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The Oppression of Isra'el

1: 8-22



Isra'el's blessing, however, became **Pharaoh's** problem. **The new king, who did not know about Joseph**, was **Ahmose**, who expelled the Hyksos invaders from **Egypt** and founded the Eighteenth Dynasty, which was probably the most brilliant age in all **Egyptian** history. The Eighteenth Dynasty lasted from 1570 to 1090 BC, beginning as **Egypt** reached its height of glory and ending in one of **its** weakest positions. **Egyptian** history will not tell what caused **its** downfall from such glorious heights. But **ADONAI** explains it in great detail here in the first third of **Exodus**. **Ahmose** did not want **the Israelites** to become so strong and numerous that **they** might win **their** freedom by joining forces with the Semitic Hittites and fight against **Egypt**. **Pharaoh's** plan of oppression had three phases, each more ruthless than the one before it.³

Already at this early stage we see the real antagonist in the book of **Exodus**, which will become much more pronounced later on. This is not a battle of **Isra'el** versus **Pharaoh**, or even **Moses** verses **Pharaoh**, but of **ADONAI** verses **Pharaoh**. **The Egyptian king**, as we will see in the following chapters, is presented as an anti-god figure; **he** repeatedly places **himself** in direct opposition to **God's** redemptive plan, and this behavior is already anticipated here. **Pharaoh's** sin was not simply making slaves of **God's people**. This is

merely **his** solution to get at a much more basic problem: **The Israelites** are becoming too numerous, and are as such, a possible military threat to **Egypt**.⁴ When **he** tried to reduce **their** number even though **the LORD** said **He** would make **them** very fruitful (**Genesis 17:6**), **he** violated universal spiritual principles: **Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God** and **it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God** (**James 4:4** and **Hebrews 10:31**).