

LESSON 1

BONDAGE IN EGYPT

Scripture Text: Exodus 1:7-17, 22



In our studies in this quarterly and the next one, we will follow the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. These lessons take us back into Old Testament history. They follow the studies we made on the life of Joseph.

In speaking of the Old Testament, the Bible tells: **For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning . . .** (Romans 15:4). The experiences of Israel are more than examples; they are also types. God did things with the Israelites to provide a type or picture of what He would later do in the Gospel age. Then the type was a material happening. Now the antitype or fulfillment is a spiritual truth. It is something that takes place in our hearts. For example, the crossing of the Red Sea was a material happening that saved physical life. It was a type of the new birth through Christ that saves spiritual life. The crossing is the TYPE; the new birth is the ANTITYPE. The journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan is a type of our journey from sin to full salvation. Since these things **were written for**

our learning, it is our duty to learn them.

In this quarter we follow the Israelites in the first step of their journey: from Egypt to Mount Sinai.

MEMORY VERSE: *And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour.* – *Exodus 1:13*

Contrasting Conditions

Exodus 1:7-10. The selling of Joseph into Egypt had started a chain of events that brought his father and all his descendants to Egypt, where they settled in the land of Goshen. At first, Pharaoh and the Egyptians were friendly, and the conditions were favorable for the Israelites. But as the children of Israel grew in number, they **waxed exceeding mighty**. This presented a problem to Egypt. The Egyptians thought the children of Israel were becoming strong enough to join the enemies of Egypt and gain their freedom. They were held in Egypt for the service they could give. Why? Because these were different times. Joseph was dead. The former Pharaoh was dead. This Pharaoh **knew not Joseph** and his uprightness, his power with God, and his wisdom in handling national problems. **He said . . . Behold, the people . . . of Israel are more and mightier than we.** Hundreds of years had elapsed since the Israelites had moved to Egypt. The Pharaoh who was now in power saw in the Israelites a threat to Egypt's security only because of their large numbers.

The Bondage of Slavery

Exodus 1:11-14. To keep down the population numbers of the Israelites, Pharaoh ordered that they be made a nation of slaves and be put under the cruel authority of **taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens**. He **made their lives bitter with hard bondage**. The great part of their labor was the making of brick in the building of Pharaoh's treasure cities, **Pithom and Raamses**. **And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour**. But he failed in his purpose of reducing their numbers. **But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew**. Why? God was watching over them. He would fulfill His promise to Abraham made in Genesis 12:1-3.

Satanic Measures

Exodus 1:15-17. If hard labor would not stop the population growth, Pharaoh would try more severe measures. He ordered the midwives to kill at birth all sons born to the Israelites. They defied this command, saying that the Israelite women did not need their services. God blessed the midwives for opposing Pharaoh's word. Why? Because the **midwives feared God**.

God's plan of salvation is shown in type by the journey this far in three ways. 1. Israel's slavery in Egypt is a type of the bondage of sin. As the Israelites were held under the power of their taskmasters and not allowed to leave the country, so the sinner is bound to sin. Sin holds dominion over and afflicts the sinner. 2. Pharaoh's desire to destroy the physical life of Israel is a type of Satan's desire to destroy both the physical and spiritual life of all of God's people. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). 3. God's watch care over the Israelites in Egypt is a type of His love for us even while we are in sin (Romans 5:8). As He had chosen Israel to be His peculiar nation, so He chose us **before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love** (Ephesians 1:4).

Sin Is Cruel

Exodus 1:22. **Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river.** Israel was in a desperate condition. Failing in the previous order, Pharaoh changed his method to reach the same end. The Egyptians were to cast into the river every son born to the Israelites. He felt this plan could not fail. But he forgot to reckon with God. God knew how the order could be obeyed and brought to naught at the same time.

Sin is never without consequences. Why? When we forget God, He leaves us to our own devices, and we soon find ourselves in deep trouble. We may think we are getting by for a little while, but there is always a reckoning day with God. Sin never gets easier. It is a more cruel taskmaster than the slave drivers of Egypt. The longer we stay in sin, the more cruel it becomes. Are we building a strong fear of God and trust in Him by our communion with and obedience to Him?

JUST A THOUGHT

**You'll never move up if you are continually
running somebody down.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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