. The guilty do really not have an opportunity to pile continuing sins on that heap. “**Warning**” implies that this is a taste of what is to come unless things change, and it will get worse.

One thing that I noticed was how confident the commentators were that it was not an act of judgment. *God doesn’t do these things today – right?* Certainly not in America. Well, IMO, that’s a head-in-the-sand attitude, someone whistling while walking past a graveyard. There is nothing in the Christian worldview that would rule out the possibility that it was an act of God’s judgment or a warning from Him.

If someone asked me, “*Was this a warning from God?*” I would honestly have to say that I **don’t know** because I am not a prophet to the nation – and contrary to many prideful and bogus claims of supposed prophets in the church – **no one**

today meets the qualifications of a prophet to the nation who could tell us what an event really meant.

- But if someone then asked, “*Was God involved?*” my answer would be “*yes, of course*”. The Christian doctrine of God’s sovereignty holds that all acts – God’s or man’s – are according to God’s purpose. But what His specific purpose was in this event, I do not know.

SENSELESS?

It is precisely **at this point of uncertainly** where the word “senseless” come in. Many people have described the events of September 11, 2001 as a “**senseless**” tragedy. But, the idea of a “*senseless* tragedy” represents a worldview that is completely incompatible with Christian thought. *It assumes that something happens without purpose or without meaning.*

- If God IS God and if He is truly sovereign, then **nothing** ever happens that is ultimately senseless. Things may *appear* to us to be without purpose or meaning. Their ultimate purpose may be unknown for the present. **But if we CAN’T SEE PURPOSE in what happens, we must remember that our view of things is limited by our earthly perspective.**

If God is truly sovereign—if He rules over all things—then **NOTHING** that ever happens is senseless.

THE GREATEST EXAMPLE WAS THE CROSS. WAS THE CROSS A BAD THING – A SENSELESS THING? Peter thought so, the disciples thought so, the men on the road to Emmaus thought so. But, to God, the Cross was NOT only NOT SENSELESS, it was ABSOLUTELY Necessary!

MAN BORN BLIND

Let’s look briefly at a discussion Jesus had with His disciples, recorded in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John:

“As He (Jesus) passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” Jesus answered, “*It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*”

- As a side note: this question mentions the man **having sinned before birth**. Was this the concept of **reincarnation**? No. Some rabbis held that the Evil

Tempter could be active in the womb and thus one could somehow sin in *the womb*¹⁸ and bring about the deformity on himself. This was NOT the belief that you can atone for sins of a *past life*. (Lightfoot)¹⁹

The disciples met a blind person when he was a grown adult. They knew that he had been born blind, suffering total blindness for many years. If anything seems senseless, it is the experience of a man born blind.

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Jesus immediately recognized that, like Rabbi Kushner’s question, there was a logical fallacy in the question posed to Him. It is another example of the fallacy of the **FALSE DILEMMA**. The disciples reduced an answer to *two and only two possibilities*, when in fact there was a THIRD possibility they had not considered.

So Jesus, when He heard the question stated this way, answered by saying, “*Neither.*”

- Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him” (John 9:3).

The man had been born blind so that, on this particular day, God’s kingdom could be manifested through his healing. God’s purpose here was to demonstrate who Jesus was. “God

the Father used his blindness to demonstrate the identity of Christ.”<sup>20</sup>

- The blind man discovered that his tragic condition was NOT senseless. It had a divine purpose that has borne witness to Christ through history – even to today now that we’re talking about it.
- The man’s blindness was part of God’s Plan to reveal Jesus. God is Sovereign over His creation.

That’s not easy to accept, is it?    **It seems unfair at first.**

- But, I suggest that if we had a chance to ask that man today whether it was worth it, he would yell YES!!

**SLIDE: Sovereignty of God**

This is the mystery of the divine government of history, whether on a national, domestic or individual level: the great and loving God is in control, and because He is truly sovereign He works out His purposes in His own ways, not ours (Isa. 55:8).

**Getting back to the Israelites in Egypt, they didn’t do anything wrong to deserve the slavery.** They actually were in Egypt because God told them to be there.

- And as far as we today are concerned, we should NOT automatically assume that if things are not going well in your life that you’re under God’s punishment because of something you have done.

Since “everything that was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope” – as Paul wrote (Romans 15:4), **how does this oppression of the Israelites relate to our lives today?**

God shows us in Scripture what He was doing here, but only **AFTER THE FACT.**

**SLIDE: BAKING CAKE**

What God did with Israel in Egypt was to metaphorically make a cake. “He carefully selected the ingredients to make Israel; then He mixed them until properly blended, and next set the mixture in an oven to be baked. He set His heavenly timer for exactly the amount of time He knew was needed for this Hebrew cake to congeal and to rise and to become

usable...400 years – until the sin of the Amorites was full (Genesis 15:16) – ... and He waited.”<sup>21</sup>

During those years of slavery, there was no need for substantial intervention on God part because He saw to it that they grew in number. If they had remained in Canaan with the local populations, many would have **intermarried** (as we saw in Numbers with the incident of Baal worship – Numbers 25). That would greatly compromise their status as God’s Holy People. In Egypt, the Israelites – even when they were prosperous – were despised by most native Egyptians, and so there were few intermarriages. The cake would remain in the oven until the timer went off, and it was finished baking.

- When it was time, God opened the oven, out popped Israel.

With 20/20 hindsight, we see what God was doing and why, and the product of His actions eventually gave us Jesus.

- But, that’s easy for us to say now – isn’t it? We’re not in that situation of suffering. What did they think about it? They no doubt asked the question: “*Why God, Why?*”

Without a Bible to explain to us that God is sovereign over all, it’s easy to see life as “that’s the way the cookie crumbles”. With a Bible, however, the idea that ‘history’ is simply the lucky

or unlucky spin of the wheel is ruled out. It is always first and foremost ‘His’ story’, and what happened in Israel’s case – and in our case – is somehow part of a greater plan.

And we can’t expect a complete answer why. God told Job – *you wouldn’t understand it if I told you*. Even when the Israelites come out in the Exodus, *God never offers any detailed explanation* to them as to why they had to suffer so. But, thru Scripture, He does let us have a sufficient insight into His ways, His character, His intentions and His eternal faithfulness so that, however dark the day, we can live by faith and be sustained by hope.<sup>22</sup>

\*\* Like it or not, God’s purpose WILL be fulfilled. “... you (and I) will certainly carry out God's purpose, however (we) act, but it makes a difference... whether you serve like Judas or like John.” C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

Q: What’s the full answer to the mystery of suffering? We just don’t know. But, we know the God Who is behind history, and he is GOOD.

We can only trust with confidence a Lord who controls everything. If He was unable to use wickedness to further His plan, then evil remains free from His rule, and we could never

be sure of His final victory. Some say God only foresees human decisions without ordaining them, but Scripture never teaches this. Moreover, if the Lord only looks into a future in which He has not ordained all things, then there are “chance” events to come that He will have had no control over. How then is He God in any meaningful way? How, then, can He prevent those events He finds undesirable?

If the Lord is sovereign over all things, then every wicked event is in His plan, not because He loves evil, but because He wants to work through and against the sin to achieve a worthy end. Knowing that God does this enables us to fight the good fight of faith and stand against the forces of darkness. Nothing they do to us is outside of the Lord’s will, and so they can never derail His good plan for us.

SLIDE: HE VOLUNTEERED

So, when someone asks the question – why do bad things happen to good people? You can answer:

<Click>: **That only happened once, and He volunteered.”** 23

AN OLD IRISH PRAYER:

*May Christ be under me. Christ be over me, Christ be beside me, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit, Christ when I stand. Christ, the lowly and meek, all powerful be in the heart of everyone who speaks to me. Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. Amen.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!** Next time – the Birth of Moses.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Reformation Study Bible, comment on Gen. 46:27

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 32:27-28

<sup>3</sup> Manfred Bietak and Irene Forstner-Müller, *The Topography of New Kingdom Avaris and Per Ramesses* [http://www.academia.edu/1108200/The\\_Topography\\_of\\_New\\_Kingdom\\_Avaris\\_and\\_Per\\_Ramesses](http://www.academia.edu/1108200/The_Topography_of_New_Kingdom_Avaris_and_Per_Ramesses)

<sup>4</sup> Ancient Egypt Online, *Beer in Ancient Egypt*

<sup>5</sup> Noah Wiener, Bible History Daily, *Brewmaster’s Tomb*, 01/06/2014

<sup>6</sup> Tom Bradford, Torahclass, Exodus 1 lesson 2

<sup>7</sup> Jerry Starling, *QUESTION: Who Was Pharaoh During Joseph’s Life?*; posted on October 17, 2009

<sup>8</sup> *Strong’s Concordance*, 4714. Mitsrayim

<sup>9</sup> J. A. Moyter, *The Message of Exodus*, IVP Academic, 2005, p.27-28

<sup>10</sup> Rabbi Harold Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, New York: Schocken Books, 1981.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45

<sup>13</sup> R.C. Sproul, *Chosen By God: Know God’s Perfect Plan for His Glory and His Children*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134

<sup>15</sup> *Logically Fallacious, The Ultimate Collection*, “False Dilemma”,

[https://www.logicallyfallacious.com/tools/lp/Bo/LogicalFallacies/94/False\\_Dilemma](https://www.logicallyfallacious.com/tools/lp/Bo/LogicalFallacies/94/False_Dilemma)

<sup>16</sup> Rabbi Aron Moss, *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People*,

[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/622117/jewish/Why-Do-Bad-Things-Happen-to-Good-People.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/622117/jewish/Why-Do-Bad-Things-Happen-to-Good-People.htm)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Sanhedrin 91 b “Antoninus also said to Rabbi, ‘When is the soul placed in man; as soon as it is decreed [that the sperm shall be male or female, etc.], or when [the embryo] is actually formed?’ He replied, ‘From the moment of formation.’”

<sup>19</sup> *John Lightfoot’s Bible Commentary*, John 9,

<http://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=lgth&b=43&c=9>

<sup>20</sup> Crossway.org, *R.C. Sproul on Human Tragedies and Divine Purposes*

<sup>21</sup> Tom Bradford, Torahclass, *Week 1 Exodus Introduction*

<sup>22</sup> J.A. Moyter, *Message of Exodus*, p. 17-19

<sup>23</sup> R.C. Sproul Jr., <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/981322-why-do-bad-things-happen-to-good-people-that-only>