

Title: Days Of Darkness

Main Passage: Exodus 1:8-22

Secondary Passages: Romans 8:28, Matthew 27:45–46

Passage for Memorization and Meditation:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Overview: This section of Exodus introduces us to the ominous position of God's people. During the time of the Exodus, a new Pharaoh came to power in Egypt and this Pharaoh was not kind to the Israelites. Previously, God's people had been protected in Egypt but now they were persecuted, enslaved, and killed.

There were several reasons for this.

Ethnically, the Israelites were different from the Egyptians and the new Pharaoh was concerned that the growing immigrant population threatened to destabilize his entire government. Pharaoh shared this concern with his advisers who were all too willing to introduce a policy of forced labor and infanticide.

This sudden turn from being a protected people to being persecuted reveals something rather sinister about human nature: oppressing ethnic minorities can happen quickly because racism is part of our sinful condition. As such, we must be humble and aware when it comes to the way ethnic minorities are treated.

Spiritually, the Israelites were oppressed because they represented the success of God's plans to bless the entire world by bringing a savior into the world through Abraham's family. Satan would not allow this plan to go forward unopposed. So the oppression of God's people had a very real spiritual dimension to it. A cosmic battle was being waged between God and Satan. Satan resented God's people, rejected God's promises, and resisted God's plans. This cosmic battle continues today because we too are the people of God, and God is working out his plan of salvation through us.

The good news in this dark section of Exodus is that God's plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. Even though Pharaoh attempted to destroy God's people, they prospered. Even though Pharaoh thought the Hebrew women were of less value than the Hebrew men, it was the midwives who outsmarted him. And even though Pharaoh commanded his people to kill the Hebrew boys, Pharaoh ended up protecting the Hebrew boy who would eventually set God's people free. In short, we may resist God, but God always wins.

Opening Question:

- What is a hard thing you have gone through?

Discussion Questions:

- Read Exodus 1:8–22. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What do you learn about God from the passages you read this week?
- What do you think it would have felt like to be a Hebrew living in Egypt during the time of the Exodus?
- Describe Pharaoh’s different plans to oppress God’s people. What do they reveal about his heart?
- What is the result of Pharaoh’s plans to oppress God’s people? What does this reveal about God?
- The Israelite midwives feared God, so they disobeyed Pharaoh’s commands to kill the baby boys. When is civil disobedience the right choice? Why?
- Look at Matthew 27:45–46. What does Jesus’ death on the cross reveal about God’s response to evil in this world?

Application Questions:

- How does God’s ability to preserve his people encourage you?
- Who or what are you most likely to fear more than God? What is the secret to fearing God more than the “pharaohs” in our lives?
- In what current circumstance in your life can you imitate the courage of the Hebrew midwives?
- How has this lesson challenged the way you think, speak, or act?

Table Time With Kids

- What was the sermon from Sunday about? What questions do you have from it?
- As a family read aloud Exodus 1:8–22. What sticks out to you from these verses?
- What do you learn about God from the passages you read this week?
- Is there a battle today between Satan and God’s people? *Yes. Satan hates God’s people, and, like Pharaoh, he wants to destroy them.*
- What should we do when Satan creates hardship in our lives? *We should express our hurt and trust that God is at work to deliver us.*