

God Is Always Faithful (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 May 2012

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] Let's go.

Let's go.

Let's go. Let's go.

Let's go. And so, we understand from these, especially chapter 1, that they went from favor, actually being favored by the Egyptians, even their king, the Pharaoh, from favor to oppression. Let's consider their favor to begin with. In chapter 1 and verses 1 to 10, we see this kind of unfolding, but we need some background on this, especially if we're going to understand how they were favored by the Egyptians.

[2:41] In Genesis chapter 47, the Bible says this in verses 5 and 6, And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee, that it's right here at your disposal.

In the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell. In the land of Goshen let them dwell, and if thou knowest any man of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

Now, those are words of favor. These are spoken, of course, and in regard to Joseph's father, Jacob, and all of his brothers.

And so, clearly, initially anyway, and really for some time, Joseph and his family were highly favored.

In Genesis chapter 50, verse 3, And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, I don't think I've got that one on your PowerPoint here, so just listen to this.

[3:48] When Jacob had finished commanding his sons, this is right before Jacob is to die, He drew his feet up into the bed, and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people, and the Egyptians, Now, this is what the Bible says, the Egyptians mourned for him Seventy days.

This is more than just simply a token kind of, or customary kind of response to the death of someone notable. This was a genuine response to the loss of Jacob.

Now, Jacob, of course, was Joseph's father, and Joseph went into Egypt first, brought his father and his brothers later, his father being Jacob.

Jacob was a patriarch of the Hebrews, of Israel. Israel. And it's very clear then that they were highly favored in the land of Egypt, which is quite a contrast from what we normally think of when we think of Israel and Egypt.

Things were going to change, and did change. Do you remember the story of how Joseph and his family came into Egypt? Remember some of the particulars, and we just kind of hit some of the high spots.

[5:04] You know, first of all, Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. Remember that story in Genesis? And so they ultimately sold him into slavery.

Actually, they were going to kill him, weren't they? And reason won the day. And instead, they ultimately sold him into slavery.

And they were jealous of him, sold him into slavery. And when he got into Egypt, he was taken in as a slave into Potiphar's house. Remember that part of the story?

Potiphar honored him and greatly appreciated Joseph and gave him quite a bit of responsibility. But then there was Potiphar's wife, remember? And she had designs on Joseph and tried to, in a sense, entrap him.

And in fact, it is that part of the story that I have often used to try to relate to young people and the temptations, sexual temptations.

[6:08] Joseph, when he was there sitting on the couch by Potiphar's wife, and she was tempting him, what did he do? He didn't get out his Bible and start preaching to her and try to reason with her

and try to lead her to the Lord.

He got out of there. And he got out of there quick. She grabbed his coat, tore his coat, tore a piece of his coat off, which was used as evidence against him. And so he was falsely accused.

You remember that part of the story. So Joseph now was put into prison. And you know a little bit about what happened to him while he was there. Interpreting some dreams.

Word got to Pharaoh. Pharaoh was having dreams. And so someone told him about Joseph down at the prison. Well, bring him to me. And so Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream, remember.

And God granted Joseph that revelation. And the dream, the gist of it was that a great famine was going to come.

[7:10] And Joseph was given wisdom by God to counsel with Pharaoh what he ought to do so he could spare his people from, not only spare them from the famine, but also become quite wealthy in helping all the people of the land with the famine.

So, because of that, Pharaoh promoted Joseph to a very high position in the land of Egypt. In fact, I think it's safe to say he was number two in command of all of Egypt.

This is a Hebrew. All right? This is not an Egyptian. He came to Egypt. He came to Egypt as a slave. And God prospered him and promoted him for all intents and purposes to be the ruler of Egypt just under Pharaoh.

And then you remember the story, a very neat story, about how Joseph eventually got his father Jacob and his brothers in.

You know how the brothers came to Egypt because they needed food because of the famine. And guess who they had to deal with? Joseph, their brother, but they didn't know it was him.

[8:21] Remember that story? The drama of it is just incredible. And to make the story short, of course, eventually he identified himself.

His true identity was brought before the brothers and eventually moved the father and the brothers, the whole family and everything into Egypt. And so it was just great favor.

All right? Then comes the oppression. First, with Joseph's death. That kind of marks the beginning of the oppression that Israel and Hebrews would have in Egypt.

Joseph dies. And then the second step, a new Pharaoh comes to the throne. And the Bible says it's a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. You know, so we don't know you, Joseph.

Don't know anything about you. By the way, who was this Pharaoh? Do you remember his name? Do you know his name? Now, I know that you're going to immediately think about Cecil B. DeMille's version of that.

[9:32] You know, and I think it's Cecil B. DeMille who did that, didn't he? Didn't he do Charles Heston's version of Moses? And I know that's probably what you're thinking.

And so you're thinking, well, there it was Ramses, right? Ramses was the Pharaoh. Actually, it was Seti who was the Pharaoh first that did not know Joseph and put them into slavery.

There is quite a bit of debate, by the way, and I'll just give you a little of this and then you can decide for yourself. Debate about just who the Pharaoh was, which dynasty it was. And we're not going to get into all of the nuts and bolts of that.

A lot of it's pretty boring. But the identity of the Pharaoh that first did not know Joseph, the Bible says, and then, of course, he died.

And the Pharaoh that followed him, who was the Pharaoh of the actual Exodus, the one that plagues came upon. The identity of these two guys depends on the date of the Exodus.

[10:37] Now, we don't have any date in the Bible. You know, Moses, who wrote the book of Exodus, didn't give us a name for the Pharaoh number one.

I don't know why he didn't do that. It doesn't really matter, I guess. And he also didn't set a date. And they didn't use dates in those days. There are two possibilities.

Actually, there are three possibilities. The third one, we'll just throw it out because the third one would be from those who say, well, it never, ever happened. It's all just allegory. You know, it's a fictional story.

We'll throw that one out. Now, the other two are these dates. One would be 1446 B.C., 1446 B.C. The other possibility would be 1267 B.C.

Of course, we're talking B.C. So, the oldest date would be the 1446 B.C. And then a newer date would be 1267. Now, the key to understanding or interpreting which of the two dates, really the only key that we have in the Bible, is found in 1 Kings 6 and verse 1.

[11:53] And let me read it to you. Where the Bible says, In the 480th year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, 480 years after they came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he, this is Solomon, began to build the temple of the Lord.

So, that's the only reference we have that might help us put a date on when the exodus occurred. It was 480 years after Solomon built the temple, started to build the temple. All right? That doesn't help us much. Because we don't, there's some controversy about when he started to build the temple.

All right? But, it seems pretty clear to many, I would say, conservative theologians, those who take the Bible literally, that the date would be the older date for the exodus, the 1446, rather than the 1267.

Now, if the late date is the right date, then Seti, Pharaoh, the one that we have in the movie, Cecil B. DeMille's movie, Seti would be the Pharaoh that did not know Joseph, and was the one who put Israel into slavery.

[13:30] And then, Ramses II would be the Pharaoh of the Egypt, if the 1267 date is the correct one.

If the earlier date, the older date, 1446 is the right one, and it seems pretty clear if you take a literal view of Scripture, it's probably this date.

If that's the case, then the Pharaoh, who did not know Joseph, would be Thutmose II. Aren't you blessed?

Just write that down. We do get the notes next week. Thutmose, it's T-H-U-T-M-O-S-E. And, by the way, I'll just go ahead and tell you, it's not much of a stretch.

There are scholars who would point to the fact that Moses is part of that name. And so it was a very popular name in those days. And so, you know, his daughter named him Moses, which means taken out of the reed or the reeds.

[14:36] So there's a close association. But Thutmose II would be the, or excuse me, the third. If I say second, the third would be the Pharaoh who did not know Jesus. And then here's the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

Amenhotep. All right. Get that down. Amenhotep. A-M-E-N-H-O-T-E-P.

The second. Amenhotep II. Would be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. All right. That would be a dynasty, and this would be another argument, really, for this early date.

And Amenhotep being the Pharaoh. The argument for that would be that his dynasty marked the pinnacle of Egyptian prosperity and affluency, which I think would be fitting that it was at their pinnacle that God struck them down in such a dramatic way.

All right. You can decide about that if you want to. If you still want to stick with Ramesses, then there are plenty of conservative scholars out there who agree with you. If you do, then you have to take the 1 Kings 6.1 passage as a little less literal than it's stated.

[15:59] If you want to take the early date, then just remember Amenhotep. Amenhotep. He was the bad guy. All right. All right.

So here we're talking about these events that have led to, from Israel being in favor with the Egyptians, to now oppression. Joseph dies.

A new Pharaoh comes to the throne who didn't know Joseph or his family. And then third, the number of Hebrews, the Bible says, this is how the Egyptians are now starting to think, their leadership and so forth.

They're thinking, you know, the number of these Hebrews is more and migrier than we. So there came a time in the history when, because, you know, the Hebrews, God's people, were very prolific. They had a lot of children. And their numbers were growing and growing very rapidly. I mean, after all, God did give His people the commandment, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And they took that commandment very literally.

[17:07] And so they were growing and they reached a point when, though this is probably, you know, an exaggeration on their part, they came to a point where it looked like there were more Hebrews than Egyptians.

And that was a disturbing thing to the leadership. And so then that led to a fourth conclusion, the fear that if war came about, and we learned this in verse 10 of chapter 1, if war broke out, then can we count on the Hebrews fighting for us?

Or is it more likely, because there are more of them than us, that they might join with our enemies? And destroy us and conquer us.

And so you can kind of, you know, in a sense, I think you can understand this kind of evolution of thought. You know, they're beginning to think, you know, maybe this is not such a good idea. We've got to do something about these people. And so they fell out of favor with Egypt, and especially the Pharaoh. And then I would add a fifth element to what led to oppression, and that would be Satan's strategy.

[18 : 36] So we see his strategy woven all throughout the Old Testament. And what is his strategy, basically? It's to spoil God's redemptive plan, his purposes.

And he's been doing that from the serpent in the garden. And we can follow that theme all the way through the Old Testament, on into the New, to the very hecklers at the cross.

That, you know, were shouting out to Jesus, come down from the cross. That's the last place the devil wanted him, was on the cross. And so all throughout history, Satan has been working through men, through civilizations and governments and leaders, to end God's plan of redemption, to spoil it, to destroy it.

And so that led then, all these elements led to Israel falling out of favor with the Egyptians. Then we have Pharaoh's population control.

All right? Based upon, now Israel is not in favor with Egypt. Got to do something about these people before they conquer us. And so Pharaoh started a population control program.

[19 : 49] Not for his own people, but for Israel. And the strategy, he said in verse 10, let us deal wisely with them. Don't be thrown by that old English word.

These references, by the way, come out of the King James. I think it would be better to translate it shrewdly with them. Let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, become more numerous. And so phase one, he put them to work as builders of his treasure cities. They were already, well, they really weren't technically slaves.

I mean, they came into Egypt as favored people, and they grew in number over that 400 years. And they grew in number. And God favored them, and they were favored with the Egyptians.

But then when this Pharaoh came to power, he did not know them, he put them into slavery, and forced them to build his treasure cities.

[20 : 57] That was phase one. That was bad enough. Phase two, he made them slaves to serve with rigor. That's how the Bible put in verse 13.

That is to work them ruthlessly. Put taskmasters over them, and whip them, and we can imagine all kinds of other things.

Phase three, he killed their male babies at birth. That was part of his population control.

Kill the male babies. And if we do enough of that for a period of time, then that will really curb the increase of the Hebrews in our land.

And he had kind of a two-part to that, if you remember the story. First, of course, he ordered the Hebrew midwives.

[21 : 57] He brought, I guess, brought them in, and had a little sit-down chat with them, and said, I order you that every time a Hebrew mother is about to give birth to a child, before that child is completely birthed, if you see that that child is a male, then kill it.

Right there. Don't let it be born. Can you imagine? Now, these midwives are Hebrews themselves. And, of course, as you read the account of Scripture, they probably said, Yes, sir.

And then when they got to the homes, they didn't do it. And Pharaoh brought them back, you remember, and said, Now, I ordered you, you know, strictly to kill all the male babies, and you've not been doing it.

And they said, Well, we can't help it. These Hebrew women, they just have babies so quick, and by the time we get there, they're already born. You know, and so we couldn't do anything about it, which was probably a lie.

But they were protecting the lives of these Hebrew babies. And so he moved to kind of a second phase of that, which would be more sure, and I'm sure was more sure, and many Hebrew children were killed, male, maybe boys.

[23 : 07] And it says that he had his people kill all the male babies. And I think probably we could assume that this is a reference to soldiers or other leaders, Egyptians certainly, that would go throughout the homes, and when they saw a Hebrew male baby, they would have it killed there in

whatever method.

All right, so this was Pharaoh's population control. That led, of course, to a crime. The cry of God's people.

I mean, they're under tremendous oppression. They are not favored. They're oppressed. And they have been made slaves. And taskmasters are over them.

And they are working hard labor, making bricks for these buildings, for the glory of the Pharaoh, the Pharaoh who hates them. And that was bad enough.

I mean, they're under that. And now their male babies are being destroyed. And so the cry is coming up to God.

[24:17] And in verse 23, the Bible says there, cry came up to God. And that's a very common expression you'll find in Hebrew literature and throughout the Old Testament.

We're talking about prayer, talking about heart prayer, and crying out in agony, lifting that up to God. And, you know, at various junctures in our lives, certainly things have never been as severe as what Israel was facing, at least not in the same sense.

But we all have had seasons or times when we're hurting and things seem hopeless and we cry out, cry out to God, hopefully.

And the question is, does He hear? Sometimes we wonder. But He does hear. And we have this testimony from Scripture in verse 24. God heard their groaning.

Their groaning, their crying, their burden that they had given voice to. And God heard it. So God's people cry out. God hears.

[25:38] He hears. And then, and we see, it's interesting how it's portrayed here in verse 24. It says God remembered. Alright, so they cried out.

God heard. And then God remembered that these people were His people. It's not that God forgot anything. Alright, we also need to understand that. That's not the idea here.

It is that He had never forgotten. Really, I think we could probably put it this way literally, and this is the meaning. We could say God never forgot that they were His people.

He had made a covenant with them. He made that covenant with Abraham. It was renewed with Isaac, Abraham's son. It was renewed again with Jacob, Isaac's son. And it has continued now with the offspring of Joseph and his brothers.

And God remembered His promise to them. And then that leads to one final step. God had respect unto them.

[26:44] They cried out. God heard. He had never forgotten that they were His people. He never forgets that we're His people either. And then He had respect unto them.

And that's, again, an old English way of saying He acknowledged them. He acknowledged them. That is, He heard, and He's going to do something about it. In fact, a literal reading, I think I have that up there for you.

God looked on them and made Himself known to them. Alright, so it's not just simply that God said, okay, I'm going to respond. I'm going to do something. He actually made Himself known to them to give them assurance, to give them confidence that God is going to deliver them.

And so Israel, from this point on, really had a great hope, tremendous hope, of a deliverer. They didn't know who that deliverer was going to be. But they knew that God was going to send a deliverer.

And then, we have that deliverer coming. So, be God answers. That's what we have starting with chapter 2. Israel cried out.

[27:52] God heard. God remembered. God acknowledged them. He made Himself known to them. He's going to deliver them. And so, His answer is Moses.

Moses is the chosen deliverer. Chapter 2 through most of chapter 4. And what do we learn about Moses?

Well, several things we could consider about Him. First of all, His birth. Chapter 2, verses 1 through 10. We have an account of His birth.

And it's an amazing story, isn't it? His birth. And what does His birth reveal? Well, it reveals the providence of God. Every step of the way.

And He was born. Every step of the way. From His birth. That taking place, of course, in very difficult times, uncertain times.

[28:49] Because, of course, the edict of Pharaoh had already been that all male babies were to be destroyed. And Moses, of course, is male. And he could have very easily have been destroyed. But God's providence was at work here.

And His life was spared. Then, we have His exile. And that reveals both the preparation of Moses as well as, or excuse me, the presumption of Moses as well as the preparation of God, or the preparation of Moses by God.

So, you know, I'm skipping a lot here. Moses was born. And you know the story about how that came about and how his life was spared and what his mother had to do in order to save his life and ultimately putting him in a basket, putting him out, launching him out into the Nile River and God's providence is working and there's Pharaoh's daughter bringing him in.

She was buried, didn't have any children and taking him as her own. And he grows up in Pharaoh's household and probably Moses was one of the most highly educated men in all of Hebrew history. But he reached a point, you know, we're not told, we can't refer to Cecil Vita Mills movie, we're not told how Moses knew that he was a Hebrew.

[30:28] I think we can assume from Scripture they always knew it. He was very much raised by his mother, although she was his nurse. So he knew he was a Hebrew and so he was going to do something about the oppression of his people and that's what led to his exile.

And so his exile reveals both the presumption of Moses as well as the preparation of God. What about the presumption? In what way? Well, in chapter 2, verse 11 says, and you remember this story, he saw an Egyptian, Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew.

One of his brethren, the Bible says. So, he looked this way and that way. I love the way that is worded. Here's Moses, he's looking here and over here. And the Bible says when he saw no one, nobody's looking, he did what?

He killed the Egyptian. Killed him and hid him in the sand. Remember? Now, Pharaoh heard about it. So somebody was looking.

In fact, you can read the story and find out how all that came about. So Pharaoh heard about the matter, sought to have Moses put to death, executed, killed. But Moses fled.

[31:44] He fled from the face of Pharaoh, the Bible says, and dwelt in the land of Midian. Alright, so here's his exile. And his exile is coming about primarily because of his presumption.

Moses, I think, we could read between the lines and the implication is that he thought, well, I'm, you know, in this place of power in Egypt. And, uh, he, our Hebrews, my people, need a deliverer.

And, uh, I'll just be that deliverer. And so he just struck out on his own and the first time he saw a Hebrew being persecuted or beaten by an Egyptian, he just took the matter in his own hands and killed the guy.

He's going to single-handedly deliver his people and that was not God's plan, of course. It would never work that way. Uh, and so there's presumption. So he's exiled because God's not ready for him or the bread of Moses is not ready for God to use him.

And so that leads to the time of preparation that would take place in the land of Midian. Uh, you know, and, uh, so here's Moses, the prince of Egypt.

[32:57] He's out there tending sheep in Midian. You know, just as a common shepherd. And, uh, it was a, uh, what, some 40 years of preparation.

I mean, it was going to take some time for God to prepare this man so he could go back and, uh, actually be the deliverer. And, of course, God's going to do some other things as well to prepare him.

And that leads to, uh, his call in chapter 3. His call, and you, uh, know something about the events of that.

These are all very famous and well-known from Scripture. His call reveals first the person of God and the purpose of God.

The person of God in that God reveals himself to Moses in a way that Moses never knew him before. Uh, in fact, he didn't even know his name.

[33:54] So God reveals to Moses his person and then when he calls him, he's revealing to Moses and will reveal to him the details of his purpose for Moses to be the deliverer of his people.

In regard to the person of God, the Bible tells us in these verses, reveals several things about God. Number one, that he's holy. Remember, uh, Moses looks and he sees that bush off in the distance that's on fire but it's not being consumed and he approaches that burning bush and God speaks to

him and says to take his sandals off.

You know, the ground upon which you are walking is what? Holy. It's not holy because the ground is holy. It's holy because God is present. So God reveals himself to Moses.

He's holy. Uh, he also reveals that he is a, uh, excuse me.

All right, let's get back to the first of God. It reveals that he's a covenant keeping God. He reiterates his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and, uh, he reveals also that he's an all seeing and hearing and knowing God.

[35 : 20] Verse 7, he has seen what's been going on with his people. He's not, uh, oblivious to these things. He also reveals that he is transcendent.

I mean, he is not man, and he is transcendent and holy and yet also condescending that he has come down to man. He's come down to see, and that he is also self-existent, and he, uh, reveals that in the revelation of his name.

He is I am. Remember, Moses asked for his name. And God said, I am. I am that I am. And, uh, we could talk at length about the meaning of that name.

It's quite interesting. Uh, but to, uh, put it short, because we're going to have to quit here, uh, it basically means that God is the one who was and is and always will be.

He's the great I am. He's the self-existent one. He had no beginning, he had no end. There was no birth, no death. Uh, he, he doesn't exist, uh, because of other things like we exist.

[36 : 27] He exists in himself. Uh, he is the self-existent one. And then, uh, I'll go ahead and just give you the purpose of God. first, uh, God is, uh, going to, uh, deliver his people.

God will deliver his people out of the hand of the Egyptians. And he details that or states that in verse 8. Uh, God, uh, second, uh, will keep his covenant with Abraham and bring them unto a good land and the place of the Canaanites.

So he lays all this out. So it's not just simply, uh, a revelation of his plan to deliver Israel out of Egypt, but he goes beyond that, uh, to reveal that he's going to lead them to a land that is promised to them.

And, uh, we know, of course, that to be, uh, uh, Canaan. Uh, in fact, he says the place of the Canaanites. And so, have his call. Next time we'll see his excuses.

That is, Moses' excuses. And, uh, I'll go ahead and, uh, ask you now, and I'll ask you again next time, uh, uh, to pay attention, uh, to be honest with yourself, see if you've ever, uh, ever, uh, made the same excuses, any of them.

[37 : 46] And most of them give God five of them. God answers four of them very clearly. The fifth one, I think he just says, Moses, you've got to do it. kind of thing.

I think he does that with us, too. So, we'll get to that next time. And, uh, then, uh, after that, uh, we'll go ahead and get into the, uh, actual deliverance of Israel out of Egypt through the plagues and so forth and, uh, see, uh, what God's purpose was in all of that, which was far more than just simply delivering Israel out of Egypt, I assure you.

Thank you.