Bible Study Eighteen

November 10th, 2021

EXODUS

Of all the Books in the Old Testament the Book of Exodus is probably the best known. It is also the most dramatic if not epic! –The Jews called it: “The Great Saga of Israel’s Salvation.“ -It begins with Moses’ birth; his adoption; building the City of Thebes; cast out into the desert; life as a shepherd on Sinai; the Burning Bush; confrontation with Pharaoh; the Ten Plagues; the Passover; the Exodus; Crossing the Red Sea; the Ten Commandments, the Covenant with Yahweh. The only words to describe it is ‘Epic.’

The Book of Exodus is Israel’s great drama and the time that affects the entire nation for two thousand years and beyond. Ask any Jew: “Who wrote the Book of Exodus?” and they will tell you: “Moses did.” But none of Israel’s history or story was ever committed to writing until the time of David around the tenth and Eleventh centuries. No, these stories were memorized, told, repeated, taught, often around a camp-fire. They were preserved, till the time Israel settled in the land of Canaan that we now call Palestine.

No story from Exodus can begin without the mention of Joseph who occupies the last pages of the Book of Genesis and lived for one hundred and ten years. For it was Joseph who went down into Egypt as a slave and rose to be the chancellor and right-hand man of the King, the Pharaoh. Exodus begins by naming the twelve sons of Jacob who went down into Egypt and the role of Joseph as their savior in a time of famine. The opening lines tells of how Joseph and all his brothers are now dead but the descendants of Israel flourish and grow in number.

“Now Joseph and his brothers and all of that generation died, but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became extremely numerous, so that the land was filled with them.” Ex.1:6f.

Exodus explains that a new king comes to the throne who never knew Joseph. Upset that the Hebrews are so many he devises a plan to contain them. Camps are built, slave-masters appointed, and every Hebrew is forced to work building cities, in the field, working long hours, oppressed and enslaved. The Great Saga of Israel’s history has begun.

Pharaoh attempts to force the Jewish mid-wives to kill all male births. But the women fear God more than the king and disobey. The people increase. The king orders all new born boys to be thrown into the Nile. Ex.1:22f.

Chapter 2 begins with the birth of Moses.