

# His Hand Among the Nations

## Lesson 2 – Israel in Egypt and in the Wilderness (1899–1406 B.C.)

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This lesson covers pages 22-35 in the book. The lesson has references to specific pages.

### Worship

**Read responsively Psalm 68:4,6-10.**

**Leader:** Sing to God, sing praise to his name,

**Group:** extol him who rides on the clouds.

**L:** God sets the lonely in families,

**G:** he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

**L:** When you went out before your people, O God, when you marched through the wasteland,

**G:** the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain,

**L:** before God, the One of Sinai,

**G:** before God, the God of Israel.

**L:** You gave abundant showers, O God; you refreshed your weary inheritance.

**G:** Your people settled in it, and from your bounty, O God, you provided for the poor.

### Introduction

If we were to imagine the first gospel promise to be one post of a clothesline and the birth of Christ to be the second post, what would be hanging on the line in between? Everything that is recorded in the Old Testament. All of the Old Testament leads to or pertains to the Messiah. The Old Testament points forward to Christ's coming, reminds people of his coming, and shows the need for his coming. It also demonstrates God's power and his ability to control and manage history in order to fulfill all his promises. How important would the Israelites' story be if they had not been connected with the promised Savior?

## God Brings Israel to Egypt

Read Genesis 15:13,14 (p. 24).

1. About two centuries before Joseph and his family entered Egypt, God told Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign country for four hundred years. Liberal scholars often question God's or his prophets' ability to predict the future. This also leads them to question the authorship of much of the Bible. They contend that authorship must be ascribed to someone who lived after the events he describes. How would you defend your belief that God is able to foretell the future? See also Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:13. On your own, list three examples from the Bible that demonstrate God's ability to foretell the future. Share your list with a person next to you.

Read Genesis 50:20.

2. God's people were happy and settled in their new homeland Canaan. But the Lord's plan was to transplant them and settle them in Egypt for four hundred years. What benefits did the Israelites experience while living in Egypt?

What benefits did the Egyptians receive from them?

After noting the benefits for Israel and Egypt, what truth is reinforced for you that would comfort someone experiencing an unsettling situation?

3. God used Joseph to bring his people into Egypt. Recall the life of Joseph from his childhood until his death. List some of the times when God's hand was most active and most loving in Joseph's personal life.

## Israel Living in Egypt

Read Genesis 47:14,26 (pp. 25,26).

4. In theology we distinguish between matters that are prescriptive and those that are descriptive. God commands prescriptive matters. In other words, God expects us to follow those directives. Matters that are descriptive simply tell us about what people did in the Bible, and there is no command for us to do exactly the same. Joseph served Pharaoh by helping to centralize the government, giving him

unprecedented power over his subjects. By the end of the famine almost all of the Egyptians were penniless and slaves to Pharaoh. Should we consider this service of Joseph to his government prescriptive or descriptive?

Consider the examples below and decide whether each is prescriptive or descriptive and why. Can you give other examples?

- (a) Luke 21:2-4
- (b) Acts 1:26
- (c) Galatians 5:14
- (d) Matthew 28:19,20
- (e) Genesis 50:19-21
- (f) Matthew 19:21

**Read Psalm 73:1-19 (especially v. 17).**

5. The pharaohs considered themselves to be gods. From the day they were born, they were told that there was no one superior to them in heaven or on earth. Why is it a mistake for the rich, the healthy, or the powerful to consider their good fortune to be proof of God's approval?

How do we know that we have God's approval?

6. The Bible is completely silent about the 280 years between the death of Joseph (1806 B.C.) and the birth of Moses (1526 B.C.). According to secular historians, what was Egypt like during that time? (See also page 27.)

## **God Leads Israel Out of Egypt**

**Read Exodus 2:5,6,10 (p. 30).**

7. Moses was the leader that God raised up to take his people out of Egypt. Recall the life of Moses. List events in Moses' life where you see God's loving hand especially active.

8. God made the Israelites' lives in Egypt very difficult. Consider how hard they were forced to work and especially how they suffered the loss of their baby boys. How was this actually an attack on God's plan of salvation? Why would God allow this? How would you answer someone who says, "God's people deserve better!"?

**Read Ezekiel 9:9,10.**

9. Doubters and scoffers would say that God doesn't care what happens to us. God isn't even paying attention. Why can we be confident that God is indeed paying attention and that he cares very deeply regarding everything that happens to us? (See also Matthew 10:29-31 and Romans 8:28.)
10. When the Israelites were suffering their greatest oppression under Pharaoh, they must have been tempted to think that God had forgotten them and the promises that he had made. Refer to "God remembers" (p. 130) and "God acts when all seems hopeless" (p. 131) for a better perspective. How would you summarize in one statement the certainty you have in God's help?

**Read Deuteronomy 25:17-19 (p. 32).**

11. Give three reasons why Amalek's attack on Israel was so offensive to God.

## **For Reflection**

12. Trace the development of writing as it is described in chapters 1 and 2 of the book. How does this illustrate God's management of history and his determination to save precious souls?
13. How was God's hand among the nations and in the lives of his people most evident in this lesson?

## **During the Week**

Consider how little the world has changed spiritually in spite of thousands of years of other kinds of progress. Human beings' philosophies, achievements, and advances all come to nothing when viewed from the perspective of eternity. This week take

notice of things around you that are evidence of human beings' pride and claims to glory. But what does it all mean in the end? Remember that Jesus is truly the human race's only hope.

Read chapter 3 of *His Hand Among the Nations*.

