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IN HIS TIME

"Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph," (Ex. 1:8). Just when it seemed all was secured for Joseph's family, the bottom drops out. One would assume that given Joseph's status as the one who single-handedly preserved Egypt and their reign, Joseph's relatives would be virtually untouchable (although the reality was, as Joseph even acknowledged, it was all God's doing – *"...I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.'* Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, *'It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer,'"* Gen. 41:15-16). A new ruler over the land has risen to power who does not share the same debt of gratitude that the entire empire owes to the one who saved their hides, and disregards the previous Pharaoh's generosity towards

Joseph's family. *"Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Say to your brothers...I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat of the fat of the land...for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours,'"* (Gen. 45:16,17,18,20). Over time, the Israelite family of 70 (Gen. 46:27; Ex. 1:5) had grown to become so numerous they were filling up the land. For fear that in the event of war they would side with Egypt's enemies and rebel against their Egyptian rule to emancipate themselves and leave (Ex. 1:9-10), their new king bitterly enslaves them in cruel heavy labor. If you are an Israelite during that time, it would be very easy to be tempted to want to prod God along in respect to His promises

they were living on. “Ok, LORD...now would be a GREAT time for you to bring us back to Canaan where we are supposed to settle at!” 100 years of rigorous slave labor goes by, and perhaps enough is enough? Not quite. “God said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years,’” (Gen. 15:13).

Four...hundred...years. I can imagine after that enormous amount of time lapsing I might be just as jaded and despondent to any hope of things ever getting better as the Israelites apparently were. Moses’ own self-imposed rescue mission fell flat on its face with the subsequent response, “Who made you a ruler and judge over us?” (Acts 7:27) rather than, “It’s about time!” “And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand,” (Acts 7:25).

When it comes to not understanding in terms of how and when God chooses to deliver His children from the hardships of suffering, the Israelite slaves in Egypt are certainly not alone. I think the amount of how much I don’t understand in that aspect of

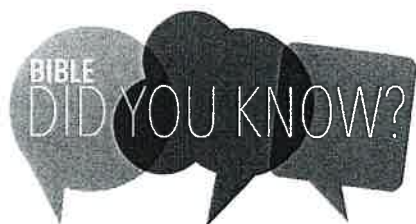
God’s behavior in my own life, you could just about squeeze into the Grand Canyon. And yet whenever I think of my daughter Lily asking me for a piece of orange when she first learned to talk, I am comforted. It usually went like this: I have a whole unpeeled orange in my hand, Lily would see it, and say, “Our Pees! (translation: Orange Please!). I say, “O.k. Lily,” and I start to peel the orange. As my fingers wrestle to dig into the peel and strip the outer layer off, Lily stands waiting in dismay, pouting and crying, confused why I would tell her she could have a slice of orange and then leave her hanging. I am struck by the irony of all this, in that Lily doesn’t understand that the reason she cannot have a slice of orange the minute she sees me holding an entire orange in my hand is because it needs to be peeled first...it’s not ready for consumption. I’m not making her wait out of cruelty or neglect, but certain things need to be accomplished first before she can get what’s been promised to her. This is the very reason Joseph’s family had to endure 400 years of slavery before they would be delivered. Canaan wasn’t quite ready to be overthrown by them. “...they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years...Then in the

fourth generation they will return here, **for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete**," (Gen. 15:13,16). In

other words, the Canaanites hadn't become wicked enough to be fully deserving of being utterly destroyed by the Israelites when they were to move in. "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you," (Deut. 9:4). The whole time Israel was suffering in Egypt all those years, the "orange was still being peeled" while they were crying out to Him. "The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings,'" (Ex. 3:7). While we may not always understand why it seems we must wait so long before God delivers us from hardship, we can learn to display obedient faith that trusts God knows the perfect timing of all things. It just may be the "orange is still being peeled" and deliverance is just not quite ready. Be sure of this...when God's deliverance does appear...it will be worth

the wait! "He has made everything beautiful in its time," (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

— Daniel Ruegg



The Bible doesn't say there were 3 wise men and they didn't visit Jesus in a manger. The Bible never gives the number of men (but does say there were 3 gifts, which is probably where this misconception comes from). Additionally, Herod demanded the death of all boys 2 years old and under, making it probable that Christ had been born 2 years prior. Also, the wise men visited Jesus when he lived in a house according to the Biblical account in Matthew 2:11.

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



THE 382 AMARNA TABLETS OF THE HEBREW CONQUEST

After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, Moses handed over the leadership of the Hebrew nation to Joshua, who brings the children of Israel into the promised land. According to the Bible, after entering Canaan, Joshua had to go to war with the inhabitants of the land. There is an amazing piece of evidence to support this. A letter has been found that was written by a man named Abdi-Heba, Governor of Jerusalem, to an unnamed Pharaoh, requesting aid from Egypt in fighting the approaching Hebrews. The Amarna tablets are a second record of the conquest from Egyptian and Canaanite cuneiform tablets written in Akkadian Babylonian. The letter states the following: "Why do you not hear my call for help? All the governors are lost; the king, my lord, does not have a single governor remaining! Let the king send troops and archers, or the king will have no lands left. All the lands of the king are being plundered by the Habiru (Hebrews). If archers are here by the end of the year, then the lands of my lord, the king, will be saved, but if the archers are not sent, then the lands of the king, my lord, will be lost." (El-Amarna Letter EA.286). Compare this with the following Bible statement found in Joshua 10:1-5: "Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it;...Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem,...gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it." The Bible states in Joshua 10:26 that Joshua defeated these kings, captured them and killed them, including the king of Jerusalem, Adoni-Zedek. It is very likely that Abdi-Heba and Adoni-Zedek are one in the same man. The reason being is that "Adoni-Zedek" is a title rather than the actual name of the king. Adoni-Zedek means the "Lord of Zedek," similar to the name Melchi-Zedek which means "Prince of Zedek," who was the ruler of Salem according to **Genesis 14:18**. The Hebrews would have associated this title with the prince of Salem, an early name for the city of Jerusalem. So the letters written by Abdi-Heba, trying to stop the advancing Hebrews, were likely written by either Adoni-Zedek, mentioned in Joshua 10:1, or Adonie-Bezek, another king mentioned in Judges 1:7 who was defeated by Joshua and buried in Jerusalem. The letters from Abdi-Heba seem to have been written to either Amenhotep II or Amenhotep III. Since one of the letters from Abdi-Heba mentions that the Pharaoh, whom he was requesting help from, had conquered the land of Naharaim and the land of Cush, this would likely point to Amenhotep II who indeed had military campaigns against both these countries. The time frame of this letter also corresponds to the dating found in the Bible.

