

Let My People Grow!

All of us, when we are born into this world are born into spiritual land of death or the land of Egypt. Those are our roots. The word Egypt means “hemmed in” and we are certainly constrained by Pharaoh which is Satan. Pharaoh’s name means the “great house” and Satan has been declared the prince of this world. While in Egypt, we are dead in our trespasses and sin, we have to serve in slavery and with hard bondage and bitterness. That produces a groaning in our lives, a longing to be released from that oppression. Pharaoh worked to put the sons of Israel to death; put their male children to death. Satan also wants to take our dreams, our hopes, our aspirations, our very life and put it to death. The wages of our sin and our bondage is death. At some point when we cry out because of the pressure from the enemy; God hears our cry and he knows that we are crying out because of the taskmasters of this world. God sends a prepared individual to help us be led out. At that point, we become a seeker of the Lord and long to be loosed from the bondage we are in. Moses himself is a type of the process that God takes a person through. He also was born in Egypt, but he was miraculously preserved. As he grew in Pharaoh’s house, Moses longed to deliver God’s people, his own people, but then murdered a man and had to flee for his life. He went out into the wilderness where God took him through hard times and he spiritually became a young man by learning to overcome and having encountered God at the burning bush experience. At the burning bush, God answered each of his excuses why he could not be a leader. Then Moses returned from the wilderness to come back to land he fled from and there proclaimed what God told him to, “let my people go”. God also provided him with Aaron, an assistant, so we have a leader and an assistant coming back to the home that they were raised in, the nation they were raised in, and proclaiming that God wanted to set the children of Israel free. As Moses comes back, he comes back as an elder or father with preaching and with the signs that God had given him. There are eight demands Moses gave and eight refusals of Pharaoh. The most effective means of releasing the people was the pressure God put on Pharaoh and Egypt with the ten plagues. Each of the plagues was designed to nullify some of the so-called gods of Egypt and to show God’s power was greater than theirs. It was through these ten pressures or power encounters that God eventually caused Pharaoh to release the children of Israel. These ten plagues or pressures as we could understand them in area of evangelism, are when we see God is allowing pressures to come into an individual’s life. Then we can begin like Moses to see God’s hand at work and proclaim that God is here to set them free. As people sense these pressures, it is stripping the gods of this world from their effectiveness in holding the person’s life and to help them see that God’s power is a greater power.

As we want to move out of this world and seek God, we come to a place where God is ready to release us as we are obedient. That brings us to the infant stage or the time of the Passover. This is a time when God wants to deliver us, make us a member of His covenant and take us away from the domination of this world. God’s original purpose for Israel was seven-fold. The first was that they would obey God’s voice. Second, that they would keep His covenant. Third, that they would be a peculiar people. Fourth, that they would realize that all the earth is the Lord’s (which speaks of world-wide vision.) Fifth, they were to be a kingdom. Sixth, they were to be priests. And seventh, they were to be a holy nation. The Passover shows and defines the point at which they were released by the covering of the blood of the lamb which speaks of forgiveness. They were taken out of Egypt and went through the Red Sea, which pictures their baptisms - baptism through the water and baptism by the cloud latter at the mountain, which is of the spirit.

It pictures some worship; rejoicing as they danced on the other side and sang praises to the Lord. Their subsequent journey gives us a pattern for Christian discipleship. In their journey they had to pass certain tests. They also began to receive manna from the Lord. Manna is a type of our personal devotional and relational life, drawing from the Lord our daily bread. Also, during that initial time, Jethro came and taught Moses to organize the entire community into small groups with leaders for care and counsel. Their goal at this point was to become disciples (learners) at the mountain where God would give them further instructions. At the mountain they received the ten words or commandments of God which were to be the central values by which they governed their lives. For their journey ahead and entry into the land, there was need for God to instill His values into them. The ten commandments and the subsequent laws that God gave, helped to outline all areas of social and spiritual life. One of the corresponding passages in the New Testament is the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus gave His sermon and he sat on a mountain with the twelve disciples gathered.

We move on to a young man or teenager phase of Christian walk. As they came to the mountain, they were to be apprenticed as a young person would be to their father for purpose of learning a trade. When we are weaned from being a babe in Christ, just desiring the milk of the word and needing others around to carry us, we come to a “young person” stage where we are to attach ourselves to God. Our personal relationship develops as God teaches us and guides us how to walk with Him. One of the key things that a young man does is to learn how to gain victories as a solider. There in the wilderness, even as Jesus was in the wilderness, they went through testing. There are ten testings that God allowed them to go through up until the border when God had them ready to begin to go into the promised land. But the ten spies gave an evil report while two spies gave a good report. There were ten that could not believe that they could be victors while two knew that God could accomplish it through them. Although they did wander for forty years, God brought a new generation that went through similar stages of testing and the opportunity to go in again.

As the believer goes from the beginner stage, through the intermediate stage, to the advanced stage, he is implementing the pattern and plan of God. Even as God took the Israelites to the border of the land of Israel, God takes us to a place where we are ready to begin to inherit His promises. We need to become fathers of faith in our ability to see that God is with us and we can become overcomers in every area of our life. Even as Joshua and Caleb knew this and sought to lead the people into it, so God gives us the ability to become leaders. We are to influence people, invite them to participate in all that God has for them, show them the path and direction of discipleship and begin to reproduce these same principles in their own lives. Just as the nation of Israel had seven nations in the land of Canaan to conquer, so we are with God’s power sent back into the world, not to be of it, but to begin to do spiritual warfare and to take it captive for Christ. It is our role to plunder the enemies’ territory and to take the spoil and start the process all over again in bringing them out of the devil’s kingdom and into the infant stage in Christ. We are builders of His plans and purposes.

We see that not all were willing to enter into the land because of lack of faith. But God provided the opportunity again years later after the old generation had died out. So to, there are Christians who stagnate or are unable to enter in at some point, but God graciously opens the door again as the old ways would die. We are led by the Holy Spirit who is our Joshua, to take us into the land of God’s promises and possessions. This is the point where the gates of Hades (which speaks of the unseen world) cannot stand against the victorious church. We advance as the ministers of Christ into the fullness of God’s plan of “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.”