

Plan and Purpose Bible Lesson #III-11—Genesis 50-Exodus 3

We discussed in our last lesson that Jacob-Israel called all of his sons together and told them what would happen to their families in the “last days.” To some it was blessings, but to some the news wasn’t all that good. After completing this we’re told that Jacob commanded his sons, when he died, to take his body back to the land of Canaan and bury him in the cave of Machpelah where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were all buried. Then Jacob lay back down in his bed and passed away.

(Read Genesis 50:1-14) This is the most elaborate funeral that we have recorded in Scripture. This chapter is the only time in Scripture that we find the word embalm, though in a sense, this is probably what the women were planning to do to Christ’s body (Luke 24:1) the day He was resurrected. The word “embalm” is from the Hebrew word *chanat* which Dr. Strong says is a primary root word meaning “to spice.” The word is used one other place in Song of Solomon 2:13 where it is translated “putteth forth” meaning here “to ripen:” **“The fig tree putteth forth her green figs...”**

Joseph, in carrying out the request of his father, had the Egyptian physicians embalm Jacob’s body. We are familiar with the fact that the Egyptians are known for embalming their Pharaohs. This process apparently took 40 days to complete. We’re told that the Egyptians mourned for Jacob-Israel for 70 days. We’re not told whether this included the 40 days for the embalming or whether it took place after the 40 days. Once the embalming and the mourning period were completed, Joseph requested permission from the Pharaoh to complete Jacob’s request to be buried in the cave of Machpelah.

Not only did Joseph, his brothers and all their families, with the exception of their little ones and their herds, make the journey, but all the servants of the Pharaoh, Egyptian elders and soldiers on horseback and in chariots, and many of the Egyptian people went with them so that there was a great company of people went with them to the burial. We’re told that once the burial was complete, Joseph and his brethren and all their families returned to the land of Egypt.

(Read Gen. 50:15-21) Once Jacob was gone, his brothers became very concerned as to what their fate might be at Joseph’s hand since they had treated him so badly and sold him into servitude. However, Joseph understood the sovereignty of God far better than most and acknowledged to them that though they had thought evil against him, God meant it for the good as was evidenced by the fact that Joseph had been there to save them and many more from starvation. So far as Joseph was concerned, he had forgiven them and he continued to treat them with kindness and comfort.

(Read Gen. 50:22-26) Joseph lived to the age of 110 and was able to see his great, great grandchildren from Ephraim and great grandchildren from Manasseh.

Joseph understood that the day would come when the children of Israel would leave

Egypt and return to the land of Canaan. He made the children of Israel swear to him that they would take his body with them when they went and bury him in the land of Canaan.

Joseph died and his body was also embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt to await the return of the Israelites to the land of Canaan.

Continuing our study on into the book of Exodus, we can see the development of this people into the great nation as God promised to Abraham (Gen. 12:2). We need to learn and understand the sovereignty of God as we see Him work His plan. As we have already seen in the brothers of Joseph selling him into slavery and it turning out to ultimately mean their salvation from starvation, we will see God work in mysterious ways as He brings about the fulfillment of the promises He made to Abraham.

(Read Ex. 1:1-14) To fully understand just how fruitful the children of Israel were, we need to look at some figures that will demonstrate this fact. In Genesis 15 God made the covenant or the promises He was making to Abram unconditional. In verse 13, He told Abram, **“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.”** However, when Israel left Egypt, Ex. 12:40 tells us, **“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.** There is no mistake here. We just need to understand what all happened. Paul, in Gal. 4:17 dates the four hundred thirty years from God’s covenant with Abram (Read Gen. 12:1-4). Some believe that the actual first call to Abram came when he was 70 years old while others believe it came when he actually left Haran when he was 75 years old.

The four hundred years actually started when Isaac was born. Though Ishmael was born 14 years before Isaac, he was not the seed of the promise, so we have to consider that Isaac is the seed that **“shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s...”** in Genesis 15:13. Though Isaac lived in the land of Canaan 180 years, he never owned any of it, plus the land of Canaan was actually under the jurisdiction of Egypt at the time.

Isaac was born when Abram was 100 years old and then Jacob was born when Isaac was 60 years old and Jacob went down to Egypt when he was 130. Depending on whether we start counting when Abram was 70 or 75, Abram, Isaac and Jacob had already been in a land not their own for 215 or 220 years which only left 215 or 210 years of the original 430 years. The book of Jasher says that they were only in Egypt 210 years while Josephus says 215 years. Either way, the point is that they increased from 70 men to over 600,000 men (with women and children the number would probably have been over 3,000,000) in only a little over 200 years.

I think we can see then why the **“new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph”** was becoming alarmed. According to the book of Jasher, not only were the Egyptians afraid of the number of Israelites, but also their physical strength. The men of Israel appeared to be much stronger in battle than the men of Egypt. The solution was to place the Israelites into servitude

and work them hard enough that would have neither the time nor desire to have children. The king soon found that this was not the solution for the harder they worked them, the more they produced. The Egyptians caused the Israelites to build some of Egypt's treasure cities such as Pithom and Raamses. Like many things, when something doesn't work, man's solution is to do more of the same. This is what the Egyptians did with the Israelites, yet because God was behind this, the Israelites only continued to reproduce.

(Read Ex. 1:15-21) The king then tried a different tactic. He instructed the mid-wives to kill all of the male babies while letting the female babies live. The mid-wives feared God more than the king and refused to carry out the king's order. When asked by the king why they had refused his order, their explanation was that the Hebrew women were not like the Egyptian women, but bore their children quickly and easily and had their babies before the mid-wives got to them. God blessed the households of these mid-wives because of what they had done in resisting the king.

(Read Ex. 1:22) So the king went directly to the people and ordered that every male baby was to be cast into the river. We're talking about the Nile River as most all of the population of Egypt at that time was located on the Nile River.

(Read Ex. 2:1-4) First note that this man and woman were both of the family of Levi. As we go further in our study, we'll see that the Levites had a special job to do in Israel. They were to be the priests and the bureaucrats of that day, i.e. they served the rest of the people in the functions that we depend on both government and church to do. This baby was to serve in the greatest of these positions.

Second, note that the mother, with the exception of waiting 3 months before doing so, did exactly as the king had ordered. Though certainly not as the king had intended, the mother put the baby in the river.

(Read Ex. 2:5-10) This is an excellent example of God's sovereignty at work. Pharaoh's daughter certainly thought that she was doing things by her own free will, just as we do in the things that we do. But in this case we can certainly see the hand of God in it. We need to learn that God's sovereignty doesn't just apply to certain people, but to all of us.

Instead of killing her baby boy, the boy's mother was actually being paid, by no less than the king's daughter, to nurse and raise this little boy. Eventually, as the child grew, the mother took the boy to the king's daughter for her to finish raising. The king's daughter, because she had "drawn the baby out of the river," named him Moses, which means "drawer out." She could not have known how really significant this name would turn out to be as Moses drew out the children of Israel from Egypt.

Moses was the youngest child of his family, having at least one older brother and an older sister. The older brother was born before the king issued his order to throw the male babies into the river. We'll meet both this brother and sister a little later.

(Read Ex. 2:11-22) Moses' life was a series of three forty year experiences. His first

forty years was spent being educated in the art and practice of being a king. His second forty years was being educated in the art of being a shepherd. The third forty years was spent exercising and putting into practice the knowledge he had gained in the previous 80 years.

The story of Moses killing the Egyptian that was fighting with the Israelite man gives us some idea of Moses physical strength and ability. The fact that he was able to drive away the shepherds, single handed, that were preventing the daughters of the priest of Midian from watering their father's flocks adds confirmation as to his strength and physical ability.

There is sometimes confusion as just who this priest of Midian is. We find him usually being called "Jethro" which means "pre-eminence." He is also called Jether which means the same thing. Here he is called "Reuel" which means "friend with God." He apparently was a chieftain who also carried out priestly duties. "Midian" was a son of Abraham by his wife Keturah. Jethro was an ancestor of Midian. The land of Midian was east and south of the Jordan River in what we now know as Arabia. We're told in Gal. 4:25 that Mt. Sinai was in Arabia, not in the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula as is commonly taught today. Arabia was in what was called at that time the land of Cush. Thus in Numbers 12:1, Moses' wife Zipporah is referred to as an Ethiopian woman. Ethiopia was another name for the land of Cush at that time. So Jethro was a descendant of Abraham through Abraham's wife Keturah and was obviously a Godly man. God caused Moses to go to the area of Mt. Sinai for his next 40 years of training by taking care of Jethro's sheep. This accomplished two things for Moses. He had been served for his first 40 years, now he learned to serve. Secondly, he shepherded these sheep in the very area that he was to later lead the children of Israel.

Jethro, or Reuel, gave one of his daughters, Zipporah, to Moses for his wife. Their first born son was Gershom, which means "sojourner or temporary, dweller," so named because Moses said he had been a stranger in the land.

(Read Ex. 2:23-25) What might later appear to be a possible mistake is that when Joseph brought his father and all his family to Egypt they were treated as a special class by Joseph and the Pharaoh. This caused resentment on the part of the Egyptians, so that after Joseph and the Pharaoh died, this resentment began to build and it turned the tables on the Israelites. Instead of being treated as a special class, or guests of the Pharaoh, they ended up in servitude to the Egyptians. As time went on, this servitude became more and more onerous. It eventually became bad enough that the Israelite people started crying out to God for deliverance. In verse 25 we're told "**and God had respect unto them,**" i.e. He heard their cry with the intent to do something about it.

(Read Ex. 3:1-6) According to my Bible dictionary, Horeb is a range of mountains of which Mt. Sinai is the most prominent. *[Side note: I recommend that if you would like to learn more about what I believe is the real Mt. Sinai, go to www.baseinstitute.org on the web and order their DVD, "Search For Mt. Sinai—Mountain of Fire." It is \$15.00 plus postage. The gentlemen who made this DVD point out a number of things from Scripture that many of us,*

including me, read over without realizing the real significance, that will make the story of the Exodus much more meaningful to you. I believe you will find it very worthwhile.] It is here that Moses kept the flock of his father-in-law.

We're told in verse 2 that an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the flame, but in verse 6 Moses hid his face as he was afraid to look upon God. God says in Ex. 33:20, "**Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.**" However, there are many manifestations of God that man has seen such as this burning bush that Moses is seeing. I am not an expert on electricity, but what little I know about static electricity leads me to believe that this was the phenomena that made the bush to appear to be burning, but not being burned, and why Moses had to remove his shoes to approach the bush so that he was well grounded. While I don't want to take away from any of the miracles of God, it appears to me that quite often God uses natural phenomena to effect His miracles. The miracle is often more a miracle of timing than of the event itself.

Notice that God introduces Himself to Moses as the God of Moses' father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This fact will have significance a little later in our study.

(Read Ex. 3:7-10) The fact that God was telling Moses that He was going to deliver the children of Israel from the oppression of the Egyptians was something that had been promised to Abraham, so it was expected, at least to some of the people. The problem in situations like this is, we as people usually fail to understand and thus believe the wonderful workings of God. We think the situation is impossible, even for God, all too often. The impact to Moses was in verse 10, God is telling Moses that he is the one by whom God is going to deliver the people out of Egypt. For a moment, put yourself in Moses' place and imagine what your thoughts might be if you were told such a thing.

(Read Ex. 3:11-15) Remember the Moses that killed the Egyptian who was smiting the Hebrew (Ex. 2:11). Smiting the Egyptian was Moses' idea of delivering the Israelites from the Egyptians, i.e. his thought of deliverance was that of doing so by force. So when God told Moses that He was sending him to the Pharaoh to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, suddenly, this put things under a different light. Immediately, Moses started thinking of reasons that he was not qualified for the job. He asks the question, "**Who am I?**" Obviously all of these reasons came to mind immediately that made Moses question why had God chosen him.

However, God reassured him that He would be with Moses and as a token or a pledge of this, God told Moses that when he brought the Israelites out of Egypt that they would serve God on this very mountain that Moses was on at that moment. As we have mentioned already, Mt. Sinai was in Arabia, not in the Sinai Peninsula as is commonly taught. We now know that this in fact happened. They spent close to a year there and accomplished a great deal during this time. They received the law, set up the tabernacle, organized the priesthood, and

organized governmentally. They had no choice where they traveled as they followed the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of a cloud by day, so it was God that brought them to this mountain. A great deal of what we have recorded about the Exodus took place here at this mountain.

Moses then began to put forth his arguments as to why he could not do the job. He said that when he went to the children of Israel and told them the God of their fathers had sent him, they would immediately question Moses' authority by asking him what the name is of the God that sent him. Moses asks God, what shall I say?

The translators of the King James and several other versions have capitalized the beginning of God's answer to Moses' question as if that were God's name. The phrase "**I am that I am**" is not the name, but literally means "I will be what I will be (or become)." God then tells Moses to say to the children of Israel, "**I am (I will be) hath sent me unto you.**" This is like saying "I will be _____ hath sent me unto you. The blank would be filled in "according to the needs of those with whom He is in covenant. He who becometh Saviour, Redeemer, Deliverer, Strengthened, Comforter, etc." (note in Companion Bible)

The actual name that God instructed Moses to give to the people is in verse 15, "**The LORD God of your fathers....**" "LORD" is from the Hebrew *Yehweh* with "Jehovah" being the English translation. The name "God" is from the Hebrew *Elohim*. Dr. Bullinger's Appendix 4 of the Companion Bible says, "While Elohim is God as the Creator of all things, Jehovah is the same God in covenant relation to those whom He has created. Jehovah means the Eternal, the Immutable One, He Who WAS, and IS, and IS to COME." So while God first told Moses that He was the God (or Elohim) of Moses' fathers, He now adds "LORD" (or Jehovah) to the name. "LORD" is an improper translation, but it is used throughout the Old Testament by the King James translators when the Hebrew word Yeweh or Yaweh is encountered in the original text. This gives us a more complete understanding of the promise that God made to Abraham in Gen. 17:8, "**I will be their God,**" i.e. He is saying that He is creator and covenant keeper. The point here being that He had promised to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, so by giving the additional name He is indicating that He remembers His promise and will carry it out.

God then adds, "**This is my name for ever (for the ages), and this is my memorial unto all generations.**"

(Read Ex. 3:16-22) God then tells Moses to gather the elders of Israel and tell them what He has told Moses and He says that the elders will believe him and go with him to the Pharaoh. He is to then tell the Pharaoh that the LORD God has met with them and then ask that the Pharaoh let them go three days into the wilderness that they may sacrifice to Him there. However, He tells Moses that the Pharaoh will not let them go. God then says that He will smite the Egyptians with all His wonders that He is going to do and when He is done, the Pharaoh will let them go.

When they go, God tells them not to go empty handed, but they are to borrow of their

Egyptian neighbors jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment which they are to put on their sons and daughters by which they are to spoil the Egyptians. JRL