

APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

for *Shemot*

by Mark Huey posted 09 January, 2010 www.outreachisrael.net

Matthew 22:23-33, 41-46

Mark 12:18-27, 35-37

Luke 20:27-44

Acts 3:12-15; 5:27-32; 7:17-36; 22:12-16; 24:14-16

Hebrews 11:23-26

“God of the Living”

This week we begin the Book of Exodus with *Shemot* (Exodus 1:1-6:1), and the accounts of the life of Moses and the deliverance of the Ancient Israelites from Egypt begin to unfold. For the remaining four books of the Torah, the forty-year journey, from the fertile fields of Goshen to the plains of Moab overlooking the Promised Land, is detailed. Naturally, this pivotal transition for the Israelites—from once being Egyptian slaves to later being ready to occupy Canaan—is something that is quite significant for one’s reading of the entire Bible, being referred back to throughout the Prophets, Writings, and Apostolic Scriptures.

One of the most all-incorporating passages, which appeals to much of what we are considering this week in *Shemot*, is the general overview of these historical events found in Stephen’s discourse in Acts 7. Some additional insights into the upbringing of Moses are added to the narrative, so that a more comprehensive understanding of Moses’ life can be understood. Stephen includes various references to Moses’ education, his knowledge of his Hebrew heritage, and the thought that he was going to be the deliverer of Israel at forty years of age:

“But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, until THERE AROSE ANOTHER KING OVER EGYPT WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT JOSEPH [Exodus 2:2]. It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son. Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. And when he saw one *of them* being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?’ But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US? YOU DO NOT MEAN TO KILL ME AS YOU KILLED THE EGYPTIAN YESTERDAY, DO YOU?’ [Exodus 2:13-14] At this remark, MOSES FLED AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN [Exodus 2:15], where he became the father of two sons. After forty years had passed, AN ANGEL APPEARED TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT Sinai, IN THE FLAME OF A BURNING THORN BUSH [Exodus 3:2-3]. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look *more* closely, there came the voice of the Lord: I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB.’ Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look. BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘TAKE OFF THE SANDALS FROM YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE ON WHICH YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND. I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT AND HAVE HEARD THEIR GROANS, AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.’ This Moses whom they disowned, saying, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?’ [Exodus 3:4-10] is the one whom God sent *to be* both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years” (Acts 7:17-36).

Additionally, the author of Hebrews describes some of the important aspects of Moses' life in Egypt. In Hebrews 11, a chapter dedicated to various champions of Biblical faith, Moses is portrayed as a Hebrew who was willing to endure the ill-treatment of the Egyptians—even though his upbringing had entitled him to great privileges as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. The author of Hebrews concludes that Moses looked forward to the future rewards from the eternal, unseen God, who he came to know more closely throughout the course of his life:

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Messiah greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen” (Hebrews 11:23-27).

But perhaps beyond the references to Moses' life made by Stephen, and the further amplification of Moses' choices as supplied by the author of Hebrews, one of the most important aspects in *Shemot*—the scene of the burning bush—is specifically appealed to by Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 12:27; Matthew 22:32; Luke 20:38). Yeshua directly takes on the mistaken views of the Sadducees, who categorically denied the resurrection (Mark 12:18):

“Yeshua said to them, ‘Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *passage* about *the burning bush*, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC [Exodus 4:6, 15, 16], and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken” (Mark 12:24-27).

The Sadducees questioning Yeshua were trying to trick Him in their inquiries about life and death. Yeshua responds by stating that when the dead are resurrected, their new existence with reanimated bodies will be similar to the angels. Resurrected people will not have sexual relations, like normal living people in the current age. The appeal made to Moses' encounter at the burning bush is that the Lord is God of the living—as all people will rise in the resurrection (Daniel 12:2). Because all will be resurrected, once someone dies God does not stop paying attention, quite contrary to the Saddusaical view that death is the ultimate end of a human being (influenced by Greek Epicureanism).

The fact that God is concerned with His people is seen in the wider message of what He speaks to Moses at the burning bush. While people will be resurrected in the future age, God is concerned about them in the current age. He heard the cries of Ancient Israel in Egyptian bondage, and responded to them by providing deliverance:

“The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, ‘I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.’ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ He said also, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. The LORD said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.

Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:2-10).

If the Holy One sees the affliction of His people and hears their cries, and has a record of responding, should we not continually beseech Him for deliverance and protection today, from the ails of the moment? If He is the God of the living, will He not respond to the pleas of the living? Without reservation, as Moses’ generation received, Yeshua confirmed, and the Apostolic Scriptures elaborate—and countless followers of the Messiah since have witnessed—the Lord comes to the rescue of the living. *You too can be counted among the living!*

Until the restoration of all things...

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