

Kia ora!

Many a time I am asked about our relationship with Te Atua (God), and so I think it is important to look at the events surrounding the call of God to Moses (+/-1450-1410 BC). The important roleplayers are Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, Pharaoh's daughter, Aaron, and Joshua. Here goes a bit of background leading up to our text of Apostle Flor on Exodus 15 from 2015..

Fluit-Fluit, my storie is uit. Nag Ou Grote! Hoop dit help.

Br. Theo Ph.D

The overarching theme of the Bible at the beginning is emphasized here in the book of Exodus again. God, who created all things and blessed it as "good", promised to bless humans and cautioned them not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Rebellion against God's divine will and taking upon themselves the responsibility to decide what is good and evil for themselves, caused Adam and Eve to fall in a state of sin and becoming separated from God.

God, does not give up, but works tirelessly to restore this relationship and chooses Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:1-6) as the means to accomplish the restoration of the Covenant relationship between God and his creation.

So, Exodus is the second book in the Bible. It follows the story of Abraham (Gen. 12; see also Flor, 15 Dec 2015) and his descendants as recorded in the Book of Genesis. Joseph, Jacob's 11th son, had saved his brothers and his father's family from famine in the land of Canaan, after becoming a senior official in Egypt after which, his father Jacob and his family of 70 receives an invitation from the Pharaoh at the time to settle in Egypt (Alexander & Alexander, 2002).



Exodus can be divided into two parts and has been seen by many theologians as the formative phase of the people as Israel. The first part deals with the Exodus of God's people from slavery in Egypt (Ex 1-18). The second part deals with people gathered with Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai and where the covenant with God is made and ratified (Exodus 19-40).

400 years have passed since the time of Joseph and the Hebrews have become fruitful, multiplied and filled the earth (Gen 1: 28). However, the current Pharaoh of Egypt did not view the people of God as a blessing and considered that their increased numbers has become a threat to his kingdom and enslaves the people of God and drowned the new-born male children (Ex. 1: 8-22).

At the time of the drowning of the children, God allows an Israelite woman to save her son by placing him in a basket and putting him in the river (Ex. 2:1-10). This basket is then retrieved by the daughter of Pharaoh, who calls the baby, Moses, meaning "Rescuer".

When learning that he is also a Hebrew, Moses runs away after killing one of the overseers working with the Hebrew slaves (Ex: 2: 11-12). While away from Egypt, God speaks through a burning bush and instructs him to return to Pharaoh and the land of his birth and to tell Pharaoh to let God's people go (Ex. 3; see also Apostle C. Flor 24 May 2015; Alexander & Alexander, 2002). God also says that he will harden the heart of Pharaoh. God's response would be to use 10 plagues to bring down his judgement upon Pharaoh, as the source of evil in the lives of God's chosen people.

In chapters 5 to 15 we deal with the confrontation between God and Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardens his own heart and God responds with the first 5 plagues. After each plague we see Pharaoh hardening his heart and resolving to keep the Hebrews as slaves. It is important to note that God is not at this stage causing Pharaoh's heart to harden, but that Pharaoh does so by himself. It is only with the next 5 plagues that we see God hardening the heart of Pharaoh. The underlying theme here is that although God knew that Pharaoh would harden his heart, God still gave him the opportunity to humble himself, accept God's will, and let his people go.

The final plague ushers in the time of Passover, where God now brings justice to Pharaoh and his father. As the Pharaoh's father killed all the new-born male children, so God will kill the firstborn in Egypt of every family and bring restoration in the eyes of His people and an affirmation that He is a just God who remembers His promises and covenants. The Hebrews, forewarned by Moses, celebrate the first Passover as God carries out his dreadful threat to pass through the land and kill every first-born of man and beast, thereby executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt (Rielly, 1911).

God will save his people through the blood of a lamb and here starts the institution of the Passover meal that is celebrated every year by the people of the book. On the night before they left, they had all to sacrifice a spotless lamb and take his blood and put it on the door post and lintel of the house, so that when the plague enters Egypt, the Passover meal and blood of the lamb saves them. A very important theme is emerging that will find resonance latest in the gospel of Matthew where Jesus is portrayed as the new Moses who is the Lamb of God and who saves the people of God from sin, hell and death. Pharaoh does not escape the divine plague and finally let the people go.

However, Pharaoh changes his mind and sends his army to bring the Hebrew slaves back to Egypt, but the Hebrews escape. A dry passage in Red Sea, miraculously opened by God, proves a fatal trap for a body of Egyptian pursuers, organized by Pharaoh and possibly under his leadership (Rielly, 1911; see also Apostle C Flor WOL 25-2012). In Exodus 15 we find the first song of praise which glorifies God as King.

The people sing for joy as God's actions has revealed his true nature, that is that on their behalf, He has confronted evil and rebellion against His Divine will and has delivered them out of slavery leading them to the Promised Land and promising to dwell amongst them.

So, from creation, human beings rejected God's judgement of what is good or evil and forfeited the invitation to live in a harmonious and cooperative relationship with God (NCRS, 2016a). Sin, hell and death entered the world through original sin bringing confusion and helplessness.

We now pick up the teaching from Apostle Flor from 2015.

Linking this with the New Testament we can see Jesus is the new Moses as Matthew reminds his readers of the Exodus story when God, through the leadership of Moses, rescued the people of Israel from slavery and oppression in Egypt (NCRS, 2016a). Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, is being presented here as the new leader who will save the people of Israel from their afflictions.

Led by Moses the people promised, 'All that the Lord has said we will do' (Ex. 19:8). In return God promised, 'I will be your God and you shall be my people' (Lev. 26:12 see also NCRS, 2016b). God remained ever faithful to the Covenant even though the Israelites had to be continually called back to it by the Prophets (NCRS, 2016b)

“The New Covenant, inaugurated by Jesus (see Luke 22:20) does not revoke the Old Covenant, but fulfils it” (NCRS, 2016b, p. 162).

References

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