Bible Study Twenty-Eight

January 26, 2022

 The Book of Exodus Conclusion and Summary

Without doubt The Book of Exodus is one of the most important books of the Old Testament. It is here that Israel is forged into a Nation and the Chosen People of God. Joseph had gone down into Egypt followed by his nine brothers. Later they would become the Twelve Tribes of Israel, joined by the two sons of Joseph himself.

No one knows exactly how long the Hebrews were in Egypt. Perhaps several hundred years before they were forced into slavery by a jealous and vengeful Pharaoh. The events recorded in Exodus: The Ten Plagues; The Passover; The Crossing of the Red Sea; and the Covenant on Sinai all are so historic and important that they remain in the mainstream of Hebrew thought for thousands of years.

Everything in Jewish theology, liturgy and religious practice goes back to the Book of Exodus and the time of Moses. Once out of Egypt they became a Nomadic People. In the Wilderness they became united around the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle that they called the Tent of Meetings and the Holy of Holies. They believed that the Ark represented God’s presence in their midst. It was the same God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that now they were his chosen people.

The Bible says that the people were in the wilderness for 40 years but in reality, it was closer to three hundred years. They moved from place to place settling where there was water and grass for their herds and flocks. Perhaps they stayed in the same place ten to twenty years, or moved with the seasons and the weather. Undoubtedly, they were also mercenaries fighting for other nations in their wars. As they grew in strength, they became a formidable military force., they would choose their campsites for defense and very soon became feared by their neighbors.

The Hebrews believed that as long as the went into battle with the Ark before them then they were invincible and could not be defeated. This united them as twelve Tribes and welded them as one nation. Here in the Wilderness they built tradition, law, regulations and their practices. Many were the result of the harsh nature of their life. They were forced to purify everything and have strict laws about washing and hygiene that stayed with them. The laws were necessary to prevent disease and illness and preserve life. So even with ritual washings and things like circumcision you can see that they originated with health. It is easy to see those laws about marriage, and morality were important to a Nomadic people living so close to one another. There was no room for wrong-doers or crime, and it was punished accordingly.

Israel could not forget the Wilderness years. The annual Passover meal reminded them of their history and was imbedded in their consciousness. The stories of their past were repeated around the campfires and never allowed to die.

The Ark is described in chapters 39 and 40 when Moses inspects the Tabernacle and the setting up of the Tent of Meetings and the Holy of Holies. Later in Canaan, the Ark will be enshrined in Shechem until King David moves it to Jerusalem his new capital.

Read Chapter 39 & 40

This concludes the Book of Exodus. Watch out for another exciting Bible Study next week.