



# The Story of Salvation

## Chapter 7 - Israel In Egypt



### Genesis 49 - Exodus 12

#### Opening Prayer:

O LORD, as Thou sent Moses to lead Your people Israel unto the Promised land, even so Thou hast sent forth pastors and teachers to proclaim Thy holy Word and to be our spiritual leaders on our journey to our heavenly home. Strengthen them, we pray Thee, with Thy grace and grant them wisdom and power to speak convincingly. Crown their service with Thy blessings that they may faithfully proclaim Thy Word and perform the mighty works which are pleasing to Thee. **Amen.**

Kramer, Wm. A. (1949). *Devotions for Lutheran Schools* (p.34). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

#### SEPARATED FROM THE EGYPTIANS

In Goshen the Israelites lived by themselves. The Egyptians who lived there were moved to other parts of the country by the command of Pharaoh, as he promised the land to Joseph (Genesis 47:1-6). Additionally, there were four barriers or fences keeping the two peoples apart:

1. The Israelites spoke the Hebrew language, which was a foreign language to the Egyptians.
2. Jacob and his people were shepherds, and the Egyptians looked upon shepherds as unclean and kept away from them (see Genesis 46:34).
3. The Israelites worshipped the one true God, Yahweh. The Egyptians worshipped idols. The different religions also kept them apart, especially as the Hebrews did not associate with heathens, and the religious practices of the Hebrews were abhorrent to Egyptians (see Exodus 8:22).
4. Finally the location of Goshen in the northeastern part of Egypt tended to make the Israelites keep to themselves.

By these means God protected His people from being drawn into the Egyptian heathendom<sup>1</sup>.

#### SHILOH, THE PEACE BRINGER

Before his death Jacob gathered his sons around his bed for a word of farewell. He prophesied that Judah would be the royal tribe and that Christ would be born of Judah. Reuben was the firstborn and as such would ordinarily have succeeded to his father's rank and position as head of the family or tribe and have received the promise of the Messiah's descent from his "house and lineage." However, he forfeited the rights and privileges of the firstborn when he defiled his father's bed (see Genesis 49:3-5, 1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Neither Simeon nor Levi, Jacob's second and third sons, respectively, could step into Reuben's place for they, too, had been disentitled (see Genesis 49:6-7). There were also many blemishes and sins attached to Judah, but he redeemed himself by becoming surety for Benjamin. So, it is Judah who receives the inheritance, as Jacob gave him the blessing:

*The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until the coming of Shiloh,  
the one whom all nations will honor. (Genesis 49:10)*

So it is that Judah became the leader of Israel. It would be the tribe of Judah that formed the vanguard<sup>2</sup> during the wilderness journey; David and Solomon were Judah's descendants and were the greatest kings over all Israel and over other nations when David conquered them. Judah's leadership ("scepter") was to extend to the days of the Messiah. *Shiloh means "the one who is peace and brings peace." Isaiah calls the Messiah the "Prince of Peace". It is one of the names of Christ.*

<sup>1</sup> heathen = a person who is neither a Jew (in the Old Testament) nor a Christian (since Christ); a pagan.  
heathendom = a people/tribe/nation that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> vanguard = "a group of people leading the way"

### JACOB AND JOSEPH'S LAST WILL

When Jacob had finished blessing his sons he commanded them, "I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah." When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people. So, when Jacob died his body was brought to Canaan for burial, for he wanted to rest in the land God had promised His people.

Joseph lived to be 110 years old. He lived to see Ephraim's and Manassah's grandchildren. Near the end of his life Joseph told his family, "God will bring you out of this land to the land that He promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. You shall carry my bones from here." So Joseph died, they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt to be kept until Israel returned to Canaan. Then his body should be taken along and buried in the homeland of his people. In this way Joseph's body reminded the people from generation to generation that their home was Canaan, not Egypt.

### ISRAEL SETTLES DOWN

After Joseph, his brothers, and everyone in their generation died, the children of Israel grew rapidly in numbers. As generation followed generation, more and more the Israelites considered Goshen as their home and Egypt as their country. Not only father, but grandfather and even great-grandfather were born there. Many of the people became farmers and workers in handicrafts of Egypt. They were comfortable and satisfied. They did not look for or desire another home. The idea that they should move to Canaan was losing its appeal.

### GOD USES OPPRESSIONS AND SUFFERINGS TO MAKE ISRAEL WILLING TO LEAVE EGYPT

Eventually a new king ruled over Egypt who did not know anything about Joseph or remember anything he had done to save Egypt. This king said to his people, "Think about this. The people of Israel are stronger and more numerous than we are. We must not let them get too strong before they grow to be so many that they will outnumber us, start a war against us, and take our land."

So the Egyptians placed taskmasters over them to afflict them with burdensome work. They had to build the supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. They made them work extremely hard, turning them into slaves whose lives became bitter because of the hard work they had to do with mortar, brick, and working in the fields. Pharaoh thought this would make them weak, but God kept them strong.

The more the Egyptians oppressed God's people, the more numerous they became. So the king of Egypt tried to have the Hebrew midwives kill all the sons at birth, but the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them. "They give birth before we arrive," they said. Then the king said that all the boy babies of the Children of Israel should be thrown into the river and be drowned.

Finally, by all these cruelties it became so unbearable for the Israelites that anything looked better than their life in Egypt, and they began to call upon the Lord for salvation and to be led out of Egypt.

### GOD PREPARES THE LEADER

Before God could lead His people out of Egypt, a leader had to be prepared. Again God proved that He works in mysterious ways. Pharaoh had commanded that all baby boys among the Israelites should be drowned in the Nile. A boy was born to a family of the tribe of Levi and his parents hid him for three months. Not being able to hide him any longer, the mother, Jochebed, made a watertight basket and put the boy in it and placed it among the reeds in the river. The king's daughter came to the river to bathe, saw the chest and had it brought to shore. She had pity on the crying child and took it as her own. The sister of the boy, who had been watching from a distance, came and asked if she should find a nurse for the child. The princess said yes, and the sister brought the baby's mother.

The mother kept the child until he was ready to go to school. She poured into the boy's soul her own love for Yahweh and filled his mind with the stories about his forefathers and God's promises to them. When the time came, she brought him to the princess, who called him Moses. Having the rank of a prince, Moses received the best education Egypt could give. He also had practical training in the affairs of the government. At forty he was a well-educated, capable man. And it was Pharaoh's daughter that God used to educate the man who should lead Israel out of the slavery of Pharaoh's Egypt.

When Moses was forty years of age God placed him in another school. In his zeal to help his people, Moses killed an Egyptian overseer who had beaten an Israelite. Moses had to flee to the Arabian desert, where he came to a priest of a desert tribe, whose daughter he married. He stayed with his father-in-law for forty years herding sheep. In this school Moses learned to trust God, to pray, and to be patient. And he learned to humble himself. He also became familiar with the country where he would later lead his people for another forty years. At the end of this forty years Moses, the leader, was ready. He was now eighty years old.

### MOSES IS CALLED

God's call to Moses came in a peculiar way. One day as Moses was herding the sheep near Mount Sinai, he saw a bush on fire. It burned and burned but was not destroyed. As he walked toward the bush, a voice spoke to him out of the fire. The voice said, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Moses took off his sandals, hid his face, and stood waiting. Again the voice spoke, saying, "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I have certainly seen the misery of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry for help because of their slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. So I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Come now, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:7-10).

But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" So God said, "I will certainly be with you. This will be the sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what should I say to them?" So God replied to Moses, "I am who I am (Hebrew: יהוה "Yahweh")." He also said, "You will say this to the Israelites: 'Yahweh has sent me to you.'" Yahweh is the ever-living, unchangeable, and faithful God who keeps His promises. This name would assure Israel that God's purpose was to keep His promise to the fathers and bring the people back to the promised land. For the people knew the stories of their ancestors, how Yahweh was the name of the covenant God. It was the name of God as the Savior of His people.

However, Moses did not have confidence in himself, and he made excuses for himself. Moses said to Yahweh, "Please, Yahweh, I am not an eloquent speaker. I stutter. I beg You, send someone else." Moses also said, "Who am I that I should go and speak to Pharaoh? He will say, 'Who is this Yahweh, who tells me what to do?' And he will not let the people go." But God gave Moses the words to say, the power to perform miracles, and the promise to send his brother Aaron to go with him and to be his spokesman. The experience made a powerful impression on Moses. The God of Israel was holy and faithful, and Moses was in the service of Israel's holy and faithful God, powerful to do what He promises. The experience shaped the future life and work of Moses.

On the way to Egypt Moses met with Aaron. First they went to Goshen and told the Israelites what Yahweh had said. The people rejoiced and worshipped God. Then they went to Pharaoh, but he refused to let the Israelites go. By God's command Moses brought plague upon plague over the country of Egypt to punish and chastise Pharaoh. But still Pharaoh refused.

## ISRAEL LEAVES EGYPT

Finally God told Moses that He would send one more punishment and then the king would let the people go. But first Israel should celebrate a special feast. In every Israelite household they should slay a year-old lamb, without blemish, and put the blood on the doorposts and lintel. They should roast the meat and eat it with bitter herbs. They should be dressed for the journey with staff in hand, ready to leave. At midnight the Angel of the LORD passed through Egypt and brought death to the firstborn son in every family. But, He passed over the homes where He saw the blood on the doorposts. Grief-stricken at the death of their children, Pharaoh and his people became overwrought, and messages were sent to Moses that the Israelites should leave at once. Before morning they were on the way. And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph.

*The feast the Israelites celebrated on this night became a permanent festival among the Israelites and was called the Passover. The lamb was a symbol of Christ and pointed forward to Him as the Agnus Dei ("the Lamb of God" - see John 1:29). As the blood of the lamb protected Israel against the angel of death, so the blood of Christ saves us from eternal death. When Christ came, He instituted the Lord's Supper while observing the Passover meal with His disciples.*

## CATECHETICAL CONNECTION:

**As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household**

### ***THE LORD'S PRAYER - THE INTRODUCTION***

***Our Father who art in heaven.***

*What does this mean?* With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

Luther. (2017). [Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation](#) (p.p. 19-20). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, You have set Your people aside for Your service. Help us that we do not think and live as those who care nothing for You and Your salvation. Grant us faith to watch and pray for Your salvation, and fill us with a fervent desire to do Your bidding at all times, and deliver us from all sin and evil, even as you have taught us to pray, **Our Father, who art in heaven...**

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## Reading for the Next Bible Class 23 June 2021:

- ➔ Exodus 13-34
- ➔ 4<sup>th</sup> Petition of the Lord's Prayer

# “Preserve Your Word, O Savior”

LSB 658 (TLH 264)



1 Pre - serve Your Word, O Sav - ior, To us this lat - ter day,  
2 Pre - serve, O Lord, Your hon - or, The bold blas - phem - er smite;  
3 Pre - serve, O Lord, Your Zi - on, Bought dear - ly with Your blood;  
4 Pre - serve Your Word and preach - ing, The truth that makes us whole,  
5 Pre - serve in wave and tem - pest Your storm - tossed lit - tle flock;



And let Your king - dom flour - ish; En - large Your Church, we pray.  
Con - vince, con - vert, en - light - en The souls in er - ror's night.  
Pro - tect what You have cho - sen A - gainst the hell - ish flood.  
The mir - ror of Your glo - ry, The pow'r that saves the soul.  
As - sailed by wind and weath - er, May it en - dure each shock.



O keep our faith from fail - ing; Keep hope's bright star a - glow.  
Re - veal Your will, dear Sav - ior, To all who dwell be - low,  
Be al - ways our de - fend - er When dan - gers gath - er round;  
Oh, may this liv - ing wa - ter, This dew of heav'n - ly grace,  
Stand at the helm, our pi - lot, And set the course a - right;



Let noth - ing from truth turn us While liv - ing here be - low.  
Great light of all the liv - ing, That all Your name may know.  
When all the earth is crum - bling, Safe may Your Church be found.  
Sus - tain us while here liv - ing Un - til we see Your face.  
Then we will reach the har - bor In Your e - ter - nal light.

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