Survey of Biblical History – Part 1: Creation to Christ

#6 – MOSES AND THE EXODUS

Introduction

The Israelite nation was forged in the fires of bondage for 400 years (cf. Gen. 15:13). A new Pharaoh arose (Ahmose I) who did not appreciate Joseph's accomplishments. To control the quickly populating Hebrews, they were thrust into slavery as a way to eradicate the emerging nation (Exod. 1:15-22). Here we see the manifestation of spiritual opposition toward the promises of God to Abraham. Satan always opposes God's plans. Israel's deliverance from bondage is the Biblical paradigm for redemption.

Moses (1526-1406 BC)

1. **The Birth of Moses** (Exodus 2:1-10)
   Moses' mother hides him in the Nile. Pharaoh's daughter sees the baby and adopts him as her own, securing his mother as his nurse. Pharaoh's daughter may have been Hatshepsut (1503-1483 BC) of Thutmose I (1526-1512 BC). Hatshepsut married Thutmose II (1512-1504 BC), who died prematurely, bearing her no sons. A son of a concubine became the heir apparent, Thutmose III (1504-1450 BC). Great animosity existed between these two. She was a powerful ruler, defying Egyptian custom. When Thutmose III came to power he destroyed most of the marks of her reign. Hatshepsut was possibly grooming Moses to take the king's throne, explaining his fear of Thutmose III. Moses' 40-year flight to Midian coincides with his long reign, Egypt's most powerful ruler. Amenhotep II (1450-1425 BC) would be the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

2. **Moses' Failed Attempt to Deliver** (Exodus 2:11-15)
   Moses sought, apart from God, to act upon his concern for his brethren. Although, justifiably motivated, his murderous action backfired. He did not command any respect from his countrymen, and his fear of Pharaoh left him with no choice but to flee the country in 1486 BC.

The Preparation of a Deliverer

1. **Moses' Encounter with God** (Exodus 3:1-5)
   The cry of the Israelites for deliverance (Exod. 2:23-25) coincided with God's desire to groom Moses into a deliverer. Moses encounters God in the burning bush. The ground was holy due to the presence of God. The removal of the sandals represents that man must come before God unhindered by his own human trappings. Maintaining distance demonstrates that man cannot dwell in the midst of God's holiness. Holiness means complete purity from sin, but also separation from the mundane. God's holiness speaks of His otherness. God prepared Moses to stand before His holiness so he could communicate with Him "face to face" (Num. 12:8). We see a contrast between God's transcendence (absolute otherness) and His immanence (nearness).

2. **Moses is Inadequate for the Task** (Exodus 3:6-12)
   God informs Moses of the task to deliver His enslaved people. Moses protests that is not qualified. This is precisely the kind of person God uses to accomplish His purposes. He does not seek the one with strong ambition and natural ability, who is supremely self-confident and full of high self-esteem (See 1 Cor. 1:27). The godly person is not one who exalts in self-righteousness, but who sees himself as empty and incapable of attaining holiness on his own. Rather, he boasts in what God has accomplished for him (See Jer. 9:23-24). True righteousness consists in denying self and entrusting oneself to the provision of God alone. Humans cannot trust themselves. God alone is trustworthy and deserving of our objective faith.

3. **God Revealed to Moses** (Exodus 3:13-15)
   Moses asks God for His name (i.e., nature). Names in the Ancient Near East often identify a person's character (cf. 1 Sam. 25:25). God reveals Himself as the "I AM", the self-existent One. It speaks of His holiness and wholly otherness and His supreme being. (cf. 6:2-3 - God revealed himself visibly to Moses as Yahweh, but only as El Shaddai to the Patriarchs).

4. **The Plan Revealed to Moses** (Exodus 3:16-22; 4:1-31)
   God demonstrates His sovereign providence over the affairs of men and of nations in what He tells Moses (Heb. 4:13). Moses should have responded in full trust of God. Instead, he falters. Moses' objections reveal his fear and distrust of God. God's response does not seek to bolster his self-confidence. Instead, God encourages him with His own presence and power. Again, God always tests his servants to determine their faithfulness. God delivers amidst dire circumstances, insurmountable opposition, and impossible odds.

The Plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7:20-12:36)

The Plagues served as a sign to both Egyptians and Israelites alike that God is indeed God who judges and delivers nations (cf. Ex. 9:15-16; 10:1-2). A pattern emerges in the plagues: Moses warns Pharaoh, Pharaoh rejects the warning. The judgment falls and Pharaoh begs mercy and agrees to comply with the injunction. God relents but Pharaoh hardens his heart. Note the plagues serve as an attack upon the false gods of the Egyptian Pantheon (Ex. 12:12):

Plague:	god(s) attacked:
1. Nile to blood	Khnum (giver of Nile, ram), Sothis (Nile floodwaters), Hapi (Nile god)
2. Frogs	Heh (depicted as frog, manifestation of Hathor, foremost goddess)
3. Sand flies(?)	Geb (earth god), Nut (sky goddess)
4. Beetles(?)	Khepry (sacred scarab beetle, god of dawn)
5. Murrain(?)	Apis (sacred bull), Hathor (Sun goddess, cow)
6. Boils	Typhon (the evil genius), Isis (goddess of life & healing)
7. Hail	Set (god of crops), Shu (god of air), Amun (wind god, king of gods)
8. Locusts	Serapia (protector from locust plagues), Osiris (god of agriculture)
9. Darkness	Ra (Sun god, nat'l deity), Hathor (Sun goddess, cow), Nut (sun, moon, star goddess)
10. 1st born dies	Anubis (Jackal-protector of dead), Osiris (fertility god), Horus (falcon-god of pharaohs)

The Passover (Exodus 12:1-28; 43-51)

The final plague was the most severe. The angel of death was employed to kill the first born sons/animals of Egypt while passing over Israel. Pharaoh's own son was prevented from taking the throne. Amenhotep II's eldest son never took the throne of Egypt, rather a younger son became heir (Thutmose IV). It has been deduced that the older son died prematurely (cf. Cambridge Ancient History). The Passover celebration pictures God's redemptive purpose His people. The sacrifice of the lamb indicates substitutionary atonement. It foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ (1 Cor. 5:7).

The Exodus (Exodus 12:29-42; 13:17-15:21)

Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go (1446 BC). God demonstrates His power and authority to Egypt and to Israel (Exod. 14:3-4). God tested the Israelites as the approaching armies trapped them against the sea. Trusting in the deliverance of God is a perpetual lesson of faith (Exod. 14:13-14, 31). The deliverance of Israel and destruction of Pharaoh's armies shows the two-fold work of redemption, the judgment of enemies and the deliverance of a newly possessed people (Exod. 6:6; 7:4-5; cf. Col. 1:13-14; 2:15).