

Exodus 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

Analysis

Come on, let us deal wisely with them (הַבָּה נִתְחַקֵּם לֹא, havah nitchakemah lo)—The verb "deal wisely" (חִקָּם, chakam) drips with irony: Pharaoh thinks he's being shrewd, but he's actually opposing God's covenant people. This so-called "wisdom" is folly (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:19-20). His three-part fear: **lest they multiply, join our enemies, and get them up out of the land**. The last phrase is doubly ironic—Pharaoh fears their exodus, which is exactly God's plan! Human schemes cannot thwart divine purposes. Pharaoh's "wisdom" will be exposed as foolishness when God delivers Israel through mighty acts.

Historical Context

Egypt's strategic vulnerability to invasion from the east (via Sinai) made large Semitic populations in the Delta region a legitimate security concern. The Hyksos had invaded from this region centuries earlier. However, Pharaoh's solution—oppression rather than integration—only intensified the problem.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish worldly "wisdom" from godly wisdom when making decisions about perceived threats?
2. In what ways have you seen human schemes against God's people ultimately serve His purposes?

Interlinear Text

בָּהּ	נִתְמַכֵּת	הִנֵּה	לֹא	פִּי	וְיַגְּבַּהּ	הַיְּמִינָה	בְּ
Come on	let us deal wisely		H0	H6435	with them lest they multiply		H1961
H3051	H2449				H7235		H3588
תֵּקֶם אֲנָה				מִלְחָמָה	גַּם	הָוֶה	
and it come to pass that when there falleth out				any war	join	they	
H7122				H4421	H3254	H1931	
עַל	שְׁנָא יְנוּ	וְגַלְעַם	בְּ כֵן	וְעַל הָ		מִן	
H5921	also unto our enemies	and fight	H0	against us and so get them up		H4480	
H8130		H3898		H5927			
בְּאֶרֶץ :							
out of the land							
H776							

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:19 (Parallel theme): The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

Proverbs 1:11 (Parallel theme): If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:

Psalms 105:25 (Parallel theme): He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

Psalms 10:2 (Parallel theme): The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

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