

Bondage in Egypt and the Need for Deliverance

— God Heard Their Groaning and Remembered His Covenant —

- A New King Turned a Place of Preservation into Bondage
- Israel's Affliction Revealed Their Helpless Need
- God Was Fully Aware of Their Suffering
- God Remembered His Covenant, and His Promise Still Stood

In the previous lesson, "*Joseph: God's Providence in Suffering*,"

- we saw how God preserved Jacob's family through Joseph.
- Men acted wickedly against Joseph, but their wrongdoing, could not defeat God's purpose to preserve life.

Today, God willing, we begin where that lesson left us:

- Joseph died, his generation passed away, and another king arose over Egypt.
- Egypt had once been the place, where Jacob and his family, found food during famine.

In the opening chapters of Exodus,

- That place of preservation, became a place of oppression.
- The family had grown into a numerous people,
- but they were under a ruler who feared them, burdened them, and made their lives bitter.

The central question in this lesson is Not yet,

- "Whom will God call, to deliver Israel?" — That belongs to the next lesson.

Our question today is more basic:

- What does Scripture show, when God's people are trapped beneath a power, they cannot overcome, their suffering continues, and no human answer appears?

[Exodus 1 and 2](#), answer with two truths, that must be held together:

- **1)** Israel was helpless to free itself, **2)** but Israel was Not unseen by God.
- God **Heard**, God **Remembered**, God **Looked**, and **God had Respect unto them**.

This morning, God willing, we will consider:

- How a new king, turned Israel's safety into bondage
- How Israel's sighing and crying, revealed its helpless need
- How God was fully aware, of every part of the affliction
- and How God's covenant promise, remained sure, across changing generations

A simple way to remember the lesson, is this:

- Egypt burdened them.
- Israel cried.
- God heard.
- And God's promise stood.

To understand why deliverance became necessary, we must first see, how quickly human conditions changed, after Joseph's generation passed.

I. A New King Turned a Place of Preservation into Bondage

The change began at Egypt's throne.

Joseph's former service, no longer protected his family, and Israel's growth, was treated as a threat.

A. A New King, Knew Not Joseph

Exodus closes the Joseph generation, and immediately shows the abundant growth of the children of Israel. Then a new king interprets their numbers, through fear instead of gratitude.

- Scripture says, **"And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and 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."**

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; **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." ([Exodus 1:6-10](#))

Explanation:

- The words, **"All that generation"** — shows that many years had passed. Those who personally knew Joseph and his service, were gone.
- **"Fruitful," "increased," "multiplied,"** and **"waxed exceeding mighty"** describe abundant growth in number.
- **"Knew not Joseph"** — shows that the new king, did not regard Joseph or allow Joseph's former service, to protect his family.
- The words, **"Let us deal wisely"** — what Pharaoh called wisdom, was a calculated plan, to control Israel through oppression.
- **"Lest they multiply"** — reveals the fear behind his plan; he saw Israel's continued growth, as a threat to Egypt.

Stephen later summarized this same transition,

and connected Israel's growth, with the promise God had sworn to Abraham.

- He said, **"But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph."** ([Acts 7:17-18](#))

Explanation:

- The statement, **"The time of the promise, drew nigh"** means — that the time for God's sworn purpose to move forward, was approaching.
- **"The people grew and multiplied"** — agrees with Exodus 1, and places Israel's increase, within the unfolding promise.
- **"Another king arose"**, but a change in rulers, could not change what God had sworn.

Human gratitude may disappear, when generations change.

- Egypt had benefited from Joseph, but a later ruler, treated Joseph's people as a danger.
- Israel's future, however, did not finally depend upon a king's memory.

Exodus and Stephen's inspired summary, show that Israel multiplied, as God's promise moved forward, even while a new king chose fear, and prepared deliberate oppression.

Fear in the ruler's heart, soon became burdens upon the people's backs.

B. Pharaoh Made Their Lives Bitter with Hard Bondage

Pharaoh did not merely speak suspiciously about Israel.

He organized a system of forced labor, placed taskmasters over the people, and made every part of their service harsh.

- The Bible says, “Therefore they did set over them **taskmasters**, to **afflict** them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved, because of the children of Israel.

And the Egyptians, made the children of Israel, to serve with **rigour**: And they **made their lives bitter** with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with **rigour**.” ([Exodus 1:11-14](#))

Explanation:

- The word, “**Taskmasters**” — were overseers, placed above Israel, to enforce Pharaoh's burdens.
- “**Afflict**” means — to oppress by causing suffering and hardship.
- “**Rigour**” means — harshness or severe treatment.
The word is repeated to emphasize the cruelty of the service.
- “**Made their lives bitter**” — shows that bondage affected daily life, not merely an occasional duty.
- The more Egypt afflicted Israel, the more Israel multiplied.
Pharaoh could increase their pain, but he could not cancel the growth, God had permitted.

When later generations confessed this history, they described Egypt's treatment, with the same strong words.

- “And the Egyptians, **evil entreated** us, and **afflicted** us, and laid upon us, **hard bondage**.” ([Deut.26:6](#))

Explanation:

- The words, “**Evil entreated**” means — the Egyptians treated Israel cruelly and wrongfully.
- “**Afflicted**” means — they caused Israel suffering and oppression.
- “**Hard bondage**” means — severe and compulsory service.

Israel could make bricks, work fields, and build cities, but Israel could not remove the taskmasters.

- Their labor, displayed physical ability;
- their bondage, displayed their inability to make themselves free.

Exodus describes taskmasters, rigour, bitter service, and hard bondage;

Deuteronomy later confirms, that Israel was cruelly treated and placed under hard bondage.

- Israel was numerous, but Israel was not free.

A new king turned a place of preservation, into a house of bondage.

- Israel suffered under real human wrongdoing,
- yet Pharaoh's oppression, still could not erase the growth, already taking place among God's people.

Now that we have seen what Egypt imposed, let's consider what bondage produced within Israel.

II. Israel's Affliction, Revealed Their Helpless Need

The death of a ruler, might have seemed like a possible turning point, but Scripture shows, that a new circumstance, did not automatically break Israel's yoke.

A. A Pharaoh Died, but the Bondage Remained

Exodus 2, records the passing of more time.
Moses had been born, had grown, and was living in Midian,
but this lesson does not yet develop his call.

Verse 23 returns our attention, to Israel's continuing bondage.

- Scripture says, "**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.**" ([Exodus 2:23](#))

Explanation:

- The words, "**In process of time**" — shows that the affliction continued, through a long period.
- The king died, but the bondage remained — Israel's problem was larger, than the life of one ruler.
- "**Sighed**" — describes the deep expression of distress, produced by the burden.
- The word, "**Cried**" — shows that their suffering, was expressed as an appeal for help.
- The phrase "**by reason of the bondage**" — is repeated.
Scripture identifies the direct cause, of both the sighing and the crying.

A change in one circumstance, does not always remove the deeper problem.

- Israel did not merely need a different day or a different work assignment.
- Israel needed deliverance from bondage itself.

"Deliverance" means — rescue or release from bondage, by one who has the power to set free.

A Pharaoh died, but Israel's chains, did not fall away.

- Time passed — the burden continued — and the people's distress deepened.

The sigh tells us, the pain was real.

The cry tells us, the people needed help, beyond their own strength.

B. Their Cry Rose from a Need, They Could Not Meet

Years later, Israel was instructed to confess,
that its cry was directed to the LORD God of the fathers, and that He heard.

- The Bible says, "**And when we cried unto the LORD God, of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:**" ([Deut.26:7](#))

The statement,

- "**We cried unto the LORD God, of our fathers**" — shows that Israel appealed to the God, who had dealt with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- "**The LORD heard our voice**" — prepares us for the fuller, fourfold description in [Exodus 2:24-25](#).
- The words, "**Affliction**," "**labour**," and "**oppression**" — gather the whole burden into clear words.
Scripture does not minimize their suffering.

David later described the same truth in personal words:
distress should move the sufferer, to call upon the LORD.

- He said, “In my **distress**, I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God:
He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears.” ([Psa.18:6](#))

Explanation:

- The word, “**Distress**” means — severe trouble or anguish.
- “**My cry came before him, even into his ears**” — shows that a cry of need, is not lost before God.

A small child, pinned beneath a weight, cannot free himself, merely by crying.

- The cry, is not deliverance —
- it reveals the need, and calls for one who is stronger.

So it was with Israel:

- Bondage continued, through time and across rulers;
- they could not deliver themselves;
- their cry rose to God, and their need for a deliverer, became unmistakable.

When the afflicted cannot see an answer, one question can trouble the heart: **Does God know?**
Exodus answers, with four deliberate statements.

III. God Was Fully Aware of Their Suffering

First, Scripture turns from Israel's groaning on earth, to God's hearing and regard.

A. God Heard, Remembered, Looked, and Had Respect

These two verses are the heart of the lesson.

No visible deliverance has yet occurred,
but the text, reveals what was true, before Israel could see the answer.

- The Bible says, “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 2:24-25](#))

Explanation:

- The name “**God**” — begins each statement:
God **heard**, God **remembered**, God **looked**, and God **had respect**.
- “**Groaning**” — is the burdened expression of people in pain.
Their words did not have to be polished, before God heard them.
- The word, “**Heard**” — shows that their cry was not lost, ignored, or hidden from God.
- “**Remembered his covenant**” — will be developed in the next key topic.
It connects the present affliction, to God's earlier word.
- “**Covenant**” means — a binding agreement or solemn promise established by God.
Here, it refers to the word, God had sworn concerning Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants.
- “**Looked upon**” and “**had respect unto them**” — show that God regarded the people and their condition. He was not a distant or uninformed observer.

Another Psalm uses the same language of looking, beholding, and hearing the groaning of prisoners.

- The Bible says, “For He hath **looked down**, from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven, did the LORD **behold** the earth; To hear **the groaning of the prisoner**; to loose those, that are appointed to death;” ([Psa.102:19-20](#))

Explanation:

- The words, “**Looked down**” and “**behold**” show that suffering on earth, is not hidden from the LORD.
- “**The groaning of the prisoner**” — closely reflects Israel's condition under bondage.
- The Psalm points toward release, but the manner of Israel's deliverance, is reserved for the coming lessons.

Egypt may have heard, only the sounds of slaves under labor — God heard the groaning of His people. What sounded like weakness to the oppressor, was fully heard by the LORD.

Before the people saw deliverance, Exodus and the Psalm **assure us**, that God had looked, heard, and regarded the groaning of those, under bondage.

The words “had respect unto them” are explained by God's own statement, in the next chapter.

B. God Knew Their Sorrows

At the beginning of the burning-bush account, the LORD describes His knowledge of Israel's condition, before He speaks about the servant, He will send.

- “And the LORD said, I have **surely seen** the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt, and have **heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters**; for I **know their sorrows**;” ([Exodus 3:7](#))

Explanation:

- The words, “**Surely seen**” means — the affliction was completely open before the LORD.
- “**Heard their cry**” — repeats the assurance of Exodus 2:24.
- “**By reason of their taskmasters**” — identifies the human cause of the suffering. God's knowledge did not excuse the oppressor.
- The statement, “**I know their sorrows**” — explains the personal regard of Exodus 2:25. God fully understood what His people were enduring.

David also joined God's mercy, with His personal knowledge of trouble.

- He said, “I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy: for Thou hast **considered my trouble**; Thou hast **known my soul in adversities**;” ([Psa.31:7](#))

Explanation:

- The words, “**Considered my trouble**” means — that God gave attention and regard, to the affliction.
- “**Known my soul in adversities**” — shows knowledge that is personal, not distant or careless.

Bondage could limit **where** Israel went, **what** Israel did, and **how** Israel lived.

- But, It **could Not** place Israel, outside the sight and knowledge of God.
- God did not merely know, that a broad problem existed — He knew the sorrows of His people personally.

The absence of an immediate visible answer, was not evidence of divine ignorance or indifference. God heard, looked, regarded, and knew.

God's knowledge is comforting, and Exodus gives a further ground of hope: God had already spoken.

IV. God Remembered His Covenant, and His Promise Still Stood

Long before Pharaoh placed burdens on Israel,

God had told Abraham, that affliction would come and that affliction, would not be the final chapter.

A. God Had Spoken, Before the Bondage Began

In Genesis 15, the LORD spoke to Abram about the future of his descendants.

The words include, both the coming affliction and the promise, that the people would afterward come out.

- “And he said unto Abram, **Know of a surety** that **thy seed** shall be a stranger in a land, that is not theirs, and **shall serve them**; and they **shall afflict them** four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and **afterward, shall they come out** with great substance.” ([Gen.15:13-14](#))

Explanation:

- The phrase, “**Know of a surety**” means — that Abram could be certain, of what God had spoken.
- “**Thy seed**” — refers to Abram's descendants.
- “**Shall serve them**” and “**shall afflict them**” — show that the bondage did not surprise God.
- “**Afterward shall they come out**” — shows that the affliction had a limit, within God's stated purpose. Bondage would not be the final word.
- This lesson does not yet develop how God judged Egypt or how Israel came out. Those events belong to the coming lessons.

The promise was still being trusted, at the close of Genesis.

Joseph did not explain the means of deliverance;

he spoke with certainty, that God would act according to His oath.

- “And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and **God will surely visit you**, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” ([Gen.50:24-25](#))

Explanation:

- “**God will surely visit you**” — means that God would act for His people, in fulfillment of His word; it does Not suggest, that He had been absent or unaware.
- Joseph named Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the same covenant line, named in Exodus 2:24.
- The command concerning his bones, showed that Joseph expected Israel's stay in Egypt, to end.

The New Testament explains, that Joseph's final command, was an act of faith.

- “**By faith** Joseph, when he died, made mention of **the departing of the children of Israel**; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” ([Heb.11:22](#))

Explanation:

- “**By faith**” — shows that Joseph's certainty, rested in God's word, Not in Egypt's circumstances.
- “**The departing of the children of Israel**” — points forward to deliverance, without developing the means, by which God would accomplish it.

Abraham heard the promise, before the bondage — Joseph trusted it, while his family still lived in Egypt.

- Israel later groaned, while no path out, was visible.
- At every point, God's word remained ahead, of changing circumstances.

God had spoken before the bondage, and Joseph died, believing that God would surely bring Israel out.

The promise did not depend, upon the people seeing the method beforehand.

If God had already spoken, could time, kings, or oppression, make His word fail?

B. God's Remembering, Is His Faithfulness to His Word

Psalm 105 gives an inspired summary of God's covenant faithfulness.

It uses the same names, found in Exodus 2:24, and explains that the covenant, is remembered for ever.

- **“He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same, unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel, for an everlasting covenant:”** ([Psa.105:8-10](#))

Explanation:

- The statement, **“Remembered His covenant for ever”** describes His continuing faithfulness, to His word.
- **“The word which He commanded”** & **“confirmed”** show His promise rested, in what He had spoken, and remained firm, through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, changing kings, and passing generations.

Joseph died — rulers changed — generations passed — but God’s word did not die.

God’s remembering, was covenant faithfulness.

- Israel’s hope rested, not in numbers, kings, or Egypt’s mercy,
- but in the God who had spoken,
- and in the promise Joseph trusted, to the end.

Let’s now gather the whole lesson, into a few,

V. Final Thoughts

The Biblical Record,

- Moved from preservation under Joseph, to oppression under a new king; Israel multiplied, yet remained in hard bondage.
- A Pharaoh died, but the bondage continued; the people sighed and cried, unable to deliver themselves.
- God heard, remembered, looked, had respect, and knew their sorrows; their helplessness, was Not hopelessness, because His covenant promise, still stood.

Lessons Learned:

- **Human rulers and earthly circumstances change,** but God’s word does not depend upon human memory. ([Acts 7:17-18](#); [Psa.105:8-10](#))
- **Biblical faith does not pretend affliction is small.** Scripture describes their service as bitter, hard, and oppressive. ([Ex.1:11-14](#); [Deut.26:6-7](#))
- **Being preserved during hardship, is not the same as being delivered from hardship.** Israel multiplied, yet remained in bondage. ([Ex.1:7,12-14](#))
- **Human helplessness, reveals the need for a deliverer.** Israel’s continuing bondage and cry, showed its need for help from the LORD. ([Ex.2:23-25](#); [Deut.26:7](#))
- **God heard the groaning and cry of His afflicted people.** Their cry was not hidden from Him. ([Ex.2:23-25](#); [Psa.18:6](#); [Psa.102:19-20](#))
- **A delayed visible answer, is Not proof that God is unaware.** He had surely seen, heard, and known. ([Ex.2:23-25](#); [Ex.3:7](#))
- **God's promises remain sure, across changing generations.** He remembers His covenant for ever. ([Psa.105:8-10](#))
- **Faith may trust God's promised outcome, before the method is visible;** Joseph spoke of Israel's departure, while still in Egypt. ([Gen.50:24-25](#); [Heb.11:22](#))

Questions for Reflection:

- When hardship continues, do I assume that God is unaware, merely because I cannot yet see, the answer?
- Am I honest about my weakness, or do I trust my own strength, as though I can remove every bondage, by myself?
- Do I remember God's word, when changing circumstances, seem to speak more loudly than His Word?
- Do I bring my cry to God, trusting that He sees, hears, and knows?

Remember the lesson:

- Egypt burdened them.
- Israel cried.
- God heard.
- and God's promise stood.

The bondage in Exodus was literal physical bondage under Egypt.

The New Testament, separately warns that sin also brings a bondage, from which the sinner cannot free himself. Jesus identifies both the bondage, and the One who can make men free.

- “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is **the servant of sin**. And the servant abideth Not in the house for ever: but **the Son** abideth ever. If **the Son** therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” ([Jn.8:34-36](#))

Explanation:

- The words, “**The servant of sin**” means — sin enslaves the sinner; the sinner cannot make himself free.
- “**The servant abideth not in the house for ever**” means — a servant has no permanent standing or authority, in the household.
- “**The Son**” is Jesus Christ, who abides and has authority, to make men free indeed.
- Israel needed deliverance beyond its own power; Sinners need the freedom, that only Christ provides.

The Lesson is yours!

It is the Lord, Who invites, and we await to assist.

Won't you come...

- Desiring to **Hear** the gospel ([Rom.10:17](#)),
- **Believing** in Christ ([Heb.11:6](#); [Jn.8:24](#)),
- **Repenting** of sins ([Lk. 13:3](#); [Acts 17:30](#)), along with **godly sorrow** ([2Cor.7:10](#))
- **Confessing** your belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ([Acts 8:37](#); [Rom.10:9-10](#)),
- and Be **Baptized** for the forgiveness of sins ([Acts 22:16](#); [Mk.16:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [1Pet.3:21](#); [Gal.3:26-29](#)).

...While we stand and while we sing.