

Sent: Thu, May 27, 2021, 1:27 pm
Subject: A Lookback at Our MOB Study of Exodus!

"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether! They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward! (Psalm 19:7-11)

We did it! We finished our study of Exodus! So, what will you always remember?

Remember how it all began (in Exodus 1:1-3)--"with the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob...seventy in number"! It was, in effect, an "exodus" from the land of Canaan to a place where they were not ultimately destined to live, but all part of God's plan to grow them as a people and prepare them for the "great exodus" (the exodus movies are made of!), to live in the land that God had promised!

But you have to go back to Genesis to fully understand what God is doing through all this! In Genesis 12, God called Abram to "go forth to a land that He would show him" (and it was not Egypt!) and promised that He would make him a great nation, and that "in him all the families of the earth would be blessed!" Then, in Genesis 15, "the word of the Lord came to him in a vision," promising that his descendants would be "as the stars in the heavens," and that they would inherit the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession (the so-called "Abrahamic Covenant"), but that there would first be what MacArthur calls a "painful detour" into Egypt. In fact, God said to Abram, in Genesis 15:13-14: "know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years..." but that He would judge the nation (Egypt) whom they would serve and "afterward" they would "come out with many possessions" (which is exactly what would happen)! Wow!

There is an amazing story of how the descendants of Abraham would get to Egypt in the first place! Remember how, in the providence of God, Abraham's grandson, Joseph, was sold by his brothers to Ishmaelite traders who took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh's; and how the Lord "was with him and caused all that he did to prosper..." You know the rest of the story--how Joseph rose to power, becoming "second only to Pharaoh," and how, when there was a famine in the land of Canaan, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt for food and stood before Joseph (not realizing who he was and had become) and how Joseph, rather than taking revenge saw what happened as a "God-thing" and responded with the legendary words: "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good!" And so, he sent for his father Jacob, and he and Joseph's brothers, and their descendants, lived and prospered for many years in the "land of Goshen" until, Exodus 1:8 says, "a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph..." and he put the children of Israel under bondage where they remained for 400 years!

And so, after the silence of many years, Exodus picks up the narrative with the birth of Moses--and Exodus become the fitting sequel to the book of Genesis! Constable notes that "while Pharaoh was urging the extermination of the children of Israel, God was preparing His emancipator, Moses"! (Isn't it amazing how God works?)

Exodus, we learned, is all about the "sovereignty" of God and the "salvation" of His people. Paul Logan summarized it this way: "God delivers His chosen people out of slavery and death so they can obey, worship, and serve Him!" And the slide he introduced at the beginning of our study--and which was included in every Tuesday nite presentation--shows Exodus organized into two main sections: "Redemption from Egypt" (in chapters 1-18) and "Revelation from God" (in chapters 19-40).

Shepherd's Notes states the "thematic focus" of Exodus as one of "redemption"! "God redeems Israel from slavery and offers them a covenant relationship in which they will be a channel of reconciliation to an alienated world!"

And as for Moses, D.L. Moody once said: "Moses spent 40 years in Pharaoh's court, thinking he was somebody; 40 years in the desert learning that he was a nobody; and 40 more years showing what God can do with somebody who found out that he was a nobody!" Wow!

Remember when God called Moses! In Exodus 3:7-10, 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 suffering. So, I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite (but not the "Mennonites"!). Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt!"

And you remember Moses' response and God's anger at his lack of faith! But eventually he relents but only after God appointed Aaron to be his spokesman! (Like a "Penn & Teller show" with Aaron doing the speaking before Pharaoh, and Moses doing the "performing" of signs!)

In Exodus 11-13, we see the LORD delivering the final "plague,"--the ultimate blow to the Egyptians, with God "passing through the land and striking down all the first-born of Egypt," causing a "great cry" in the land, but "passing over" the homes of the children of Israel where there was "blood of the sacrificial lamb" splattered on the doorposts and on lintels of their houses! All of which led to the "night of the Passover" and the flight of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt! (And a reminder for us that "without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin"!)

And then the awesome "parting of the Red Sea, which Shepherd's Notes describes as the "greatest moment in Israel's history"!

Exodus 14:3-31 says, "So the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians...and when Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses!"

All of which sets the scene for Exodus 15, with Moses and the sons of Israel singing songs of praise and celebration to the LORD! And things are looking good!

But then, the times of "testing" come for them on their wilderness journey, e.g., when they found no water and finally came to the "waters of Marah," only to find it bitter, and "grumbled" against

Moses (but really against the LORD), and the LORD, in His mercy, bringing them to the "springs of water and date palms" at Elim--and providing them "bread from heaven" (manna) and basically showing them how dependent they were on Him, and how they needed to turn to Him for every need!

I Corinthians 10:11 says (speaking of the experiences of the children of Israel), "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

Exodus 19 begins the second half of the book of Exodus (the "revelation from God"), where we see the children of Israel camping at the base of Mt. Sinai and the LORD calling Moses up to the mount and laying out the conditions for the so-called "Mosaic Covenant" which he was to relay to the people: "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!" And the people respond in unanimous consent!

Constable sums it up this way: "The LORD liberated Israel from bondage in Egypt; and now adopts them as a nation for a special relationship to Himself!"

We think of I Peter 2:9-10, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy! (And a bunch of "therefores" follows!)

In the next five chapters (Exodus 20-24), God reveals to Moses "what the LORD would require of His people," beginning with the Ten Commandments!

Deuteronomy 6:4-14 includes these words from God for the people: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding to you today shall be on your heart! You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way...and you shall watch yourself that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him...You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you...!"

And so, a question often asked: Do the Ten Commandments and related laws and ordinances apply to us today, and what, if any, role do they play in our salvation?

The answer is "yes"! As our memory verse, closing out this study, says so clearly: "The law of the Lord is perfect... the testimony of the Lord is sure...the precepts of the Lord are right...More to be desired are they than gold...sweeter also than honey, and...! God's law still applies to us and our world! It is still the basis for all public morality! And it deserves our allegiance! But keeping it is not the basis for our salvation! (It just does not "work"!)

Galatians 2:16 says, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; since by the works of the law no flesh will be justified!"

Galatians 3:24 says that "the law has become our tutor (schoolmaster) to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith!"

Well, the final 16 chapters of Exodus focus on the design and construction of a central place of worship for the nation--the tabernacle, or "tent of meeting"--where God could dwell in the midst of His people!

Exodus 25:8-9 says, "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it!" And verse 22, "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel!" (Jesus would later say, in John 14:26, that when He would leave "the Father would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, who would be with them and teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that He had said to them"!)

But somehow, as we studied Exodus 32, when the people saw that Moses was delayed in coming down the mountain (and apparently thought that he would never return), they appealed to Aaron to make them "a god who would go before them"! And, as you will remember, Aaron complied, to please them, and so set up a "golden calf," and proclaimed a feast; and they worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and even called it the god who brought them up from the land of Egypt! Can you believe it? All of which almost led to God change His mind about dwelling with the people (in the tabernacle they were called to build for Him!) and was about to destroy them--except for the intervention (and intercession) by Moses! Among other things reminding Him of His promise to Abraham! (Although, of course, God needed no reminding!)

You know what happened next! God relented and called on Moses to "cut two more stone tablets" (the "ones he had shattered"!) and appear before Him on the mount, where He "descended in a cloud and passed in front of him" and declared that He was "the LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin; and yet by no means the guilty unpunished...!"

In other words, the LORD "made a way" to keep His promise with Abraham (and with His eternal redemptive plan!) and to be both "the Just and the Justifier" (ultimately through pouring out His judgment on His Son, who would shed His blood on the cross as an atonement for our sin). And so, He renewed His covenant with the children of Israel and even promised that He would "perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations" and that "all the people would see the working of the LORD," and that it would be "awesome" to behold!

J.J. Engelbrecht summed it up this way: "God is so holy that we cannot approach Him in our sin; but so merciful that He makes a way to be with us; but that we must respond to the mercy of this Holy God!" A week later, Dan Crabtree described God as "a God who stays with sinners!"

And so, after all that, we see (beginning in Exodus 35) the work of building the tabernacle and all its components proceeding, with God calling Bezalel and Oholiab, and filling them (as well as "all skillful people in whom the LORD put skill") with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, and craftsmanship, to "do all the work required in accordance with all that the LORD had commanded"! (Someone has noted that "God doesn't call the qualified but qualities the called!")

And the work was completed and Moses (who had passed on to the people all the "blueprints" for everything connected with the tabernacle) examined all the work and found that it all been done "just as the LORD had commanded"!

Then the LORD told Moses to set it all up and arrange what belongs in the tabernacle and to "anoint" everything with oil and "bring Aaron and his sons to doorway of the tabernacle and wash them with water and put on them the holy garments and anoint them and consecrate them that they might minister as priests to Him"!

And Moses did everything "just as the LORD commanded, thus finishing the work!"

Then, Exodus 40:34-38 says, "the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle...and throughout all their journey, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire in it by night, in the sight of all the people!" Whew!

Well, the more we studied Exodus the more we saw the symbolism for the coming of Christ--"when the fulness of the time would come"--and God's great "redemptive plan," for all mankind, as well as so many applications (for us!) for living the Christian life!

One thing for sure! We learned that things always work out best for us in our lives when we do exactly what the LORD tells us to do! And those times of testing are meant to teach us more dependence on Him! And, as Matthew Henry wrote: "Man's extremity is God's opportunity!" And so much more!

And we were reminded again, how blessed is the nation, and the people, whose God is the Lord! (May it be!)

Psalms 103:7-11 seems to sum it up well! "The LORD made His way known to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel. The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness to those who fear Him!"

May we never forget what God has taught us through our study of the book of Exodus, and may it forever affect the way we see God--and compel us to want to trust and obey and worship and serve Him more fully!

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