

18-19 Bible Study # 7

10/23/18

Exodus 1

The Israelites Are Oppressed by the Egyptians

Exodus 1

- **Exodus 1:1-7**

- Many books of the Bible are named by an ancient system where they are named after a word found in the first sentence of the text
- In the Greek “Septuagint” the name of the second book of the Pentateuch was the “**Exodus**”
- But in Hebrew it was called the book of “the names” as found in the first line of the **Exodus** where we see “these are the names”

Exodus 1 (Cont)

- We just saw in **Genesis** the names of the 70 people who went down to *Egypt*, so why would they be listed again?
- Remember that these originally were independent scrolls so they sometimes repeat something from one to the next
- Also, this was done to remind the person who was going to hear the story for the first time about something important because he may not have heard the story in the Book of **Genesis**
- We also heard before about the descendants of **Israel** being fruitful and increasing greatly
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Exodus 1 (Cont)

- **Exodus 1:8-14**

- The word to “serve” (**abad**) in Hebrew, will be a major theme throughout the entire book
- There are two major points with reference to this:
 - First, whom will the descendants of Jacob “serve”?
 - Second, will they “serve” the Egyptians and the Egyptian gods, or Yahweh?
- We also need to note that the “people of God” are being oppressed
- In fact, they are not just being mistreated but enslaved
- Yet the more this happened, the more they increased

Exodus 1 (Cont)

- The same will happen to the early Church in the **Book of Acts**
- Once again, all the persecutions began with an evil intent, but God turned them to a greater good ¹
- Hopefully, this will be the same outcome in the years to come when we look back on the terrible persecution of Christians in the Middle East today ³

Exodus 1 (Cont)

- **Exodus 1:15-22**

- The God fearing Hebrew midwives did not listen to the Pharaoh's instructions
- So he directed "all his people" to throw the Hebrew male children into the Nile, while allowing the females to live
- He did this to avoid the boys from growing up, arming themselves and posing a threat to his army, while he hoped that the girls would grow up and become servants and wives

Exodus 1 (Cont)

- *St Ephrem* remembered that when Abram went down to *Egypt* he was afraid for his life but was confident that his wife would be safe
- That is exactly what happened here

Exodus 2

The Israelites Are Oppressed by the Egyptians

Exodus 2

- **Exodus 2:1-8**

- It is important to remember that *Moses* was from the House of *Levi*
- Also, there is an interesting note concerning the word for basket, *Tevah* in Hebrew
- This is the same word used for Noah's "Ark" in Genesis
- This indicates that *Moses* was going to be the new Noah and thus, the "savior of his people"
- *Moses* floated on the surface of the *Nile* in his basket just as *Noah* floated on the waters in his ark
- Both can be seen as a "covenantal mediator"

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- **Exodus 2:9-10**

- There is a great deal of irony and humor in this story
- *Miriam* was Moses' sister and she arranged for him to be nursed by his own mother
- *Pharaoh* was doing all he could to prevent the Israelites from destroying Egypt; yet, the very law he instituted caused *Moses* to be saved in a basket which was retrieved by own daughter
- *Moses* then grew up in the royal household
- He was named *Moses* by Pharaoh's daughter because he was "drawn from the water"

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- **Exodus 2:11-14**

- *Moses* grew up with an anger problem which ultimately prevented him from entering the “Promised Land”
- In attempting to separate two Hebrew men from fighting after killing an Egyptian the day before, he was merely trying to help them not “lord” it over them
- This caused him to flee to *Midian* to avoid being executed

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- **Exodus 2:15-22**

- As discussed earlier, the *Midianites* were the descendants of *Midian*, the son of *Abraham's* second wife, *Keturah*
- The clan lived in the southern desert south of the Dead Sea (along with the *Ishmaelites*, the descendants of *Ishmael*, the son of *Abraham* by *Sarah's* maid, *Hagar*)
- *Moses* sat down beside a well (here comes the bride!)
- We will see similar details in **John 4**, when Jesus meets the *Samaritan* woman at the well

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- This story depicts seven shepherd girls attempting to water their father's flock while being abused by other shepherds
- *Moses* stepped in and assisted them, and was eventually invited to join the family and marry one of the daughters
- Father Sebastian said that this should remind us of the story of Joseph and his shepherd brothers who threw him into a pit (an empty well) while tending their flocks in the wilderness
- Many see the similarities of these stories as a coincidence, but there are too many details for that to be the case

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- The author is hoping that we will see this as a “**chiasm**”
 - In the first story Joseph was the mediator of God’s mercy for the people of Israel by bringing the sons of Israel to Egypt and saving them
 - Here Moses is going to save the people of Israel by bringing them out of Egypt
 - Both can be seen as instruments of God

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- **Exodus 2:23-25**

- Saying that God “remembered his covenant” does not mean that He had forgotten it
- It means that God will keep His covenant with His people
- This was the covenant with Abraham from **Genesis 15:12-16** *
- The Hebrew text ends with the statement “God knew”
- Because the passage sounds funny in English, the translators added the object that He knew “their condition”

Exodus 2 (Cont)

- Unfortunately, this messes up the theology of the text
- It really means that God knew their condition, their situation
- The Hebrew word for “He know” is *Yada*
- This is the same “to know” as we saw in **Genesis 1** where it said *Adam* “knew” his wife, *Eve*
- Later Pharaoh will say, “I do not know this God”
- “To know” was to have intimate relations, to be in accord with, and it is a very important theme in the *Pentateuch*
- So in this passage “God knew” meant that He was in a covenantal relationship with His people

Exodus 3

Moses and the Burning Bush

Exodus 3

- **Exodus 3:1-6**

- This is an image of what is about to happen
- *Moses* brought his father-in-law's flock to **Mount Sinai**
- Then he met his real father – God on **Mount Sinai**
- *Moses* was attracted to the strange sight of the “burning bush”
- The passages says in one place that an angel of the Lord appeared to *Moses* from the bush, and then in the next sentence, that God called him from the bush
- The ambiguity between the angel of the Lord and God's presence will be seen in a number of places in the book of Exodus ²

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- Who was in the bush?
- The fathers of the church believe that it was Jesus, as the Second Person of the Trinity, who spoke to *Moses* from the bush
- This is why in Old Testament iconography when God or an angel appears, we will often see an image of Jesus

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- **Exodus 3:7-8**

- The word for that “land” in Hebrew is *Erets*
- This is a piece of land where *Moses* encountered God in the burning bush
- The author was being careful to let us know that this was not the Promised Land in Canaan that Abraham was promised flowing with **milk and honey** (symbols of fertility) ₃

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- **Exodus 3:9-12**

- *Moses* asked God, “who am I that should do this?”
- After all, he just got out of Egypt with his life intact
- He certainly questioned if he was the right guy for the job
- God did not tell him how great he was, but instead God assures Moses that He would be with him
- Many things are impossible for man, but all things are possible for God
- This should teach us that if we pray for God to be with us and it’s something He wants done, then we will succeed

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- Then, God gave him a sign which was that he would return and serve God on this mountain (Mt Sinai)
- Again, a reference to “serve” (*abad*)
- God was telling *Moses* that he would not serve Pharaoh, but he will serve Yahweh
- This will require an act of faith on the part of Moses

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- **Exodus 3:13**

- Because the Hebrew people needed some coaxing, *Moses* asked God for His name (This is an amazing moment in Salvation History)
- God said that *Moses* was to tell his people that, “I am who am sent me to you”
- He also told *Moses* to tell the people that the, “God of your fathers has sent me to you”
- Whenever you see the word “Lord” in all caps in the RSV, it is the translation of the Divine Name - Yahweh

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- **Exodus 3:14 -16**

- So God said to *Moses*, “I am who am”, or it could be translated “I am who I will be,” or “I will be who I am,” or “I will be who I will be”
- His name is a bit ambiguous, and we are not sure of exactly what it means ⁴
- We get a hint at what the Jews understood the name to mean from the Septuagint where *ego eimai oan* can be translated as, “I am the one who is”
- Some 200 years before Christ, the Jews were interpreting this name as a statement of existence

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- We will see (*ego eimai*) used in John's Gospel as, "I AM"
- One also often sees within the halo of Jesus in Icons the words *ho on*, meaning He who is, as a reference back to this passage in Exodus
- We will also find the word *kyrios* meaning "Lord" in Greek, or *Adonai* in Hebrew or Aramaic, which were seen as another way a saying the divine name (a circumlocution)
- At the time the Septuagint was completed, the Jews were avoiding saying the divine name out of piety for the 2nd Commandment, "you shall not profane the name of the Lord"

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- **Exodus 3:17-18**

- This demand for freedom is not what most have been led to believe from earlier films about the Exodus like the 10 Commandments
- This is not “liberation theology”
- This is not political, but rather, it is about a spiritual battle
- The ultimate question being asked here is, whom will Israel serve, the Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt or the God of Abraham?
- Here *Moses* was told, “you shall serve God upon this mountain”

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- The original request was to allow the people of Israel to go on a three day journey into the wilderness to worship
- A three day journey would allow the people to be out of the site of the Egyptians
- This was to ensure that this people who had been worshiping the Egyptian gods for 400 years would be totally out of that polytheistic environment and influence
- This would allow them to be re-educated with monotheism
- They would be taught about and be able to worship the one true God

Exodus 3 (Cont)

- **Exodus 3:19-22**

- The mighty hand of God will bring about the plagues necessary to get the *Egyptians* to release the people of God
- Also, *Moses* was told to have the Israelites to ask their neighbors for jewelry and gold as they walked out the door
- This will be fulfilled in **Exodus 12**