

# The Slavery of The Israelites

Exodus 1:1-14; 2:23, 24

## **MEMORY VERSE**

MATTHEW 11:28

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

You will need: apples, knife, a chalk or dry erase board to draw on.

You will need: Plastic grocery bags, canned goods or something heavy (according to age), two cardboard boxes (Option: decorate them like cars).

You will need: The “God’s Ear” template, scissors, pencil, and markers or crayons.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Fruitful Multiplication**

Cut an apple across the middle to show the children in the two slices how many seeds are inside (there are usually 5 seeds in each apple).

On a chalk or dry erase board, draw an apple tree. Talk to the children about how the fruit multiplies while drawing. Ask, “if only one apple grew on this tree, and the seeds from only that apple grew into trees, how many trees would there be?”

Draw five more apple trees under the first tree, spaced wide apart. Then continue asking, “Now, if only one apple grew on each of these trees, and the seeds from those apples grew into trees, how many trees would there be?”

Point out that so many trees and apples were produced just from one apple from one tree. In today's lesson, we will see that the Lord greatly multiplied the people of Israel while they were in Egypt. Go ahead and cut slices of the remaining apples for a snack. **God hears the prayers of His children.**

## LESSON TIME!

In all of our lessons, we have seen the love of God for each one of us and for everyone. We have seen how God is sovereign and has a master plan for everything. We have seen types in the Old Testament that represent Christ in the New Testament, and we have seen how God uses every circumstance in our lives for His good purposes.

Today, we begin Exodus. We will learn that, over many years, the children of Israel have multiplied greatly in Egypt. However, their circumstances change, and God's people will cry out for deliverance. We can be confident that **God hears the prayers of His children.** He will answer their prayers in His perfect time.

### EXODUS 1:1-7

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.

In the first seven verses, we see the nation of Israel was growing and multiplying. Leah's six sons are mentioned in the order of their birth, then Rachel (Jacob's second wife). Joseph's son Benjamin is mentioned, but not Joseph, because Joseph was already in Egypt. Dan and Naphtali were the sons of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah. Gad and Asher were the sons of Leah's maidservant Zilpah. The number of men who entered Egypt was between 70 and 75 (see Genesis 46:27; Deuteronomy 10:22; Acts 7:14).

It is amazing to think that the entire nation of Israel at this time was only around 75 men. At the time when the Exodus begins there are now about 600,000 men. When you add women and children there were about 2,000,000 people. The population grew to this amount in approximately 400 years. No wonder it says, "the land was filled with them."

God is so good. His promise to Abraham so many generations ago is now coming to pass. Do you remember? God made a promise to Abraham that He would be a great nation and that they would be the same in number as the sand of the sea. Abraham did not see it physically fulfilled in his lifetime, but God kept His promise many years later. God always keeps His promises. He will do what He says in just the right time.

So as God promised, the Israelites were becoming as numerous as the sands of the sea. God was not done fulfilling His promise. He had promised that His people would live in the land that He promised to give them. God would fulfill that promise, also, and teach His children to trust in Him in the process. As we follow the journey of the children of Israel, we will learn exciting things about our own walk with God. **God hears the prayers of His children.**

## Heavy Laden

Let's do a grocery store relay! Divide your class into two teams. Give each team two heavy grocery bags (just heavy enough for them to carry).

The first person must carry the groceries to the "car" (cardboard box made to resemble a car).

The second person gets them out of the car and carries them into the "house" (back across the starting line), then repeats.

Explain that things had changed for the children of Israel since Joseph's time. They were made slaves and had to do heavy labor every day of their lives; they were beaten and treated badly.

## EXODUS 1:8-14

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 wisely 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.

The new king of Egypt, "did not know about Joseph" or "had no appreciation for Joseph's achievements." He became concerned that there were too many Israelites in the land. He feared, in event of war, such a great number of people could easily revolt and help their enemies to defeat Egypt.

Pharaoh decided to deal with the Israelites shrewdly. The words, "deals shrewdly" implies implementing a policy that would control their fast-growing population as well as use their labor potential to its fullest. The Pharaoh set taskmasters over them and forced them into labor to build the royal store cities of Pitham and Rameses.

But, as the Lord so often does, he frustrated the plans of man. The more the Egyptians oppressed the children of Israel, the more they grew in number and strength. God is awesome! He uses hard times in our lives to strengthen us. His purposes will always be accomplished. God can turn what is meant for evil against us to work for our good.

Consider the great persecution of the early church. Christians were persecuted (or treated badly and sometimes even killed) for their faith. As a result, the persecution drove the Christians all over the country and the world. When they scattered all over, they spread the Gospel all over the world. Satan's plan backfired on him! We can truly say, "And we know that all things work together for the good to them that love God and are called according to His purposes" Romans 8:28.

## EXODUS 2:21-24

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.

Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.

So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

The Egyptians responded to the continued growth of the children of Israel by dealing even more harshly with them. They made them work harder as slaves and made their lives very bitter.

The Pharaoh died; however, the new Pharaoh continued the oppression of the Hebrews. The people cried out to God for deliverance, and God heard their cries and remembered the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God remembered His people. In His timing, He moved to deliver them. God remembers us. In Psalms 50:15 God assures, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." God does not always work in the time frame we desire Him to, but His timing is always the best. He sees our needs and hears our cries. **God hear the prayers of His children.**

Why would God allow His people to suffer affliction? Perhaps one reason could be that it made them desire a land of their own; we know that God promised His people a land of their own--the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Affliction also has a way of causing one (or a people) to draw near to God and depend on Him. Perhaps the people had not been calling upon the Lord before this trial. Now, in bondage to the Egyptians, they would look to God daily to sustain them and pray for His promise to deliver them.

Why does God allow *us* to suffer affliction? We can be confident He is working for good in our lives also. During our hard times, an attitude of self-sufficiency gives way to an attitude of dependency on God. Through those times, we walk closely to Him and our faith can grow tremendously as a result. Through those times, we learn empathy for others who go through difficult times, and we become more Christ-like in character as a result of the “fiery” trials.

## God's Ears

You will need as many “God’s Ear” templates as the number of children in your class. Have the children draw a large picture of an ear and color. Next have the children poke a hole in the ear where the sound will travel in. At the bottom of the page are lines that can be used for prayer requests.

Explain to the children that “God’s Ear” is always open to our prayers. Have them write a prayer request to poke through the hole. **God hears the prayers of His children.**

## PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness to hear His children. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

Template – God’s Ear

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Prayer Request:

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Prayer Request:

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Prayer Request:

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Prayer Request:

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