

Exodus 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Analysis

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens (שָׂרֵי מִסִּים לָמַעַן עָנֹתוּ בְּסִבְלָתָם, sarei missim lema'an anoto besivlotam)—**Taskmasters** (שָׂרֵי מִסִּים, sarei missim, "forced labor officials") implemented slave labor. **Afflict** (עָנָה, anah) is the same verb used in Genesis 15:13's prophecy of Israel's affliction. **They built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses**—archaeological sites possibly identified with Tell el-Retabah and Qantir/Pi-Ramesses. These store cities for military supplies show Israel's labor served Pharaoh's imperial ambitions. Yet affliction became the crucible for Israel's national identity and cry to God (2:23-25).

Historical Context

Pithom (Hebrew פִּתּוֹם, Egyptian Per-Atum, "House of Atum") and Raamses (רַעַמְסֵס, Egyptian Pi-Ramesses, "House of Ramesses") were Delta store cities. If Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC) was the pharaoh, these building projects date to the 19th Dynasty. Brick-making using straw (5:7-8) matches Egyptian construction methods documented in tomb paintings.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do you maintain faith when your labor seems to serve ungodly purposes or oppressive systems?
2. What does God's fulfillment of the Genesis 15:13 prophecy teach about His sovereign control of history?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּשׁ יָמֹוֹ	שָׁרֵי יַעֲלִיּוּ	מִסֵּיִם	לְמַעַן	עֲנֹת וְ
Therefore they did set		over them taskmasters		to afflict
H7760	H5921 H8269	H4522	H4616	H6031
בְּסִבְלָתָם	וַיִּבְנוּ	עָרֵי	מִסְכְּנוֹת	לְפָרֹעַ הָאֵת
them with their burdens	And they built	cities	treasure	for Pharaoh
H5450	H1129	H5892	H4543	H6547 H853
וְאֶת פִּתּוֹם	וְרַעַמְסֵס:			
Pithom	and Raamses			
H6619	H853 H7486			

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 15:13 (Parallel theme): And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

Genesis 47:11 (Parallel theme): And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

Exodus 3:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Exodus 2:11 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

Psalms 81:6 (Parallel theme): I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.

Deuteronomy 26:6 (Parallel theme): And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:

Numbers 20:15 (Parallel theme): How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers: