

Psalm 105 Continued

In the last lesson we were studying about Joseph being sold into Egypt by his brothers, winding up in jail, and becoming second to the Pharaoh as part of God's plan to get the family of Jacob into Egypt.

Psalm 105:20 "The king sent and loosed him; [even] the ruler of the people, and let him go free."

Released him from prison (Gen. 41:14). The object was that he might interpret the dreams of Pharaoh.

"The ruler of the people, and let him go free": Hebrew, "peoples," in the plural, referring either to the fact that there were "many" people in the land, or that Pharaoh ruled over tributary nations as well as over the Egyptians.

This is saying that Pharaoh himself, let Joseph out of jail.

Psalm 105:21 "He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:"

(Gen. 41:40). This implied that the administration of the affairs of the nation was virtually committed to him.

"And ruler of all his substance": Margin, as in Hebrew, "possession." Of all he had. He placed all at his disposal in the affairs of his kingdom.

When Joseph interpreted the dream of the Pharaoh with a plan to save their land, Pharaoh made Joseph second only to himself.

Psalm 105:22 "To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom."

Giving him absolute power. The power here referred to was that which was always claimed in despotic governments, and was, and is still, actually practiced in Oriental nations. Literally, "to bind his princes "by his soul;" that is, at his will; or, as he chose.

"And teach his senators wisdom": This is now a bad translation. The word "senator" in fact originally had reference to "age" (see Webster's Dictionary), but it is now commonly applied to a body of men entrusted with a share in the administration of government. Usually a higher body in a government, as the Senate of the United States. As these were usually "aged men," the word has acquired its present meaning, and is now ordinarily used without reference to age. But there was no such constituted body in the government of Egypt, for despotism does not admit of such an arrangement. The Hebrew word here means "aged men," and is employed with reference to those who were connected with the administration, or whom the monarch would consult, his counselors. The meaning of the phrase "to teach them wisdom" is, that he would instruct them "what to do;" literally, he would "make them wise," that is, in reference to the administration. He

had the right of commanding them, and directing them in the administration. At the same time, it is doubtless true that Joseph was endowed with practical wisdom in the affairs of government far beyond them. And that in instructing them what to do, he actually imparted "wisdom" to them.

Verses 23-25: God sovereignly used Egypt to judge Israel (compare Gen. 15:13).

Psalm 105:23 "Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham."

"The land of Ham": Another name for the area in Egypt where part of the descendants of Ham, the youngest son of Noah, settled (compare Gen. 9:24; Psalm 78:51).

As we studied in the lessons on Genesis, we know that some of Ham's descendants settled in the land of Egypt. Specifically, they dwelled in the land of Goshen.

Verses 24-45: As the believer commonly thrives best in his soul when under the cross; so the church also flourishes most in true holiness, and increases in number, while under persecution. Yet instruments shall be raised up for their deliverance, and plagues may be expected by persecutors. And see the special care God took of his people in the wilderness. All the benefits bestowed on Israel as a nation, were shadows of spiritual blessings with which we are blessed in Christ Jesus. Having redeemed us with his blood, restored our souls to holiness, and set us at liberty from Satan's bondage, he guides and guards us all the way. He satisfies our souls with the bread of heaven, and the water of life from the Rock of salvation, and will bring us safely to heaven. He redeems his servants from all iniquity, and purifies them unto himself, to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Psalm 105:24 "And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies."

God increased the people of Israel greatly in the land of Egypt; they went down few, and became a populous nation. Only sixty six persons, besides Jacob's sons' wives; and when they came out from thence were six hundred thousand footmen. Yea, they increased the more they were afflicted (Exodus 1:12). So the people of God in this world sometimes increase in number, and that even amidst the persecutions of their enemies. As the Christians did in the first times of the Gospel under the Roman emperors. And they increase in grace, in every grace, and oftentimes the more they are tried and exercised by afflictions.

"And made them stronger than their enemies": In their bodies, being healthier, strong, and robust; and which was seen, observed, and owned by their enemies (Exodus 1:9). So saints, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, are a match for their enemies; are stronger than they, and are even more than conquerors through Christ, that has loved them.

In just over 400 years, the small group of 70 and the family of Joseph grew into a nation somewhere between 2 and 3 million. All of a sudden, the Pharaoh in the land began to be worried, because there was so many of them. He was afraid they would rise up and fight against Egypt.

Psalm 105:25 "He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants."

God turned their heart. That is, He so ordered things that they became the enemies of his people, and made it necessary that they should be removed into another land. It is not said that God did this by his direct "power;" or that he "compelled" them to hate his people. Or that he in any way interfered with their "will;" or that he regarded this "as a good" in itself. Or that he "approved" of it: but this is said in accordance with the usual representations in the Bible, where God is spoken of as having all things under his control. And where it is constantly affirmed that nothing takes place without his own proper agency and government in the matter. Nothing, not even the human will, free as it is, is independent of God. And not even the worst passions of men are "outside of his plan," or independent in such a sense that he does not afford the opportunity for their development and display (compare the notes at Isa. 6:10; 10:5-7; 10:15).

"To deal subtly with his servants" In a fraudulent, or deceitful manner (see Exodus 1:10).

This is speaking of the time that Jacob's family were under bondage to these Egyptians.

Verses 26-36: God' deliverance of Israel from Egypt through the leadership of Moses and Aaron is rehearsed with a special emphasis on the 10 plagues, ending with the Passover (compare Exodus chapters 5-12).

Psalm 105:26 "He sent Moses his servant; [and] Aaron whom he had chosen."

Into Egypt, to deliver his people Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians. In which, as in other things, he approved himself to be a faithful servant to the Lord. Of this mission of his (see Exodus 3:10). In this he was a type of Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant, and really was one. God's righteous servant as Mediator, though his Son as a divine Person; sent by him to redeem his people out of worse than Egyptian bondage. From sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation.

"And Aaron whom he had chosen": To go along with Moses, to be a mouth for him, and a prophet to him (Exodus 4:16). Who also was a type of Christ, being a priest and good spokesman, chosen and called of God, a holy and an anointed one. The Targum is, "in whom he was well pleased."

When Moses was 80 years old, God called him to go to Egypt and obtain the release of the Hebrews. Moses' brother, Aaron, was given to Moses as a helper.

Psalm 105:27 "They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham."

Literally, "They placed among them the words of his signs." So the margin. The reference is to the miracles performed in Egypt in bringing calamities upon the Egyptians to induce them to permit the children of Israel to go out from their bondage. They were the agents in setting these wonders before the Egyptians. The term words is employed here, "the words of his signs", to keep up the idea that it was by the command of God that this was done, or by his word. It was by no power of their own, but only by the authority of God.

"And wonders in the land of Ham. Miracles. Things suited to produce astonishment (see Psalm 105:5).

Moses was endowed with power from God to do mighty wonders before the Pharaoh to get him to let the people go. One of these wonders was turning the Nile River (which the Egyptians worshipped), into blood. I believe the statement about Ham here is speaking of the plagues coming on Egypt, but not on Goshen where Jacob's family dwelled. Here is a list of some of the plagues that God sent upon Pharaoh and Egypt to get him to let the people of God go. Most of these plagues attacked one of the things worshipped by the Egyptians. Not only were these plagues to get the release of the people, but they were to discredit the gods of Egypt.

Psalm 105:28 "He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word."

Exodus (10:21-23).

"And they rebelled not against his word": More literally, "his words." The reference is to Moses and Aaron; and the idea, as expressed here, is that they were obedient to the command of God. That they went and did what he ordered them; that, although he required them to go before a mighty and proud monarch, to denounce against him the vengeance of heaven, and to be the instruments of bringing upon the land unspeakably severe judgments. Yet they did not shrink from what God commanded them to do. They were true to his appointment, and showed themselves to be faithful messengers of God. Others, however, suppose that this refers to the Egyptians, and that it is to be taken as a question: "And did they not rebel against his word?" The language might bear this, and the translators of the Septuagint seem to have so understood it, for they render it, "And they rebelled against his words." But the most natural construction is that in our common version, and the design is evidently to commend the boldness and the fidelity of Moses and Aaron.

"Darkness": The ninth plague (compare Exodus 10:21-29).

Psalm 105:29 "He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish."

With which Egypt abounded; their streams, rivers, ponds, and pools, so that they had no water to drink. A just judgment upon them for shedding the innocent blood of infants, by drowning them in their rivers. This was the first of the ten plagues (Exodus 7:19). With this compare the second and third vials poured out on spiritual Egypt, whereby blood will be given to antichrist, and to the antichristian states, for they are worthy, having shed so much of the blood of the saints (Rev. 16:3).

“Waters into blood”: The first plague (compare Exodus 7:14-25).

"And slew their fish": Which showed that the miracle was real, that the waters were really turned into blood, since the fish could not live in them, as they might if it had been only in appearance. The rivers of Egypt abounded with fish, this was a principal part of their food, and therefore must greatly distress them (see Num. 11:5).

Psalm 105:30 "Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings."

The land of Egypt, the moist, marshy, and watery places of it. The banks of the river Nile, out of the slime and mud of which these sprung. Or, as Kimchi observes, wherever there were waters in the land there were frogs. For these came out of the streams, rivers, and ponds; this is the second plague (Exodus 8:3).

"In the chambers of their kings": That is, they came into the chambers of their kings. Not that they were produced there; they entered not only into the kneading troughs, and ovens, and bedchambers of the common people, but into the chambers of the king, and his sons, and his nobles, and princes of the land. Who may be called in the plural number kings (see Isa. 10:8). With these compare the three unclean spirits, like frogs, under the pouring out of the sixth vial, that will go forth to the kings of the earth, and gather them to the battle of the Lord God Almighty. By whom are meant the emissaries of Rome, priests and Jesuits. So called for their impurity and impudence, for their noise and loquaciousness, and for the ways and means they use to get into the cabinet councils of princes. And prevail upon them to do things which will issue in their ruin (see Rev. 16:13).

“Frogs”: The second plague (compare Exodus 8:1-15).

Psalm 105:31 "He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, [and] lice in all their coasts."

“Divers sorts of flies ... lice”: The fourth and third plagues respectively (compare Exodus 8:16-32). The fifth plague of pestilence (Exodus 9:1-7), and the sixth plague of boils (Exodus 9:8-12), are not mentioned.

Verses 32-33: “Hail ... flaming fire:” The seventh plague (compare Exodus 9:13-35).

Psalm 105:32 "He gave them hail for rain, [and] flaming fire in their land."

Egypt, at least part of it, was not used to rain, but was watered by the overflowing of the Nile. But now it had hail for rain, and a grievous hail storm it was, such as was never seen in the land of Egypt before. Hail being rare, if ever there, and so frost and snow; this was the seventh plague (Exodus 9:18). Compare with this the terrible storm of hail which will fall on men at the pouring out of the seventh vial on spiritual Egypt (Rev. 16:21).

"And flaming fire in their land": For a storm of thunder and lightning went along with the hail; fire was mingled with it, and ran upon the ground (Exodus 9:23).

Psalm 105:33 "He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts."

So that they died; for in (Psalm 78:47), it is said, he "killed" them. And it is not only used in common speech with us, but with classical writers to speak of killing inanimate things, as trees, herbs, etc. That is, the hail smote them, or God by the hail. These are particularly mentioned because most useful, producing grapes and figs.

"And brake the trees of their coasts": All the trees within the borders of their land (Exodus 9:25).

Verse 34-35: "Locusts": The eighth plague (compare 10:1-20).

Psalm 105:34 "He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number,"

A great army of them, and covered the land, that it was even darkened by them. And were such as had never been seen before, or ever were since. This is the eighth plague (Exodus 10:12), with these compare the locusts in (Rev. 9:3).

"And caterpillars, and that without number": Of these no mention is made in Exodus. They seem to be one of the kinds of locusts, or a different word is here used for the same, and so Kimchi interprets it. Some render it the white locust; it has its name from licking up the herbs and grass of the field; as the other name for the locust seems to be taken from its great abundance and increase.

Psalm 105:35 "And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground."

As these creatures usually do, unless restrained (Exodus 10:5).

"And devoured the fruit of their ground": Which the hail left (Exodus 10:15).

These are not exact replicas of 9 of the 10 plagues that came, but they are the same plagues. Notice, all of the things in this that are in control of God. This is just another time when we see that everything in this earth is under direct command of God. The last plague in the next verse was of course, the worst. The Egyptians had killed the first born of the Hebrews, now God will kill their firstborn.

Psalm 105:36 "He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength."

“Smote ... the firstborn”: The tenth and final plague, which was death to the firstborn of man and beast (compare Exodus 11:1 – 12:51).

No home in Egypt, except the Hebrew families who had the blood of the lamb over the door, were spared. Pharaoh's own son died. This was the plague that set them free. Pharaoh told them to go.

Verses 37-41: The psalmist summarizes Israel’s Exodus from Egypt. God provided for their financial and physical needs (compare Exodus 11:2-3; 12:35 and Exodus 15:26); protection by day and night (compare Exodus 14:19-20); food needs (Exodus 16:1-36); and water needs (compare Exodus 17:6; Num. 20:1-11).

Psalm 105:37 "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and [there was] not one feeble [person] among their tribes."

Which they had begged of the Egyptians. In (Exodus 12:35), it is said, in our translation, that they had "borrowed" this gold and silver, together with raiment, of the Egyptians. This is a bad translation, as our word "borrow" means to ask anything of another for the purpose of using it for a time, with an implied understanding that it shall be returned. If an article to be used, or that as much money shall be repaid. If it is money that is borrowed, and according to this there would have been dishonesty and fraud on the part of the Israelites in "borrowing" these things of the Egyptians, when not intending (as they evidently did not), to return them. The Hebrew word, however, in Exodus 12:35 (*שאל* *shâ'al*), means merely to ask, "to demand, to require, to request, to petition, or to beg." The idea of an obligation to "return" the things, as in our word "borrow," is not attached to the Hebrew word.

"And there was not one feeble person among their tribes": Literally, not one who was lame. Or, who halted, or staggered. This, of course, is not necessarily to be understood literally. It is a general description of the capability of the people for traveling, or for war.

They spoiled the Egyptians and took silver and gold into the wilderness with them. The joy of being released from the hard bondage was enough to renew their strength, but I believe this goes even further than that. God restored them so there was no feeble.

Psalm 105:38 "Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them."

They had suffered so many plagues; the land was so utterly desolate, and there was so much sorrow in their dwellings. From the calamities which had come upon them for refusing to let the Israelites go. That at last they were glad to have them depart. And they were willing to aid them that they might get rid of them. This will, in part, account for the fact that they were willing to give them what they asked, even silver and gold, if they might thus facilitate their departure.

"For the fear of them fell upon them": The fear of them, as being under the protection of God. And the fear of the judgments, which must follow if they continued to oppress them.

This is truly an understatement. The Egyptians had become terribly afraid of the God of these Israelites. This fear of Israel's God spread to countries nearby as well.

Psalm 105:39 "He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night."

(See the notes at Psalm 78:14).

In (Num. 10:34); it is said that "the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day," and from this seems to have been derived the idea of its "covering" them, as if it were a protection from the heat in the desert.

"And fire, to give light in the night": This respects the pillar of fire which gave them light by night. An emblem of Christ, who is the light of his people, when it is a night season with them, as it sometimes is. A night of affliction and distress, of darkness and desertion, of temptation, of carnal security and sleepiness. When Christ arises as a light in darkness, and enlightens by his presence, by his Spirit, and by his word. As well as is as fire to warm, refresh, quicken, and comfort them when chill and cold, in such seasons.

This cloud and fire was the presence of God in their midst that led them across the wilderness. When the cloud by day and the fire by night stopped, they stopped and rested until the fire or cloud moved again.

Psalm 105:40 "The people] asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven."

(See the notes at Psalm 78:26-29).

"And satisfied them with the bread of heaven": Manna, sent down, as it were, from heaven. In (Psalm 78:25), it is called "angels' food" (see the notes there).

The Bread from heaven that fed them was the Manna that God miraculously fed them each day. They tired of the Manna and insisted on meat, and God rained quail on them knee deep. This group murmured against God, and God killed a large number of them on the way to the Promised Land.

Psalm 105:41 "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places [like] a river."

That is, God opened the rock, who before is said to spread the cloud, and bring the quails, for it was a miraculous affair. Or Moses, by divine orders, which was done by smiting it, when waters flowed out in great abundance, sufficient to give drink to men and beasts, and which continued (Exodus 17:6). This was typical of Christ the Rock (1 Cor. 10:4). And of the opening of his side, from whence flowed blood and water (John 19:34). And of his being smitten with the rod of justice, and by the law of Moses, from whom flow abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, freely to all his people (see notes on Psalm 78:15 and 78:16).

"They ran in the dry places like a river": And did not sink and soak into them, but continued their flow, and followed the Israelites, wherever they went (see 1 Cor. 10:4).

This is speaking of them running out of water. Moses prayed and God told Moses to strike the Rock. He did and water gushed forth from the Rock. This Rock of course is Jesus Christ. He is the fountain that never runs dry.

Verses 42-45: The psalmist concludes with a summary that alludes to Joshua's leading the nation back into the Land, first promised to Abraham (Joshua chapters 1-12), and then distributed to the 12 tribes of Israel (Joshua chapters 13-24). What God promised (compare 105:7-12), He delivered.

Psalm 105:42 "For he remembered his holy promise, [and] Abraham his servant."

(1) God's faithfulness to His covenant, "His holy promise" of Canaan, is the fountain whence flowed so many acts of marvelous kindness to His people (compare Psalm 105:8, 11; Exodus 2:24 is the fundamental passage), Hengstenberg. (2) That they might be obedient. The observance of God's commands by Abraham was the object of the covenant with him (Gen. 18:19), as it was also the object of the covenant with Israel, that they might observe God's statutes. "Remembered ... and Abraham, or, "remembered His holy word (that is, covenant confirmed), with Abraham." which "was" with:

"And Abraham his servant;" That is, which holy word or promise was with Abraham, was spoken to him; and was with him, that he would give him and his seed the land of Canaan. And that though they should be afflicted long in Egypt, yet should come out from there with great substance (Gen. 15:13). This he remembered, as he never forgets any promise of his, nor ever suffers his faithfulness to fail, nor his covenant to be broken.

"He remembered" (as promised in verse 8).

At times these people greatly troubled the Lord, but He did not forget His promise to Abraham. He brought them to the Land He had promised Abraham. There was very little opposition to the Israelites taking their Promised Land. God fought their battles for them.

Psalm 105:43 "And he brought forth his people with joy, [and] his chosen with gladness:"

With joy at their deliverance from bondage, and for his merciful interposition.

"And his chosen with gladness": Margin, as in Hebrew, "singing" (see Exodus chapter 15).

Such joy to receive the land of milk and honey that had been promised to Abraham! These were God's chosen people that were to live above the world and live in a pleasing manner to God.

Psalm 105:44 "And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labor of the people;"

The countries of the seven nations that dwelt in Canaan. The Lord did it, who had a right to do it, being the possessor of heaven and earth. And who was provoked unto it by the sins of these Heathens, as well as promised it to his people the Israelites.

"And they inherited the labor of the people": Dwelled in the houses they had built, which they found full of all good things. Enjoyed the vineyards and olive trees they had planted, and possessed the wells which they had dug (Deut. 6:10). In like manner, the heavenly Canaan is enjoyed by the saints without any labor of theirs. This inheritance is not of the law, nor of the works of it, it is the gift of God (Rom. 4:14).

This seems as if God was unfair to the heathen, but that is not so. He gave them ample time to repent of their ways, and when they did not, God took the land for His chosen.

Psalm 105:45 "That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD."

“Keep ... observe”: This theme of obedience begins (1:6-9), and ends (24:14-16, 18, 21, 24), the book of Joshua.

The psalmist drives home his point. After calling God’s people to thank and praise Him, he gives ample reason for obeying: That they might observe his statutes and keep his laws”.

They were chosen of all people to keep the law that God had given them in the wilderness. The Levitical law was to be kept forever.

Psalm 105 Continued Questions

1. Who let Joseph out of jail?
2. What position did the Pharaoh give Joseph?
3. What two names was Joseph's father called in verse 23?
4. Where did they dwell?
5. What caused Pharaoh to be worried about the Hebrews?
6. Verse 25 is speaking of what?
7. Who did God call, when he was 80 years old, to go and get freedom for the Israelites?
8. Who did God send to help him?

9. What unusual powers had God given Moses?
10. Did all of the plagues affect everyone in Egypt?
11. Who were the plagues sent by God directed against?
12. Name some of the plagues that God sent?
13. How many plagues did God send?
14. Why did God kill the firstborn of Egypt?
15. What method did God have of telling who were the Hebrews?
16. Which plague set them free?
17. Where did the Hebrews get the silver and gold they took in the wilderness?
18. What did God do specifically for the feeble?
19. Why was Egypt glad when they departed?
20. What 2 things showed the presence of God with them on their journey?
21. What was their main food on their journey?
22. When they asked for quail, what did God do?
23. Who is the Rock?
24. What promise did God remember that caused Him to bring them to their land of promise?
25. Who owned the land that God gave Israel?
26. What were they chosen to do?