

EXODUS 3:22, THE THIEVES OF GOD

God killed the first born of Egypt over Egypt keeping Israel as slaves so the Egyptians were understandably delighted to get rid of them (Exodus 12:33).

God gave a message to Pharaoh that Israel must not leave empty-handed but must take Egyptian treasures with them (Exodus 3:22). God said that he would enable this to be done as a favour for his people.

The Encyclopaedia of Bible Difficulties states that there is no problem with God willing such a thing (page 110-1). The Israelites worked for nothing so they were just getting their wages and they had no peace or pleasure so they were entitled to some compensation. But both cultures believed that slavery was a justified institution so even if there was no objective stealing the Israelites meant to steal and the Egyptians would have seen it as stealing. It was stealing in so far as all concerned believed it was.

The book also claims that when the Egyptians gave of their own accord there can be no objection. But the treasures were forced out of the Egyptians. The Egyptians were convinced that if they did not give treasure to the Israelites and wave them goodbye that they would all end up dead.

God must have changed his mind about stealing later when Moses got the Law and forbade it.