

From Bondage to Freedom JMBC Bible Study #4

Introduction: In the book of Genesis certain important things stand out:

- A. God has a heart to bless man, not curse him.
 - B. But man sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, and kept on sinning throughout his history.
 - 1. Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God in the Garden.
 - 2. Cain sinned as he made his offering, but added to that sin when he jealoused and killed his brother Abel.
 - 3. Lamech followed a life style of sin, marrying two wives and killing a man for simply wounding him.
 - 4. The wickedness of the men before the flood became great, and every inclination of his heart was only evil all the time.
 - 5. Before Abraham, the people of earth became very proud and sought to build a tower to heaven.
 - C. God judges all this sin, but his great goal in the judgement is to free man. This will be the topic of this study. Example of this include:
 - 1. In judgement on Adam and Eve God curses the snake, the land, and childbirth.
 - 2. In judgement on Cain, God curses him to wander, marked with a mark.
 - 3. In judgement on the wickedness before the flood, God sends the great waters.
 - D. In spite of all this sin, God calls Abraham to leave his home and promises him that he would be a blessing to the nations.
 - 1. He also promises him that he would inherit the land and that his family would become as numerous as the stars of the sky.
 - 2. Though Abraham's family had its own sins, God was faithful to his promises. He gave Isaac to Abraham, the child of promise. And he prospered Abraham's family in spite of everything, and God allowed Abraham's family to find safety in Egypt during the time of a great famine.
 - 3. God used Joseph, Abraham's great grandson to bless Egypt and all the nations around during the time of the famine.
 - E. The book of Genesis shows the great truth that Jesus taught when he said "... the Son of Man (Jesus) came to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19:10 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob seeks and finds men and women who are lost. If you are lost, he wants you to be found.
- I. At the beginning of the book of Exodus the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had prospered in the best part of the land of Egypt and had greatly multiplied in number. They were so many that "they filled the land." Three things then happened.
- A. A king (in Egyptian he was called Pharaoh, or great house) came to the throne who did not know about what Joseph did for Egypt and who was afraid that Israel (as the family of Abraham was called [2:23]) would become Egypt's enemy in times of trouble.
 - B. Because Egypt was a very long, narrow country surrounded by dangerous desert, the Pharaoh of Egypt had great power. He forced the Israelites into all sorts of slave labour, among which was making bricks (very similar to mudblocks) for his building projects.
 - C. He decreed to all the people that all Israelite newborn baby boys be thrown into the Nile.
- II. Moses, the great prophet of God, was born at this time to an Israelite family. His family obeyed the Pharaoh's command in letter but not in spirit. They placed him in the Nile in a little boat, hoping that someone would find him and have pity on him. Briefly, these are the high points of Moses' life
- A. He was found by the Pharaoh's daughter and reared in the king's house. He had all the advantages of the best education of the time, but he was aware of who his people were.
 - B. He was concerned for his people. One day when he was visiting one of their work sites, he became angry with an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite and killed him. He was forced to flee to Midian.
 - C. In Midian he becomes a shepherd, marries a woman named Zipporah, and tends her father's sheep for forty years.
 - D. In Midian God appears to Moses in a bush that is on fire, but is not consumed by the fire. God tells Moses that he has heard the cries of the Israelites. God instructs Moses to go back to Egypt and bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses is very frightened at the task and tries to get out of the job. He complains that he is not worthy. God tells him that he will be with him and do great signs and wonders. Moses complains that he did not know enough. God tells him his name "I am who I am", and that is enough. Moses complains that he isn't talented

- enough. God tells him that Aaron, his brother, will be his helper. Finally Moses submits to God and goes back. He is perhaps 80 years old.
- E. As we shall see, God is going to do great things through a frightened, insecure, sometimes angry man. Moses the man was weak in the face of conflict and confusion. But as he obeyed God in faith, he became the greatest of all the prophets. Not everyone is a Moses, but everyone has the opportunity to obey God in faith and be used by him for great things.
- III. In Egypt God uses Moses in a mighty way. Pharaoh does not want to let the Israelites go because they are a very valuable people. Their work was very dear. Without them the Egyptians had no one to build their temples and palaces.
- A. Of course, in the meanwhile, the situation became worse for the Israelites. Moses had met with the Pharaoh and asked if Israel could go into to offer sacrifices to the Israelites' God. The reason for this is that the sacrifices of animals would offend the Egyptians, who valued animal life very much. Pharaoh said "No" and decided to punish Moses' people by not giving them any straw for their mud bricks. The people were in trouble; Moses was in trouble.
- B. Then, when it seemed everything was lost, God brought the first plague on Egypt. God ordered Moses to stretch out his hand that held his staff and all the water that had come from the Nile would be changed to blood. And so it happened. However, the Pharaoh did not pay attention. The Bible says, "he hardened his heart." (8:15).
- C. In a similar way God brought eight more plagues on Egypt: Frogs, Gnats, Flies, the death of cattle and sheep, Boils, Hail, Locusts, and Darkness. But Pharaoh would not allow the Israelites to leave. Many people are bothered by the fact that the Bible also says, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart". (10:27) "Why would God make a man sin?" they ask. The answer is found in chapter 7:5 God does these things so that "the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord", so that they will see the signs and wonders and judgements of God. (Also 11:9)
- IV. The last plague is the death of the first born sons of Egypt. And it is great judgment on all the Egyptian families.
- A. God announces beforehand to Moses that he is going to bring death to every first born son in Egypt. This will be the last judgement—the one that will cause the Egyptians to let the Israelites go.
- B. But more importantly, God shows Moses a way for the Israelites to escape the plague. On the night that the angel of death is to come they are to kill a perfect lamb, take some its blood and paint it all around the outside door frames of their houses. The angel of death would see the blood and they would not experience the judgement of death.
- C. The lamb itself would be roasted over a fire and they would eat all of it. None of it was suppose to be left because something wondrous was to happen very quickly. Though they did not know it, they were going to be freed.
- D. They did as God said and God did as he said he would. A curse came over Egypt, but the Israelites were saved through faith because they were willing to trust in the blood of a lamb. They were redeemed (freed, released) from slavery. They called this their Passover, because the angel of death had passed over their houses, and they celebrate it every year since then
- V. In Deuteronomy Moses summarizes the miracle like this " Deut 4:32-39
- 32 Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of?
- 33 Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived?
- 34 Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?
- 35 You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other.
- 36 From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire.
- 37 Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength,
- 38 to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today.
- 39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

VI. One way the New Testament explains Jesus' death is just this way. We were in bondage to sin, like all people who ever lived. But God sought us out and sent Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins, (Our Lamb) that we might not have to experience spiritual death (everyone dies physically), and that we might be freed to obey God's word. Paul says it this way: "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." 1 Cor. 5:7 John says it this way "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." (NIV) Is he your "Passover Lamb?" God is continuing to offer the same blessing that he gave Abraham when he provided a ram (a sheep) to put in the place of Isaac his son on the sacrificial altar.