

Blessings in Bondage

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[0 : 00] Jesus.

And so keep in mind tonight as we begin to look at chapter 1, the reality of the time that has elapsed here.

The more I look at that, the more I'm amazed I am at the timeline in all of this. Remember, it is roughly 359 years from the death of Joseph to the time of the Exodus.

So, you know, it's a long time period there. And we mentioned that last week about how many generations have come and gone in that time period, not only with the people of Israel, but with Egyptians as well.

And so we'll look more about that this evening. So, in spite of that fact that they're in bondage, God blesses them. And you'll notice, I think, in the notes that I handed out last week, blessings in the midst of bondage here.

[1 : 30] The blessings of God in the midst of bondage. And so we begin to see that as being in Egypt, the people of Israel begin to experience the blessings of God, even while they're in bondage and they're servants and slaves to the people of Egypt.

Of course, we've got a new Pharaoh coming on the scene that didn't acknowledge Joseph. We'll look at that. And the more Egypt afflicts the people of Israel, the more blessed they become, the more multiplied they are in number.

And so there's a good observation for us here. You know, it doesn't matter what the circumstances are. Circumstances don't limit God's love and God's care for his people.

They just don't. It doesn't matter. You know, sometimes we get the feeling pretty downhearted about sometimes the circumstances we find ourselves in. But, and that's a natural response of the human nature.

But in the midst of that, we need to remember God never changes, does he? And his heart toward his people never changes. And so circumstances and conditions of life do not limit God's care, his love for his people, nor his provisions for his people.

[2 : 57] And there's no better way to see that than what we're about to study in the events of God and his people in the book of Exodus.

Psalms 121 is an interesting passage here. Believed to be written at a time when Israel was in captivity. And so it says, I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He, you know, notice the terminology. My help comes from the Lord, and it's the Lord that made heaven and earth.

The connotation there must be that if he made heaven and earth, if he's the creator of all this, why can he not meet my need during whatever earthly circumstance I find myself in?

So my help comes from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall not slumber nor sleep.

[4 : 09] The Lord is thy keeper. I don't know why when I read that, I think of an Andy Griffith episode. How many like Andy Griffith?

Yeah, yeah, they still play them on one of the channels during the morning. And remember the old bank guard? And Barney is just beside himself at the condition of the bank, and that it could be robbed very easily by anybody as if there were much money in that bank.

And the old guard, he sneaks in there to try to pretend to be somebody that would rob it. And the old guard, he wakes the old guard up, and he goes for his gun, and the gun just falls apart, you know, because he's slumbering and sleeping.

Amen. The old guard is. God never slumbers or sleeps. Amen. And he's always awake, always aware of what's going on in the life of his people.

The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil.

[5 : 20] He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

Isn't that glorious? Amen. Glorious promise that we have from the Lord. So, we're going to pick up on how God does that with his people throughout the book of Exodus.

So, promises which God gave to Jacob in his departure from Canaan when he leaves are fulfilled. See that in Genesis 46, those promises, and the things that God then continues to do.

But there's another promise here that we begin to see fulfilled. Remember, we looked at it last week in Genesis chapter 15, when God initiates the covenant with Abram, and signifies that covenant by passing through the pieces of the sacrificed animal, and determines that God was going to see to it that all the provisions of that covenant are fulfilled, that he would be the one.

God would be the one to do that. But also in that, God said to Abram, the time is going to come when your seed will be held in bondage, if you will, for 400 years by a different nation.

[6 : 41] And he said, I'll deal with that nation at a particular point in time, but they will be subject to bondage by them. And so, in Exodus, first part of Exodus, we begin to see the fulfillment of that promise as well.

They'll be oppressed in a strange land. They are in the first part of the book, and compelled to serve the Egyptians, and in reality, we're in danger of being entirely crushed by them.

So, verses 1 through 5, let's take a look at that for just a moment, if you will. Now, these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt.

Now, notice, came into Egypt. Every man in his household came with Jacob, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Ishkar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were 70 souls, for Joseph was in Egypt already. So, we begin to see the beginning of the promises of God here, of the multiplying of the seed of Jacob, if you will, of Abraham and then Jacob as well.

[8 : 00] So, 70 souls come in to Egypt. And boy, if there were only 70 souls that left, amen, in that 40 would have been much easier for Moses.

But it was a multiplied number of that 70 souls that come out of Egypt that we'll see in the days ahead. So, here's the commencement of the realization of the promises that God made to Abraham, even to Isaac, and then to Jacob.

So, the souls that came out with Jacob, every man and his household, all his family, his wives, the children, and so forth, came out.

Now, verses 6 and 7. Here's a key for us. And Joseph died. And all his brethren and all that generation and all of the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty.

And the land was filled with them. Remember, they go into the land of Goshen and there Joseph sees to it that they're well taken care of.

[9 : 17] And they prosper in the midst of that. To me, it's interesting. You know, you think of that. And then, my mind's going back to our study in the book of Jeremiah.

You recall, there was a portion in there where God says to Jeremiah, tell the people that are in captivity, you're going to be here for 70 years.

So, in essence, why not make it easy for yourself? Go ahead and buy lands. Build houses. Plant crops.

In other words, settle into a comfortable lifestyle even though you're in captivity. Amazing the way God does that for his covenant people.

Now, in Exodus chapter 1, they're not yet the covenant people, but they are the seed of Jacob. All right? Abraham and Jacob who will become the covenant nation.

[10 : 18] But God just does richly by them. And we saw that. Lee led us in that to see how they settled and where they settled and what God did in and through all of that.

So, God continues to do a work of providing for them. Now, notice he starts the verse. In verse 6, Joseph died.

All the major players that have passed, came into Egypt are now gone. They're out off the scene here.

They've been taken by death and no longer a part of the activity that takes place here. But even though, even though they're gone, God's blessings did not stop.

All right? They continued on. It's interesting. You know, I remember my real first experience with this was when I was in North Carolina in the Air Force there.

[11 : 33] and one of the stalwarts of the church we were a part of there. Great guy. Chairman of deacons and all of those things that made him a real pillar of the church.

Spiritual guy. Loved God. Loved God's word. Loved God's church and God's people. Word came out. He's moving. He's going to move. And could figure out why he had a tremendous job there at some of the fabric mills, textile mills there in that town.

But he was going to move back home. Back where he was born and raised. Around, well, I don't remember where it was, what town it was. But anyway, he was going to move.

And, you know what came to my mind? How is the church going to survive? Yeah? What's going to happen to the church?

He was such a vital part of what took place there. His wife was too. But more so him. You know, almost the pastor's right-hand man when we got there.

[12 : 41] And, and so, how's the church going to survive? Well, he moved on. And, for some strange reason, the church didn't miss a beat.

Amen? Yeah. God continued to take care of his church. And that was the key. Amen? It was his church. And so, we see that here with the, the seed of, of Jacob here.

All the major players are gone. And, and so, you know, God continues to bless. In particular, we find there was a miraculous increase in the, in the number of the children of Israel after they have deceased.

All right? So, again, more of a fulfillment of the promises of God to his people. So, again, verse 6 and 7, Joseph died, all his brethren, all that generation, and the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty.

and the land was filled with them. Isn't it amazing how, how, how focused God was in that verse on the reality of what people of Israel were becoming and had become.

[14 : 05] The word fruitful there literally is a word that means increased abundantly or another word swarmed like a swarm of bees or hornets and they multiplied.

Points back to Genesis 1, 28, in the Garden of Eden, God said, God blessed them and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea or the fowl of the air over every living thing that moveth.

Says the same thing in essence to Noah. When the ark finally settled on dry ground, God instructed Noah to let all the animals that he brought with him depart from the ark so that they can go and so that they can multiply and replenish.

That was the statement he made there. And so, we see that word, that idea here of being fruitful. Genesis 18, 18 says, See that Abraham surely shall become a great and mighty nation.

and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. So, there's a continuation of that promise that God gave to Abram about what they were going to become.

[15 : 21] Now, the idea here, they were fruitful signifies the idea they were like healthy trees bringing forth an abundance of fruit. And they waxed exceeding mighty, he said.

Waxed exceeding mighty. And that is the idea that they exceeded a certain level. All right? More like they exceeded or surpassed a certain expectation.

So that the land, that is the land of Goshen, of course, was filled with them. Now, two particular reasons why that increase was so magnificent.

First of all, he said the Hebrew women were exceeding fruitful. And we're going to see more of that as he shows us a little bit later. that is, they suffered very little in childbirth.

When they bore their children and gave birth, they were, they didn't have, they had very little discomfort, if you will. Often gave birth to twins, we are told.

[16 : 26] And also, secondly, there didn't seem to be or appear to be any premature deaths among them. So, in about 250 years, and that doesn't, that seems like a long time, but in 250 years, that group of 70 that came into Egypt with Joseph grew to about 600,000.

And, that's not counting the old men, the women, and the children. All right? 600,000 plus from that 70 over 250 years.

What a change and what a difference. The land then was filled with them according to what the scripture said there. Now, verses 8 and 9, not only has Joseph died, now there rose up a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph.

You know, when we stop and think about that, that phrase, to me, it rings in my mind if I'm that careful, the idea, okay, the Pharaoh that was Pharaoh when Joseph was alive has now died and a new Pharaoh comes out.

He must have been a whopping age, amen, if that were the case. But it's not. It just stipulates here that a new Pharaoh has arisen. I tried to find out, I tried to find out how many rulers of Egypt there were in that time span from the time Joseph was given honor in Egypt back in 1886 B.C.

[18:12] to the time that Joseph died, 1442 or whatever B.C. How many rulers there actually were. So, we've got Alexa.

How many have Alexa? Alexa, the little echo thingy? I asked Alexa, Alexa, how many rulers were there in Egypt from this date to that date?

She paused a minute. She said, this is what I've discovered. This is what I've found. And she told me there have been 330 rulers in Egypt.

Now, she didn't give me the time limit. So, I tried to break it down, go to Google and Wikipedia and all of those places that are listed there and come up with the idea.

There were, to me, what I found out was basically between 75 plus, maybe over 100, rulers in that, whatever that time limit is, a little over 400 years of time.

[19:20] And so, you've got a number of different people that have been ruling in Egypt in that long time period. And so, now you've got another one.

What happens, what happens when a new ruler takes over in a country? What does the ruler do? Yeah, it changes everything.

He does it just the way he wants to do it. Right? Especially if you're a dictator of the country. I'm going to do what I'm going to do. So, this new pharaoh brings in a brand new regime.

He's going to do things differently than anybody else has done it. All right? So, the idea being, if I'm going to do that, I don't give a, I don't give a care about anybody that ruled in the past.

That doesn't make any difference to me. especially somebody that ruled back in the day when Joseph was around. How many hundred years ago? Yeah. Didn't even come to his mind.

[20:26] He didn't care. He doesn't want to know. It's a new regime. He does know about the people of Israel. All right?

He's well aware of that. They're staked out up around Goshen and spreading out. And so, he knows of them. He knows who they are and he knows where originally they came from.

Now, so that old generation has passed away. Not only in Israel, as we said before, but in Egypt as well. People of Egypt.

The commoners of Egypt. Who knows? Probably don't even know the name of Joseph. because look how much time has come and gone.

I would be surprised. Well, no, I'm like, yeah, I'm going to say it anyway. I would be surprised if their, if their education systems were not anything like ours in so much that from generation to generation they stopped teaching things.

[21:37] Especially history. All right? So, these are people that have not been taught about Joseph much less the amazing things that he did to preserve the nation of, or the kingdom of Egypt.

So, brand spanking new generation. All he knows is, here are people that are known as Jews. People of Israel.

And so, what are we going to do with them? Now, now, remember, for the most part, it kind of looks like for the most part, though, and you, you'd have to be a historian, Tom, this is your homework.

how many of the pharaohs after the death of Joseph continued on favorable, doing favorable things, and showing favor of some type to the people of Israel until we get to Exodus chapter 1 in this pharaoh who's not going to do that.

Do you know the answer to that off the top of your head? I'd say one or two generations. Well, you're probably right. I'll research it. Okay. Oh, yeah.

[23:03] Okay. Oh, he's got it in his mind. He's got that. Calvita, write that question down so I can remember it. All right.

And remember who I assigned that to. All right. So, didn't know Joseph, didn't, aren't aware of the accomplishments that he made, and so now the favor that has been shown to the people of Israel is now going to change.

And the reason being is because how God blessed them in becoming such a multitude of people. All right. Now, yeah, verse 8 and 9.

There rose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, behold, the people of the children of Israel are more mightier than we.

All right. More mighty than we. And that, of course, is an exaggeration, but still he sees that. So, in verse 10 he says, 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, and so get them up out of the land.

[24 : 34] So, we need to deal wisely with these folks, that is, to act craftfully towards them. That's political craftiness or worldly wisdom that comes along with craft and cunningness.

All right. And so, that's how we're going to have to deal, not straightforward, but that's how we're going to have to deal with them. All right. Now, the reason for this is not that Pharaoh had any idea that they would try to overthrow him and take over Egypt, but what the fear was is that if somehow Egypt got into a war with another country, the people of Israel would side with whoever the other country was that they were in war with and thus defeat the Egyptians or help defeat the Egyptians. That was what his fear was and he was not about to let that happen, much less if that would happen that they would leave the country as they allied with this other nation.

Don't want them to leave. okay, we've got to keep the population numbers up so we can get more money, right? That's the kind of way we have it now.

Nonetheless, that was the fear. So, he's going to have to figure out a way to deal with this. So he said let's deal craftily with them.

[26 : 03] So here's how he's going to do it. Therefore, they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens and they built for Pharaoh treasure cities Pithom and Ramses.

All right, so they're already working but he said we're going to put some taskmasters over them. Some men that will deal harshly with them if you will.

the idea here is to bend them down by hard labor. The idea is to bend or to wear out somebody's strength.

So he hoped to break down their physical strength and thus breaking down their physical strength they would break down their growth.

All right? So, you know, when people are under oppression their growth in numbers slows down.

[27 : 07] Oppression just does a lot to you. And so he figures that's what we're going to have to do here to slow this thing down so they don't continue their growth.

Now, not only the physical strength but also to crush their spirit. and the reason why he wanted to crush their spirit so that they would no longer have any desire to have the liberty that they would want and go back to their homeland.

You know, they didn't want them to leave. They didn't want them to have the desire to leave. So best way to do that is to break their spirit. To give them the idea that there is no use in doing anything to try to leave.

To try to go home. We're here. We're stuck here. Been here for over 400 years and that's not going to change. Now, so, they were compelled to build cities.

Those cities were for storing the harvest that is brought in every year to hold the produce that they're going to use for trade purposes but also for the necessities of food to feed their soldiers in their armies.

[28 : 27] Now, verse 12, but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. Isn't that amazing? The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew and they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

So, this first step that Pharaoh tried to take to change things didn't work. Didn't accomplish the purpose he had. They continued to grow in proportion to the amount of oppression.

All right? Only God could do that. Amen? And God's doing that. And that's, you know, the picture here. The Egyptians were grieved. They, no doubt, when they saw this take place, had to realize there's something more to this than just the natural behavior.

There's got to be something else involved here. Got to be a higher power, if you will, that's being manifest for this to take place the way that is doing.

And for them, it was a power that they were tremendously uncomfortable with. So, instead of bowing down though to that pressure, they continued on enslaving Israel to even harder labor.

[29 : 43] Verses 13 and 14. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter and with hard bondage in mortar and in brick, all manner of service in the field, all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor.

So, it's not a new kind of oppression, but it's a description of it. Description of this phrase, the crushing by hard labor, enslaving them and embittering their lives with the labor that they gave to them.

So, the word rigor here literally means hard oppression. It comes from a word, a Chaldean word that means to break or crush in pieces. So, you get the idea of the mindset here, what they're wanting to do with these people, just entirely bring brokenness to them physically, emotionally, and mentally.

All right? it says their bondage was in mortar, in brick, in all manner of service in the field. So, they had to go dig up the clay to make the brick.

All right? And they had to harvest the sticks and hay and whatever else they put in there to knead with the clay.

[31 : 06] They had to knead it, they had to prepare it, they had to get it ready, and then also they had to truck it up to whoever's, wherever they're going to build, whatever they're going to build, and they had to serve then also those that were employed in building those edifices.

So, it's an amazing thing that they forced them to do. We're just going to cause them to have to work almost 24 hours a day doing every single bit of the work.

Now, Josephus, the historian, says this about all that. He said, the Egyptians contrived a variety of ways to afflict the Israelites, for they enjoined them to cut a great number of channels for the river, and to build walls for their cities and ramparts, that they might restrain the river and hinder its water from stagnating upon its overrunning its own banks.

They set them also to build pyramids, and wore them out, forced them to learn all sorts of mechanic arts, and to custom themselves to hard labor.

That's what Josephus, the historian, saw about what took place there. In verses 15 and 16, 18, and the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, and this is interesting, spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Sephara, and the name of the other was Pua, and he said, when you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son, then you shall kill him, but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.

[32 : 54] So, first attempt failed, and now he goes on to a more cruel idea here, and commands the midwives that assisted the women in giving birth to kill all the male children when they're born.

Now, keep the girls alive, but slay all the male children, all the boys. Now, that little phrase, when you see them upon the stools, I say it's difficult to be quite certain about that, but there's only one other, there's only one other passage of scripture in which that phrase is given, and that is in Jeremiah chapter 18, when he says in verse 1, the word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. All right? And then, of course, if it's marred and that kind of thing, that's the context of it.

But he sees the potter working on the wheels, plural. And the idea is this, in those days, the potter, when he works on the wheels, there are two wheels that he works with.

One's on the bottom, it's, you know, it's usually a stone on the bottom, and there's a pedestal that comes up from it to an upper wheel, which is usually wood.

[34 : 34] All right? And that's upper wheels is the edifice upon which the potter molds and shapes his clay. All right? The bottom wheel is moved with the feet.

And as they move that bottom wheel with the feet, that upper wheel then is moving so the potter can do his work with the clay. And so that's kind of the picture that's transitioned here into the birth of the children.

And the idea is that midwives are to keep a close eye out. And as that child is trying to come out and the idea of the wheel is twisting to come out of the mother's womb, when that begins to happen, you keep a close eye on that.

And as soon as you can, you detect whether this is going to be a boy or whether it's going to be a girl. No sonograms back in those days.

All right? You just had to look. And so the idea here, the midwives were to keep a close eye when it comes to that part of the procedure to keep a close eye of what that child is going to be, a boy or a girl.

[35 : 50] And if it's a boy, you put it to death. All right? That's what you call late-term abortions. Amen? Super late-term abortions.

Now, now, he said that's what's to take place here. Now, he says that's what you're to do, and you are to convey that to the other midwives.

The two midwives named were probably kind of the head of the midwife association, if you will, among the Hebrew women. These are not Egyptian women. These are Hebrew women of all things.

So you talk about more servitude, that's it. Naturally, the Hebrew midwives were going to assist the Hebrew women. But now, Pharaoh instructs these Hebrew midwives to kill all the boys that are born of the children of Israel, the people of Israel.

Now, you talk about a tremendous burden that's laid upon these ladies. Now, there's a Hebrew sage, if you will, from way back yonder, a guy that sat under the teaching of Hillel, back in the days that we see here.

[37 : 12] He gives what he thinks is the reason for Pharaoh giving the command that he gives here. He said, Pharaoh slept and saw in his sleep a balance, a scale.

And behold, the whole land of Egypt stood in one scale and a lamb in the other. In the other. And the scale in which the lamb was outweighed that in which was the land of Egypt.

So, immediately he sent and called all the chief magicians and told them his dream. And Janus and Jambres of Moses day, who were chief of the magicians, opened their mouths and said to Pharaoh, a child is shortly to be born in the congregation of the Israelites whose hand shall destroy the whole land of Egypt.

So, take that for what it's worth. You can investigate that too, chief. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But, whether that's reality or not, if that's what Pharaoh really thought, it doesn't matter.

The idea here is, he's going to exterminate all the male children so that they can stop propagating among the people of Israel in their time with Egypt.

[38 : 37] But look at verse 17. it's just amazing to me to be able to see and watch what God's doing here. All throughout this, behind the scenes, if you will, unseen, unseen activity of God, but look what he does.

You realize the fear that had to be in the heart of these midwives. What are we going to do? you know, if we don't do as Pharaoh said, what's he going to do to us?

But, verse 17 says, but the midwives feared God and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men and children alive.

Feared God with a reverential fear. fear. What do you think it was in that reverential fear of God that became paramount in their decision here?

What about Noah's day? What did God say in Noah's day? If a man sheds the blood of someone else, his blood shall be shed.

[40 : 02] they undoubtedly knew that and they weren't going to shed the blood of these baby boys. They'd rather honor God and obey him than they would Pharaoh.

And so they refused to do what God or what Pharaoh had told them to do. Now, verse 18 and 19, and this is good.

We'll have to pick up this next week. The king of Egypt called for the midwives and said unto them, why have you done this thing and have saved the men children alive?

And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptians. Oh, they're not like the Egyptian women.

Now, you can either read your notes and find out. I think I put that in your notes. Or study it out and come back next week and we'll find out why. In what way were the Hebrew, well, let me ask you, don't read your notes.

[41 : 13] What way were the Hebrew women different than the Egyptian women? What's the most obvious one? Yeah, they were hard workers.

They had to be. They were in servitude. Okay? The key to that is women. Of course, you're past.

No. Most of you are anyway. Ladies, if you don't want to have hard labor, work hard before you have babies. Amen?

And work hard while you're pregnant. Amen? Amen? Yeah, yeah, yeah. And we'll look at that because they say there's proven fact about some of that.

I remember a lady back in North Carolina, bless her heart. Her name was Alaphay Ivy. Tall lady. And she became pregnant.

[42 : 16] Was going to give birth to her baby at some point. She had gone to a scheduled doctor's appointment to see how she's doing. She went.

No problems. Went in. The doctor started his examination and he said, get your clothes back on and get over to the hospital right away.

He said, you're about to give birth. She did. She got dressed. The hospital was just right across the street. And walked over there, got in the elevator to go to the OB ward and almost gave birth to the baby in the elevator.

Never had a bit of labor pains. She's a hard worker. Amen? Yeah. I was going to say, if you want her email address, I'll give it to you, but she's passed away.

to give to your children and grandchildren. All right. We need to quit there. We'll pick up there next week. Lord willing.

[43 : 26] Let's pray. Father, thank you again for your loving kindness and your goodness to us. Thank you, Father, for the things that you show us to encourage us. to just really strengthen our ability to further trust you because we come to know more and more about who you are and what you are in your faithfulness.

So, Father, thank you for that tonight. Thank you for these men and women that are here, always faithful to come and hear your word. So, Father, I ask your blessings upon each one and on the week to follow.

We'll thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.