CONFRONTATION!
MOSES AND PHARAOH

Session Four
The Great Escape
An Exposition Of The Book Of Exodus

Wednesday, June 21, 2017
THE GREAT ESCAPE
A Study Of The Book Of Exodus
Session 4

THE OLD SHEPHERD CONFRONTS THE NEW PHARAOH

As far as we know, forty years had passed since the two brothers, Moses and Aaron, had seen each other. Moses had been exiled from Egypt and spent the next four decades herding the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro. He and his wife Zipporah had several children. In the meantime, Aaron had remained a Jewish slave in Egypt. What a reunion, dramatic beyond parallel, when the two brothers met again:

Exodus 4:27-31

And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. [28] And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

[29] And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: [30] And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. [31] And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

AARON, THE OLDER BROTHER OF MOSES

Imagine having a younger brother, on the lam from the law, who returns after 40 years and asks you to stand with him before the most powerful potentate in the world - asking for something that could get you both killed! That is the situation Aaron finds himself facing as we come to this chapter.

Aaron was apparently a good public speaker. God chose him to assist his younger brother Moses in confronting Pharaoh. Remember that Moses had dared to tell God he was not talented enough to confront the Egyptian strongman, that he needed help. So God allowed Aaron to be the prophet and spokesman for him.

There are those who suggest that Moses had a stammer or lisp, a physical impediment of speech necessitating a spokesman of Aaron’s ability. Aaron must have spoken with great power when he addressed Pharaoh on the signs and plagues of Exodus. Aaron plays an important part in the inauguration and development of priestly functions, all of which are described in Leviticus. Aaron became the first high priest of Israel. Yet Aaron had a weakness. He suffered from the murmurings of the people. Exodus 16:2
And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: Numbers 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! He was persuaded by the people to make a golden calf and was reproved by Moses for his action. (Ex. 32) Aaron's repentance was complete and he remained faithful to Moses and to God.

ALL THE MEN IN THE BIBLE / LOCKYER / ZONDERVAN PAGE 20

Aaron caved in to the pressures of unbelief. Daniel, on the other hand did not. He would not consume the king’s food in Babylon because it outraged his relationship to God - and not even the threat of physical harm, or even death, would dissuade him.

Sidebar: It was at this time that Moses sent Zipporah back to her father. They were not re-united until after the Red Sea deliverance. The wisdom of this is debatable. I would not want to have faced the sixty years of ministry without Darlene at my side. But that was Moses’ decision and heaven will reveal whether it was smart or not.

So at long last, Moses decides to obey God. Jesus said He came to do His Father’s will: John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Over one hundred years ago, Lelia Morris wrote one of the great hymns of the Church:

My stubborn will at last has yielded: I would be thine and thine alone; And this the prayer my lips are bringing, Lord, let in me Thy will be done.

Shut in with Thee, O Lord, forever; my wayward feet no more to roam; What power from Thee my soul can sever? The center of God's will my home.

Sweet will of God, still fold me closer till I am wholly lost in Thee; Sweet will of God, still fold me closer till I am wholly lost in Thee!

No, God’s will - and the accomplishment of it here, is not always easy. At long last Moses and Aaron will confront the mighty Pharaoh to set free (some estimate) two to three million Jewish slaves.

Exodus 5:1-2 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in
the wilderness. [2] And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

At the top of the page is a part of a massive temple at Karnak in Egypt, believed by many to have been built in part by this Pharaoh. This temple was well south of ancient Memphis (Cairo) and was not the capital. So one can only imagine the faith and the courage of Moses and Aaron in confronting the Pharaoh.

After forty years, Moses returns to the palace where he had been raised by Pharaoh’s daughter (the Pharaoh “who did not remember Joseph”). Now he confronts Thutmose (with whom he once played as a boy - perhaps) who is now the most powerful man in the world.

Moses tests the waters. He did not ask that the Jews be set free, only that they be allowed to go into the desert, the wilderness, for a religious observance.

The Pharaoh’s response immediately shows his contempt for the God of the Hebrews: Exodus 5:2 “And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.”

Moses caught on right away that the Pharaoh had no concept of the real, living, Creative God at all. Sometimes our efforts at doing something for God are met with this kind of reaction. He who does not know God seldom understands the discussion of God by those who do. To this Pharaoh, God was a fish, or the sun, or the rolling thunder - not a very real Person with Whom he now had to deal. And it would require some time for him to have the truth dawn on him - a fatal delay, in his case.
Don’t be surprised when non-believers have little or no concept of
- our being in church several times weekly
- the whole idea of tithing to the Lord the ten percent He claims
- our giving to missions and outreach

Now Pharaoh not only “acts” in response to Moses demand, he “over-reacts:”

Exodus 5:5-14

And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make
them rest from their burdens. [6] And Pharaoh commanded the same day the
taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, [7] Ye shall no more give the
people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for
themselves. [8] And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall
lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they
cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. [9] Let there more work be laid upon
the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.
[10] And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake
to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. [11] Go ye, get
you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. [12]
So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather
stubble instead of straw. [13] And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your
works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. [14] And the officers of the
children of Israel, which Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and
demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both
yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

It is fascinating to go on U-Tube and watch adobe bricks being made of mud and straw - a
process still being utilized today in some parts of the world. The mud by itself would
soon crack and break the brick; but when it’s subsidized by straw it is made much
stronger. (See the photo of this brick on the following page - a picture shot in Pithom,
Egypt - and could very well have been a wall actually made by the Jewish slaves.)

The work would have been hard enough when mud and straw were furnished to the
workers; but now they had to scrounge the countryside for the straw and were still
required to make as many bricks as before. The quote was not changed for them. You
can begin to understand how some of the Jews began to resent Moses and his “intrusion”
into their lives.

We have all perhaps heard testimonies of people who came to Jesus for salvation and
their lives were made better. Wonderful! But I have also heard testimonies of some
A wall in Pithom, Egypt, made of the brick-straw combination. Quite possibly this is one of the original walls made by the captive Jews.

whose lives were made much more difficult because of their stand for Christ. Pharaoh had a lot at stake here. He had a lot to lose! It had not been all that long ago that Egypt suffered through a massive rebellion against its government. How secure was he? That was the big question.

Now the Jewish people were worse off than before. Resentment was rapidly turning into hostility: Exodus 5:20-23 And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: [21] And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. [22] And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? [23] For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

The real enemy, of course, was Pharaoh. But when you can’t hit the real source, you may strike out at anyone near you. That’s a price of leadership. When things go wrong, the first person to look to is the leader. Sometimes that’s where the blame should be.
Now Moses had not only to deal with Pharaoh and his might, he also had to contend with some of the very persons he came to deliver. It is sometimes the cost of leadership. The Israelites were contending that if Moses had not been attempting to do God’s will, there would not have been any problems.

No problems except scores of generations living in misery and slavery. No problems other than that God’s promises to Abraham were being held in abeyance for centuries. But....other than that....!

Perhaps both Moses and the people he came to set free assumed that obeying God would be easy. Smooth sailing! They were wrong!

- God’s work is difficult because the stakes are so high – eternity!
- God’s work was and is difficult for Him, too; look what it cost Him to achieve salvation....the death of His Son Jesus.

Was Moses discouraged? Oh, yes! Exodus 5:22-23 And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? [23] For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

It is dangerous to take our defeats personally. In this long, long life God has given me I have seen terrific victories – and also suffered through some excruciating defeats! In those times I was prone to forget that “the battle is the Lord’s.” It is His honor we are upholding.

But God comes through:

CHAPTER SIX

Exodus 6:1-8

Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. [2] And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: [3] And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. [4] And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. [5] And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. [6] Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will
rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and
with great judgments: [7] And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you
a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out
from under the burdens of the Egyptians. [8] And I will bring you in unto the land,
concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I
will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord.

In that passage, God promised three “I will’s.”
  • I WILL bring you out from under the bondage of the Egyptians
  • I WILL rid you out of their bondage
  • I WILL redeem you with an outstretched arm
  • I WILL take you to me for a people
  • I WILL be to you a God
  • I WILL bring you into the land
  • I WILL give it to you for an heritage

What divine promises! I WILL BRING YOU OUT FROM YOUR BURDENS! Oh,
what horrible burdens the Jews bore! Their suffering had become unendurable. And
Christ is still this day bringing those who seek Him out from under their burdens.

This could help build your faith:

1. God had already taken the first step by sending Moses to the oppressed people.
   And in your case, God has already taken the first step by sending Jesus to the cross for
   you.
2. God has already SAID everything He is going to – you will find His promises in
   His Word!
   Now your step is believing the Word and accepting God’s provision for you.

GOD’S RELATIONSHIP TO US

Exodus 6:7 shows us two precious promises of God to His people and they have to do
with our relationship to Him: “I will take you to Me for a people” and “I will be to you
a God.” Yes, that was specifically directed to the Jews; however, there can be little
question that God means it for you and me through Christ’s provision at Calvary.

We are God’s people. We are not our own. We are certainly not the property of the
world system. God means to be the GOD of our lives - not a partner, not a “gofer,” not a
buddy-buddy....but a Holy and Righteous and Faithful God.
Now...Moses’ faith is bolstered! He is ready for the conflict! He goes to the Jews with the good news. Exodus 6:9  

And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

They turned against him so many times between Memphis (Cairo) and the Promised Land. But Moses learned that he was only the MESSENGER...not the MESSIAH. God will never hold you and me responsible for the way our witness is received. He will only hold us responsible for faithfully delivering the witness. My own personal challenge is this: IT IS NOT HOW MANY RECEIVED THE WORD....BUT DID I FAITHFULLY DECLARE THE WORD! I cannot give the “increase” in any aspect of my life; only my God can do that.

Someone has written that the problem with the Jewish captives in Egypt was that their BURDEN was bigger than their concept of GOD. We sing so glibly, “How great Thou art!” But then...when push comes to shove....somehow our concept of God shrinks. God will always be immeasurably bigger than your burden.

Now consider once again God’s commission (Great Commission) to Moses:

Exodus 6:13  

And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

That is still the charge, the commission today. Bring people out of sin’s bondage into the freedom found in Jesus Christ.

About 35 years ago, while still speaking on Revivaltime, I traveled a great deal on weekends, preaching in literally hundreds of our Assemblies of God churches. One weekend found me on Long Island, preaching at our church in Wading River. It was pastored by an “old” Norwegian named Magne Norval (now with the Lord). He was truly one of the great soul winners I ever knew. One afternoon, while eating at a local diner, seated at the counter, a state trooper came in and sat down beside me. He was a member of Magne’s church. He recognized me as the speaker and we started to chat. He told me how his pastor brought him to Christ. He said, “I wanted nothing to do with Christ, Pastor Norval, or his church. But everywhere I went - there he was, pestering me. I could not evade this man!” He said, “I am a Christian today because Pastor Norval gave me no choice! He followed me like the wolverine until I gave my life to Christ!”
Amy and Virgil Cox lived down our street in Sioux City. Amy was a hair dresser and had her shop in their home. My mother frequented her establishment, and like Magne Norval, hounded Amy into the kingdom. Wouldn’t let her off the hook. Amy and Virgil both committed their lives to the Lord. I still remember Virgil singing in church one Sunday morning, “Nothing between my soul and the Saviour so that His blessed face may be seen; nothing preventing the least of His favor; Keep the way clear, there’s nothing between.”

Both Pastor Norval and my mother were “told off” numerous times by those to whom they witnessed. They must have felt discouraged at time. But the spiritual need of those converts was much bigger than Magne’s or Mom’s discouraged feelings. And they kept at it.

So did Moses! And, as we will see next week....THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT BEGAN!