

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 (הָבָה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ, havah nitchakemah lo)—The verb "deal wisely" (חָכַם, 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

1 John 4:8 — God is 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

קֹּחַ בָּהֶם	וְנִתְחַכְּמָה	לָו	פֶּן	יִרְבּוּ	הֵם	כִּי	וְהָיָה
Come on	let us deal wisely	H0	H6435	with them lest they multiply	H1961	H3588	
H3051	H2449			H7235			
	וְתָקַף	אֲנֵה		מִלְחָמָה	וְ	וְנִסּוּ	גַם
	and it come to pass that when there falleth out			any war	join	H1571	they
	H7122			H4421	H3254		H1931
עַל	שֶׁנֶּאֱיָנוּ	וְנִלָּחֵם	בָּנוּ	וְעַל	הֵם	מִן	
H5921	also unto our enemies	and fight	H0	against us and so get them up		H4480	
	H8130	H3898		H5927			
	הָאָרֶץ:						
	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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