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Then a New King Who Did Not Know Joseph Came to Power 1: 8-14

Then a new king who did not know Joseph came to power DIG: How could someone rise to power in Egypt and not know about Joseph? Why is the story of Egypt's rule over Isra'el tied to the story of Joseph's rule over Egypt (and God's rule over Joseph)?

REFLECT: The Psalmist lamented when he saw the prosperity of the wicked compared to his own trials, until he entered the sanctuary of God; then he understood their destiny (Psalm 73:17). When the ungodly seed of the serpent is oppressing you, do you recognize him for who he is? Or do you blame God?

Then a new king from another dynasty, **who did know Joseph, came to power in Egypt (1:8).** As prime minister, **Joseph** had risen to second in command **in Egypt**. Only **Pharaoh** was greater. But there was not merely a change in pharaohs, there was a change in dynasties altogether. **Ah*mose*** was the **new** Hamitic **king**, and the first **king** of the Eighteenth Dynasty. **He** hated the Semites, and **he** threw out the Hyksos rulers (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click Jv – Joseph as Prime Minister**). As Stephen pointed out in his speech before the Sanhedrin: **Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became**

ruler in Egypt (Act 7:18). This Greek word in the Septuagint for **another** is *heteros,* and means *another of a different kind.* So this was not **a** Hyksos **king, he** was *a different kind of* **king**. **He** was an **Egyptian king**, who overthrew the hated Hyksos that ruled **Egypt** during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Dynasties.

After **Ah*mose*** had gained control of **Egypt,** what would **he** do with the Semites who were now in the land as a result of the Hyksos rule? Some Semites **he** expelled from the land (such as the Hyksos), but other Semites **he** enslaved. So under the rule of ***Ahmose***, the enslavement of **Isra'el** began. Notice that ***mose*** is the particular name for the Eighteenth Dynasty.

Pharaoh did not trouble **himself** with the past, and did not want to remember the good things that **Joseph** had done for **Egypt**, nor did **he** feel any indebtedness to **him** or **his** descendants**.** So the **new king** of the **new** dynasty spelled out the problem when **he** said: **Look, the Israelites have become much too numerous for us (1:9).** Even though **the Israelites** had lived **in Egypt** for four generations by this time, **they** had remained distinct. **They** had not assimilated into **the Egyptian** population, nor would **they** be assimilated into the Babylonian population in their captivity there. Neither the dispersion in 70 AD after the fall of Jerusalem, or Nazi Germany could destroy **them**. Even until the present day, **the Jews** have not been assimilated into the Gentile population. **God** will never let **the Israelites** disappear as a race.

King Ah*mose* said to the royal court: **Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous.** The **war** against the Hyksos had just recently been won, but **the Egyptians** worried that **if war** with the Hittites broke **out, the Israelites** would **join their enemies, fight against the Egyptians and leave the country (1:10). Egypt** responded to **Israel's** growth with enslavement. As evil Cain killed his righteous brother Abel, so did**Egypt** try to destroy **Isra'el** by reducing **their** numerical strength. The ungodly seed of the serpent **(Genesis 3:15)** acts the same way in every generation.

First, **he** appointed **slave masters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor (1:11a).** The beating of a **slave** by such an overseer is vividly portrayed on a wall painting in the Theban tomb of Rekhmire (dated to the time of Thut*mose* III), and an associated inscription uses **the Egyptian** equivalent of the Hebrew word used here for *slave master or sar.*[5] The slavery in **Egypt** is compared to an **iron smelting furnace (Deuteronomy 4:20).**

This **slave** labor was used to build **Pithom and Rameses as** treasure **cities for Pharaoh (1:11b). They** became centers for **Egyptian** idolatry. **Pharaoh** said: **Come, we must. . .** These are the same introductory words that were used by the men of Babel who conspired to build a city **(Genesis 11:4).** Here, **the Israelites** are pictured as building cities out of **brick and mortar** just like the people of Babel. The point is that the ungodly act the same way throughout history. **They** reject **God** and build structures to **their** own glory and honor.[6] Although **Pharaoh's slave masters** made **their** lives **bitter** (a fact later remembered in the Passover meal), **the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. So the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly (1:12-13).** The reaction of **the Egyptians** shows that sin, as it were, creates its own momentum: the feeling of **dread** did not cause them to leave **the Hebrews** alone. Rather, **they** now became ruthless in **their** oppression and made **the Israelites'** lives **bitter** by increasing the demands placed on **them**, both in building and in the fields. And along with all of this, **they** mistreated them.[7]

They made their lives bitter, later to be remembered with **bitter** herbs **(12:8)**, **with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the field. In all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly (1:14).** The word **hard** is used later in the book of **Exodus** when **ADONAI hardens Pharaoh's heart (7:3).** Because **Pharaoh** made **the Israelite's labor hard**, **God** made **his** heart **hard**. More on that later.

Peter told the early community of believers: **Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange was happening to you (First Peter 4:12).** Persecution is the way that the unbelieving world treats the children of **God**. Let's not be naive in this matter; if we do not see it in our own first-hand experience, it is because of **the Lord's** restraining, gracious hand. Even then, the hatred is there, festering and ready to pounce. We would be foolish to think otherwise. Yet **ADONAI** will bless **His** righteous ones, either in this world or the next, in times of adversity, as he blessed those who believed in the **God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** during the time of the **Exodus.**[8]