



## Gospel Community Notes & Questions

**Title:** From Favor to Affliction

**Text:** Exodus 1:1-22

**Theme:** The Lord preserves the identity and future of those who fear him.

**Teaching Notes:** We begin the story of Exodus right where Genesis left off, with the twelve sons of Jacob – and they're multiplying rapidly. The new Pharaoh sees them as a growing threat that must be stopped, using the weapons of slavery and slaughter. So the Israelites go from experiencing God's favor to experiencing affliction. Where is God? Does he even care?

### Outline:

#### 1. Strength. (vv. 1-7)

- The author is deliberately connecting the story of Exodus to Genesis.
- The author is showing us that the people of Israel were obediently fulfilling the cultural mandate. (cp. Exodus 1:7 to Genesis 1 and 9.)

#### 2. Slavery. (vv. 8-14)

- Motivated by a mix of racially-biased fear and opportunistic profit, the Egyptians enslave the people of Israel and treat them harshly.

#### 3. Slaughter. (vv. 15-22)

- Pharaoh first commanded the midwives of Israel to kill their baby boys.
- Next, Pharaoh commanded all the Egyptians to kill Hebrew baby boys.

#### 4. Surprise. (vv. 12, 20-21)

- The first surprise is that the Israelites were honoring and obeying God, but things were getting much worse for them.
- The second surprise is that everything Pharaoh did to enslave, oppress, and destroy God's people only led them to grow in size and strength.

### Concluding questions:

- 1) What has you asking, "Where is God?" – meaning "Why isn't God stopping this bad thing from happening to me?"
- 2) How are your circumstances threatening to kill your hope and/or identity in Christ? How is the adversary attempting to enslave and assimilate you?
- 3) Where is God still showing up in the surprise – in the "yes, but"?
- 4) How might God be preparing you for what comes next?



**Questions to explore individually and with your group:**

1. What's what thing you learned or observed from Exodus 1?
2. What is the "unspoken bargain at the heart of much of American Christianity" that was mentioned at the beginning of the message? How do you see that underlying narrative coloring the way you view your circumstances?
3. Why is it important to see Israel's faithful obedience and God's blessing in Exodus 1:7? How does that frame the story that follows? How does it contradict the "unspoken bargain" referenced in the previous question?
4. What was Egypt/Pharaoh trying to destroy through the implementation of slavery and slaughter? Think of it like this: What is destroyed by years of oppression, forced labor, and assimilation?
5. Referencing #4, what are some ways the Adversary, Satan, is trying to destroy those same things in our culture and in your life today?
6. Imagine you were a Hebrew living in Egypt at the end of Exodus 1. What are you thinking/feeling about God? What questions do you have for him?
7. How did slavery, paradoxically, strengthen the identity of God's people?
8. What in your life has you questioning, "Where is God?" - meaning "Why isn't God preventing or stopping this bad thing that's happening to me?"
9. Where is God still showing up in the surprise, the anomaly, the thing that doesn't track with the narrative, the "yes, but"? How can you acknowledge that your pain is real, but doesn't have the last word?
10. What one actionable thing will you do this week in response to this message?

**Prayer Prompts:**

1. Praise the Lord for preserving the hope and future of those who fear him. Praise him for being present in your story even when you can't see him or sense him.
2. Acknowledge the circumstances that cause you to doubt God's goodness and confess any sinful responses you've had because of those doubts.
3. Ask God to give you a heart to trust him when life is cruel and painful, and ask him to give you the vision to see him in the surprise, preparing you for a future glory that exceeds your imagination.