

The Bible Story In A Year

Week 5

We now enter a second section we may call, “The Exodus.” When we concluded the story in Genesis, Joseph had died and given instructions that his bones would be brought out of Egypt (Genesis 20:25, in a clear reference to the promises God had made). Entering this second section of the Bible story moves us forward in time and we will see that conditions have worsened for God’s people in Egypt. Yet, this was foretold (Genesis 15:13-14).

1) Israel in Egypt. Israel went from being a large family (Exodus 1:1-5) to being extremely numerous (1:7). But, a new king (Pharaoh) of Egypt came to power at this time who did not know Joseph and what he had done for Egypt (1:8). He determined to deal harshly with the Israelites and put them to forced labor as slaves in the land (1:9-14). Pharaoh also instructed the male children born to the Israelites to be killed by being thrown into the Nile River (1:22). It is at this point that we are introduced to Moses, who was hidden by his God-fearing parents along the banks of the Nile (2:1-4). There, Pharaoh’s daughter found Moses and adopted him (2:5-10). Then, when Moses was 40 years old (Acts 7:23), he went out to his people (the Hebrews/Israelites), saw how they were mistreated (2:11), and killed an Egyptian (2:12). However, news of this situation spread and Moses fled (as Pharaoh wanted Moses killed, 2:13-15). Meanwhile, after a long time passed, the king of Egypt died, the Israelites cried out to God for help, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (2:23-25).

2) Moses is sent to Pharaoh. When Moses was shepherding and came to Horeb/Sinai (the mountain of God, Exodus 3:1), he turned aside whenever he saw a bush that was burning but not being consumed (3:2-3). From this bush, God called Moses to go to Pharaoh (3:4-10). Despite Moses’s objections, God promised to be with him and lead the Israelites out of Egypt (3:11-12). Moses was to say that the I AM (the God of their ancestors) had sent

him to deliver Israel (3:13-17) and go to Pharaoh requesting that the Israelites go on a three-day trip into the wilderness to sacrifice to God (3:18). However, God knew the king would not listen and promised they would still leave Egypt after miracles and plundering the Egyptians (3:19-22). Moses was also given miraculous signs and his brother, Aaron, as his spokesman.

3) The ten plagues. Pharaoh did not receive the message from Jehovah God because he did not know this God (Exodus 5:1-5). In fact, Pharaoh forced the people to even more difficult labor. Yet, God still promised to deliver Israel so they would know that Jehovah is their God (6:2-8). Following this, God brought a series of ten plagues on Egypt (7-12): Water turned to blood, frogs, gnats (biting insect), flies, death of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the death of the firstborn. Yet, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by the instruction God had given to let the people go and he stubbornly refused. Through these great signs God performed, He was making it clear that He is Jehovah God who is worthy of worship and service (7:5; 8:20-23; 9:13-16; 10:1-2). Prior to the final plague, God also instituted the Passover so the Israelites would remember what God had done for them throughout the generations (12:24-28), when the Lord passed over those who had placed the blood on the door frame of the house and spared them from death. Interestingly, God used these plagues to defeat the various Egyptian gods (12:12)!

4) Israel is delivered. After the conclusion of the tenth plague, Pharaoh sent the Israelites out of Egypt, as God had said (Exodus 12:29-32, 40-41; Genesis 15:13-14)! In addition, the Israelites carried Joseph’s bones with them (13:19; Genesis 50:24-25). God led them on their journey by means of a pillar of cloud during the day and pillar of fire during the night (13:20-22). Then, the Lord gave instructions that would make it appear to Pharaoh that Israel was wandering in confusion and chase after them – and

God would receive glory through what He would accomplish (Exodus 14:1-4). When Pharaoh heard about this, Pharaoh and his army pursued Israel and Israel was afraid. Yet, Moses urged them to stand firm (14:13-14). The Lord then gave instructions concerning what the Israelites must do to receive the deliverance He would provide (14:15-18). As Israel crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, God fought for Israel and saved Israel by defeating the Egyptian army (14:29-31)! After this, the Israelites praised God for what He did (15:1-6) and how this would cause others to fear (15:11-18).

5) Israel travels from Egypt to Sinai.

Having been delivered from Egypt, they still needed to learn to rely upon God. God led the people from the Red Sea to the Wilderness of Shur (where they were three days without water) to Marah (where the water was bitter) to Elim (where there were twelve springs and date palms) to the wilderness of sin (where the people grumbled for food) and eventually to Rephidim (where the people complained about water and fought the Amalekites). Through it all, God continued to provide for and deliver them (i.e. Exodus 16:4-8) – and promised to take care of them if they obeyed (i.e. 15:26)! From Rephidim, Israel traveled to the Sinai wilderness and Mount Sinai (where God had called Moses from) and God extended His covenant to the people (19:3-8).

God has kept His promises and a large number of Abraham's descendants have been delivered from Egypt. Now, they are on their way to becoming the nation God had promised they would become and to inherit the land God promised to give. But, before this, they will spend some time at Sinai to learn what God desires of them as His people.

Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correcting: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?