

January 6, 2018

Reflections

REFLECTIONS

*But the sons of Israel
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with them.*

Exodus 1:7 (NASB)

The Fruit of “Forgetfulness”

For all intent and purposes, it appeared the people of Israel had been forgotten by God, languishing in slavery, suffering cruel affliction at the hand of a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. But God was hard at work among His people, causing His covenant promises to bear fruit even while the people were feeling forgotten. We can see that in the first chapter of Exodus, where we discover how God's "forgetfulness" was actually "fruitfulness."

The fruitfulness we see in this chapter is not figurative, but literal. Verse 7 reads, "But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them." In verse 12 we read, "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel." And finally, in the twentieth verse we read, "...the people multiplied, and became mighty."

Even amid adversity God was hard at work on behalf of His people, keeping His covenant promise with Abraham. What had started out as a small group of seventy or so Israelites who had come to Egypt to weather the famine became thousands upon thousands—so many that the Pharaoh became alarmed. That is why he ordered the killing of every Israelite male baby by the midwives. We are told, however, that the midwives feared God and so disobeyed the order. When confronted by Pharaoh, the midwives claimed that the Israelite women were so strong they delivered before the midwives arrived. The midwives may have been telling the truth, or they may have massaged the truth a bit (okay, they flat-out lied). But they did so in deference to life. Further, it is important to remember that this chapter isn't about the midwives' morality; it is about God's mercy.

God's mercy was at work among the people of God in Egypt, securing their future by sparing them from death at the hand of Pharaoh and causing them to multiply and become a great nation. As we come to the table, as we prepare our hearts and minds to receive the gift of Jesus' sacrifice, Exodus 1 reminds us that when God was at work for the future of Moses' people, He was at work for our future. That work culminated in the birth, life, and death of His Son, through whom we have been adopted into the family of God.

We are the "fruit" of Israel's increase, grafted into the nation as one unnaturally born (broken branches of a "wild" olive tree grafted into a "cultivated" olive tree; see Romans 11:24).

That is why we can be here at all; because long ago, God did not forget His covenant. It was in full effect, as the promised fruitfulness of the children of Abraham continued even amid adversity. That fruitfulness continues for us as well, even amid adversity. No matter what we are facing right now, we face it as children of God as we remember Jesus' sacrifice, which makes our presence here today possible. Even if it feels this morning that God has in some way forgotten you, the table assures us that God's "forgetfulness" is fruitfulness, and that He is at work on our behalf, amid our adversity, to secure our future. Amen.

*Pray for our church plant
in Clifton Park, NY.*

Pray With Us

Elaine Michaels: Their daughter Faith's husband has earned his master's degree. He has job offers in Canada, Mexico and Arizona with three weeks to decide where he will go. Pray for God's guidance and direction for this family in making this decision.

Teresa Zema: Her sister Peggy is having an ultrasound as there is a mass. Pray that it is negative for cancer. A co-worker Dot passed away suddenly. Pray for her family to have comfort and peace.

Dawn Demick: A girl in school who was not feeling well went to the hospital. She needs more tests to determine her problem. Pray that a solution will be found soon.

Frank Mace: Pray for his boss, Houtan, as his mom and dad who live in California are ill. His dad has cancer and his mom is sick. Pray that Houtan is able to help them and give them comfort and peace. Frank's sister Linda is getting worse, pray for her to be granted peace and let her family be comforted.

Erika Groux: Ryan is home with a cold. They have had a lot of illness lately. Pray that they will both be healthy soon.

Bob Michaels: Thankful for safe travel for their family over the holidays. Jon was rear-ended while driving truck, no one was hurt. As their granddaughter Cassie flies pray for her safety.

Craig Mosher: Their Jeep needs a new engine, which will be costly. Pray for them to have the funds to pay for this. Thankful his folks are renting a car for them, so they can get to work until the Jeep is fixed.

Paula Dibble: Thankful for the heat in her home, and for caring neighbors. Thankful her neighbor is getting help with his hearing. My niece's daughter Amanda is having a biopsy done on January 10th, pray the results are negative for cancer.

Berlin Youth Fellowship,
Monday, 6:30-8:00 pm
(grades K-12)

Weekly Events

Women's Bible Study, restarts Tuesday, February 6, 7 pm in the church library and/or Wednesday, January 10, 10 am in the church library.

Bennington YF, Wednesdays, 6 pm, at the Bennington Rec Center.

Men's Bible Study, restarts Thursday, February 1, 7 pm in the church library.

Upcoming Events

Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer, January 7-13. Booklets are available in the foyer on the information table.

Prayer Partner's Prayer Retreat, Saturday, January 27, 1-3 pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome!

Community Movie Night: The Case for Christ, February 11, 6:30 pm (childcare will be provided).