

In God We Trust

By Kevin Phipps
Parashah Shemot

The positive situation Isra'el was in at the end of Bereshit (Genesis), becomes a very bad situation at the beginning of Sh'mot (Exodus). With a new Pharaoh, came new restriction and way of life, which was very difficult and oppressive. At this point, Isra'el had been in the land for over 400 years. They appear to know of the God of their fathers, but living in the pagan land of Egypt that long, how well did they really know Him? How much did they trust Him? The primary rule to being part of the Kingdom of God, is to acknowledge God as King and to trust in Him as such. These first five chapters of Sh'mot, which make up this week's parashah, lay the backdrop for God's battle with the forces of darkness in Egypt, where Isra'el would learn just who their King is, and how to trust in Him alone.

Trust is something which is learned through experience. When you sit in a chair, you have faith that the chair will hold you up because you have sat in other chairs many times in the past at they have held you up. This experience has taught you that you can sit in a chair, with confidence and trust in that chair. In the four hundred years since Isra'el had been in Egypt, how much of God's power and reality had the people of God actually experienced? I am guessing not much. Now that it is time for them to leave and become the nation of God, set apart unto Him, to be a light to all nations, it was time God exalted Himself before His people so they could put their trust in Him to the degree they would have to to accomplish the purpose God had planned for them.

This was not only a lesson in trust for Isra'el, but for their leader, Moshe, as well. God had brought Moshe through impossible odds to not only survive, but to grow up in the household of Pharaoh himself. Here, Moshe would learn not only of his own people, the Hebrews, but of the Egyptians as well. All this would prepare Moshe for the task of leading God's people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land.

It seems to me that being a Hebrew, growing up on Pharaoh's household caused for Moshe as great deal of confusion as to who he really was. At the burning bush, when God commissions Moshe to the task of leading His people and bringing them out of Egypt, Moshe asks God, " Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the people of Isra'el out of Egypt? " (3:11) This is a man that from birth " was beautiful in God's sight " , and " was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and became both a powerful speaker and a man of action. " (Acts 7:20,22) Yet at the burning bush Moshe declares, " But I'm certain they won't believe me, and they won't listen to what I say, " (Sh'mot 4:1) , and " Oh, Adonai, I'm a terrible speaker. I always have been... " . (4:10) I think that to God and anyone else at this point in Moshe's life, he was the perfect man for the job. He had been prepared for this moment from the day of his birth. To Moshe, however, he became unsure of himself, and lacked the confidence to carry out what God had given him to do.

What is the solution to this problem? When Moshe asks God, " Who am I " , God does not answer his question describing Moshe. He responds, " I will surely be with you. " Later, He asks Moshe, " Who gives a person a mouth? Who makes a person dumb or deaf, keensighted or blind? Isn't it I, Adonai? " . Humanly speaking, Moshe was more than capable to

do the job, however, besides that, more importantly, God was going with him to enable him to accomplish the goal of bringing His people out of Egypt to the promised land. Convincing one man to go lead a nation out of the arms of a pagan tyrant was one thing, teaching an entire nation to trust in Him to lead them out of that land of oppression, under threat of annihilation, was quite another. God had His work cut out for Him, but He is more than powerful and more than faithful to make it happen. However, in order to do so, things would have to get worse for Isra'el, before they got better.

When Pharaoh made Isra'el make bricks without supplying straw and without reducing the quotas, the foremen blamed Moshe, Aaron, and God for putting them in an impossible situation that was only going to lead to their death at Pharaoh's hand. However, God had already promised that he would defeat Pharaoh and save Isra'el. When God says He is going to do something, it is as good as done. Even when situations get worse, no matter how bad things get, God's promises will prevail. This is what God is trying to teach Isra'el. Their situation with the bricks seemed impossible, and humanly speaking, it was, but what they failed to recognize was that God was on their side. He was able to provide for them, and either enable them to miraculously make their quota, or He would rescue them from the consequences for not doing so.

The existence of Isra'el is like watching a James Bond movie. Everyone knows that Hollywood is always going to want to be able to make more Bond films, so everyone knows that as they watch one of the movies, no matter how impossible a situation James Bond gets in, somehow he is going to get out of it and survive. When God says He will kill the firstborn of Pharaoh and rescue Isra'el from their oppression, He is giving away the end of the story. Knowing that, we know, and Isra'el should have known that what God said was going to happen would happen, and trusted Him in the midst of their impossible situation. Isra'el could not have known at the time that the ten plagues were coming around the corner. God would wage war against Pharaoh and the forces of darkness in Egypt. Human situations which seem impossible, are nothing in the hand of the God of the universe. However, to contend against God and become His enemy puts oneself in a situation which truly is impossible. Relying on God's promises and trusting in Him is key to get through this life whether situations are good or bad.

“ ...We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Adonai brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand. Adonai worked great and terrible signs and wonders against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household, before our very eyes. He brought us out from there in order to bring us to the land he had sworn to our ancestors that he would give us. Adonai ordered us to observe all these laws, to fear Adonai our God, always for our own good, so that he might keep us alive, as we are today. It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to obey all the mitzvot before Adonai our God, just as he ordered us to do. ” (D'varim / Deuteronomy 6:21-25)

“ And the foreigners who join themselves to Adonai to serve him, to love the name of Adonai, and to be his workers, all who keep Shabbat and do not profane it, and hold fast to my covenant, I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples. ” (Yesha'yahu / Isaiah 56:6-7)

“ But to as many as did receive him, to those who put their trust in his person and power, he gave the right to become children of God, not because of bloodline, physical impulse or human intention, but because of God. ” (Yochanan / John 1:13)

“ If we acknowledge our sins, then, since he is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and

purify us from all wrongdoing. (1 Yochanan / 1 John 1:9)

These are just a few of the thousands of promises God gives in His Word. For those who put their trust in Him, He has promised life, love, peace, joy, strength, goodness, and all the benefits of the Kingdom. There will be a day when God will seek vengeance for all the wrongs that have been done against His people. The wicked will be cast into the lake of fire, and the righteous will live with Him the New Jerusalem for eternity.

With trust in God, all His people, both Jew and Gentile can live life knowing they already have victory over sin and death through the work of Yeshua the Messiah. By His stripes we are healed, and by His Spirit, we live victorious. No matter what situation you find yourself in, there is nothing too difficult for God. If God can remove an entire nation out of slavery in Egypt, He can rescue from whatever bondage you may find yourself in. All He requires is your trust and obedience. I leave you now with one more promise, made by Yeshua Himself.

“I am coming soon, and my rewards are with me to give to each person according to what he has done... Yes, I am coming soon!” **(Revelation 22:12,20)**