

Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 10:33 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 1

"By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones!" (Hebrews 11:22)

The Book of Exodus opens with "the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob...each one with his household...seventy in number"! In effect, their "exodus" from the Land of Canaan, the "Promised Land," where they were called and destined by God to live!

The account of Exodus is about a "detour" (a "painful detour," according to Constable) from God's plan, in fact, a 400 year lapse, as it would turn out, by way of Egypt, a place where they were not ultimately destined to live! But it was all a part of God's plan to raise and prepare His people to live in the Promised Land! And so, there would be another "exodus" - the great exodus even movies would be made about - from Egypt! But by the end of the story (the end of the Book of Exodus, that is!), they would still not make it into the Promised Land, as we'll see! Close, but no cigar!

Remember how it all started, in Genesis 12:1-3, when God called Abram to "go forth from his country (in Haran, in northern Mesopotamia, modern day Syria)...to a land that I will show you; and I will make you a great nation and I will bless you...And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed!" Then, in Genesis 15, how He took Abram outside (at nite) and told him to "look toward the heavens, and count the stars...and said to him, 'So shall your descendants be"! And how, it says, Abram "believed in the Lord; and He (God) reckoned it to him (Abram) as righteousness!"

But then, verse 12 says, "a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him...And God said: 'Know for certain (Wow!) that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed 400 years (400 years?)...But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions! As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here...!" (Do you think God is sovereign, has a plan (a long-range plan) and is in control of what's happening in our lives, and in our world at-large? Take courage!)

Well, the rest of Genesis tells the story, among other things, of how the children of Israel (the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) lived their lives, and ended up in Egypt for 400 years (make that 430, to be exact)!

And so we pick up our story in Exodus, beginning with the "names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, seventy in number," under circumstances (you know the story!) that can only be described as "by the providence of God"! (The names of all seventy sons, and grandsons, just happen to be listed in Genesis 46:8-27! Names are important to God, we learn!)

Exodus 1:6-7 then reports that "Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation! But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly

mighty, so that the land was filled with them!" Wow! Just as God had foretold Abram! (Surprised? Don't be! As John Neal noted last nite: "God was, and still is, orchestrating it all!")

Speaking of numbers, Exodus 12:37 says that by the time of the exodus, which would be 430 years later (according to Exodus 12:40), "six hundred thousand sons of Israel journeyed on foot, aside from children, from Rameses to Succoth" (probably the fighting men of 20 years of age and above)! And so, the population of the Children of Israel "exploded" over that time from the 70 who entered Egypt to the 2 million or so (Constable writes "it's easy prove mathematically!") who left with Moses, we are told, in 1445 B.C.

Remember how we talked last week about how the Pharaoh of Joseph's time gave so much favor to the "sons of Jacob" and even gave them the best of the lands in Egypt (the Land of Goshen), and how they multiplied, and all seemed to be going so well in their world (away from the Promised Land)? Well, things changed!

Genesis 1:8 says, "Now a new king (that would be Pharaoh!) arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph"! And you know the story (even if your main source of knowledge is based on the movie, "The Exodus") of how the "sons of Israel" were seen as a great threat to the security of the Egyptian hierarchy and how Pharaoh thought he could thwart the "population explosion" by enslaving the "people." And so, verses 11-12 say, "they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor! But, the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied, and so they were in dread of the sons of Israel"! (An early example of "anti-Semitism" which would characterize the world stage throughout history and continues to this day!)

Well, it didn't work! So, Pharaoh enacted "plan B"! Require Hebrew midwives to "put to death" newborn sons! But, Exodus 1:17 says "the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt (that would be Pharaoh "what's-his-name") had commanded them!" And when questioned by Pharaoh, they said that "Hebrew are more vigorous than Egyptian women and give birth before the midwives can get to them"! Was this a lie and were they "disobedience" to government authority ("dishonoring the king"), and thereby violating God's law?

As a side-note, the Bible makes it clear, in Romans 13, that "every person (speaking of "Christians") is to be in subjection to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God..."! But there is also clearly an exception in Scripture! And that is when the authority of government mandates what God forbids! There are several clear examples in both the Old and the New Testaments, where God's followers resisted civil authorities, and God honored their decisions! (We may be facing these kinds of choices in our own day, things going as they are in our world!) The three Hebrew servants (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) who refused to "bow down" to the golden image, and were thrown into the "fiery furnace" (in Daniel 3); or Daniel himself who "continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God," despite a decree by Darius the king that "whoever would make a petition to any god or man besides him, would be cast into the lion's den," which is what happened! (Daniel 6) Or the example of Rahab the harlot, who hid the two "Jewish spies" (and ended up being listed in the "line of Christ"! Or, the example of Peter and John, in Acts 4, when they responded to the demands of the Sanhedrin that they "no longer speak

in the name of Jesus" with the infamous words (in verses 19-20): "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge! For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard"! And later, in Acts 5, after they were placed in prison for "performing signs and wonders among the people," but freed after an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and later were found back in the temple, "teaching the people"! Their response to the authorities is legendary: "We must obey God rather than men"! (Acts 5:20)

Interestingly, God rewarded and blessed, and "looked out for," all those cited above who "feared God more than men," including in the case of the Hebrew midwives, for whom God "established households"! More significantly, their names (Shiphrah and Puah) are included in the Scriptures, while Bible scholars and historians, after vigorous research, are still trying to figure out the names of the Pharaohs who ruled Egypt during the time of the Exodus!

But back to the plight of the Hebrew children, in Exodus 1:22, where we see Pharaoh (whatever his name is) demanding that "all his people cast every son (every Hebrew boy) into the Nile"! (Constable notes that since the Egyptians regarded the Nile as "a manifestation of deity," perhaps Pharaoh was trying to make obedience to his edict seem like an act of worship for the Egyptians!) But this too apparently failed! And, ironically, it set the scene for the birth of Moses, later discovered and rescued by the daughter of Pharaoh, after he was placed in a "wicker basket" in the Nile!

And so, as Constable notes, "While Pharaoh was urging forward the extermination of the Israelites, God was preparing His emancipator"! But more of this in next week's study of Exodus 2!

How great is our God!

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