

Lesson #1 – Oppression: The Background and the Birth of Moses – 28 Jun-4 Jul 2025

Christ would have us know that God remembers His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. Thus, we read: “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them” (Exodus 2:23-25). This covenant was confirmed in Christ. It was the covenant which God made with the fathers, saying unto Abraham, “And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (Acts 3:25). And this blessing consisted in turning them away from their iniquities. It was the covenant which God remembered in sending John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who should deliver His people from the hand of their enemies, so that they might “serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him” (Luke 1:74) all the days of their lives. It was the covenant which assured to Abraham and his seed the possession of land, through personal faith in Christ. But faith in Christ does not assure any man an earthly possession. Those who are heirs of God are the poor of this world, rich in faith. Christ Himself had not a place of His own on this earth, where he could lay His head; therefore, none need think that following Him in truth will assure them worldly possessions. It is more likely to be the contrary. These points are necessary to be borne in mind as we consider Moses in the work of deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their journey to the land of Canaan. They should be borne in mind in the study of the entire history of Israel, or else we shall be continually making the same mistake that was made by His own who received Him not when He came, because He did not come to advance their worldly interests.

Sunday: God’s People in Egypt – Read Exodus 1:1-11; we read that a new king arose who knew not Joseph; was this new king ignorant of Joseph or did not acknowledge? We are told: “The children of Israel were not slaves. They had never sold their cattle, their lands, and themselves to Pharaoh for food, as many of the Egyptians had done. They had been granted a portion of land wherein to dwell, on account of the services which Joseph had rendered to the Egyptian nation. Pharaoh appreciated his wisdom in the management of all things connected with the kingdom, especially in the preparation for the long years of famine. As a token of his gratitude, he not only offered to Jacob and his sons the best part of the land of Egypt as a dwelling-place, but exempted them from all taxation, and granted to Joseph the privilege of supplying them liberally with food through the whole continuance of that dreadful famine. The king said to his counselors, Are we not indebted to the God of Joseph, and to him, for this abundant supply of food? While other nations are perishing, we have enough. His management has greatly enriched the kingdom” {ST February 12, 1880, Art. A, par. 1}. “And Joseph died and his brethren, and all that generation.” And “there rose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph,” By this we are to understand, not one who was ignorant of Joseph's great services to the nation, but who wished to make no recognition of them, and, as much as possible, to bury them in oblivion. “And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. 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” {ST February 12, 1880, Art. A, par. 2}. That is the account of the new king.

Monday: The Historical Background – Read Genesis 37; how is God’s providence seen in this account to save the Israelites? We read there a shepherd boy, the youngest of twelve children, was given a dream by God. In the sincerity of his heart he related this dream to his brothers, and from that time they set themselves against him. One day the father sent the boy with a message to his brethren. “And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” What were these men trying to hinder? – the fulfilment of a dream that God had given to Joseph. But how did God overrule their hindering plan? Joseph was sold as a slave, he was put into prison, and finally called forth, and stood next to the king. And the time came when

his own brethren came and fell down before him. Did Joseph say to himself, 'Now I have you, my friends; I have just been waiting for this time, when I might get you into my power'? In Genesis 50:18 we read: "And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." If God meant this for good to Joseph, why should he punish his brethren? He was able to see God's providence in it all. God had worked out the fulfilment of his dream, and his heart was so filled with gratitude that he could not cherish hatred against his brethren. "Now therefore fear ye not," he said, "I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." If we would watch the providence of God more in our lives, we would often speak kindly to people.

Joseph's experience is mentioned in Psalm 105. We read: "Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him." God sent the man. His brethren thought they were getting rid of him. But God's purpose was being carried out. Notice, it says, "The word of the Lord tried him." That very experience that was intended to thwart God's purpose fitted Joseph for his high position, and afterward he realised it. God tries us at times, and it seems very hard; but if we can see, in the crucible and in the test of the fiery furnace, God's blessing, we shall thank the Lord that He is cleansing and fitting us for His own work.

Tuesday: The Hebrew Midwives – Read Exodus 1:9-21; how is God's providence seen here despite human wisdom to hinder God's plan? "Now there arose 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 and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them." Now let us see the carrying out of human wisdom. Paul tells us that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Corinthians 3:19). Let us see how God made the wisdom of the mighty men of Egypt foolishness: "Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens.... But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied." That plan did not help them. Now let us see what their next plan was: "And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, ... and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, ... if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live." Hard work had not stopped the providence of God. Now let us see how their next plan worked out: "The midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them." Did the midwives suffer by it? In verse 21 we read: "And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses." Midwives did not have any difficulty.

Wednesday: Moses Is Born – Read Exodus 2:1-10; what happened to the king who had given a decree to kill all newborn Hebrew boys, which would kill Moses before he was born, and to hinder the providence of God? It is as if the Lord said, Pharaoh, you want to kill every Hebrew child; but I will use you to prepare My instrument to deliver the children of Israel. Moses was born and hidden among the flags by the river when he was three months old, and Pharaoh's daughter came down to the water, and found him. She adopted Moses, and Pharaoh paid for his education. The king was the very man who was trying to hinder the purpose of God, yet he paid for the education of Moses. The wrath of the new Pharaoh who sought to thwart God's plan was overruled by God who makes the wrath of man to praise Him (Psalm 76:10)! Whatever men do to frustrate God's purpose only helps to accomplish it.

Thursday: A Change of Plans – Read Exodus 2:11-25; how did God overrule even the human wisdom of Moses when Moses took matters in his own hands? We are told: "Moses was too fast in slaying the Egyptian. He supposed that the people of Israel understood that God's special providence had raised him up to deliver them. But God did not design to deliver the children of Israel by warfare, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone. God overruled the act of Moses in slaying the Egyptian to bring about His purpose"; and when Moses fled to Median, he learned through the school of adversity, and through the "humble duties as a shepherd, God was preparing him to become a spiritual shepherd of His sheep, even of His people Israel" {SR 110.1}.