Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church
10 Downing St. Oakleigh, VIC. 3166

DHW

The Book of Exodus

Chapters 6

LESSON 6

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes in life events do not happen as we expect. When these happen we naturally become frustrated and down-hearted, especially when God's promises do not seem to come true. This happened to Moses. What should we do in such situations? Like Moses we ask God why. Does God hear? Does God give us an answer?

There are many things which happen in the world we simply cannot understand. If God is sovereign and is still in control over the affairs of man, why is the world not in a better shape? Like Moses, many people will blame God.

Moses put two hard questions to the LORD God: Why was this evil happening to the children of Israel? Why sent him? How did God respond to his questions? This is what we will try to learn in chapter 6 about God. .

STUDY THE WORD

The LORD Reveals His Covenant Name to Moses

We left off in chapter 5 with Moses complaining to God. Events did not happen as Moses expected. His first encounter with Pharaoh had produced negative results. Pharaoh not only stubbornly refused to let Israel go, but he increased the burdens of the children of Israel. The imposition was too much for the slaves. When the children of Israel blamed Moses and Aaron for the cause of their present sufferings and afflictions, Moses' only recourse was to turn to the Lord. How did God respond?

Firstly, God did not reply to Moses' accusations directly. It seems that God was silent in regard to Moses' complaints. God knew the weaknesses of man. Instead God responded by not talking about the past but simply proceeded to tell Moses what He intended to do to Pharaoh (v.1). God would deal with Pharaoh in such a manner that Pharaoh would strongly drive the children of Israel out of Egypt

Secondly God reminded Moses of who He was and what He planned to do to the children of Israel. God revealed His covenant name to Moses. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had known God as the Almighty

God (*El Shaddai*).[1] Now God self-revealed His personal covenant name to Moses—"I *am* the LORD" (Hebrew: *ani Yahweh*), translated as Jehovah (v.3). God repeated His name five times in this chapter (vv. 2, 6, 7, 8, 29). It is a significant name for He is a covenant-keeping LORD God.

What do these two different names of God reveal about Him? *El Shaddai* characterizes God as omnipotent and all powerful who is capable of supplying all the wants of the Patriarchs. By His name *I am the LORD* (*ani* Yahweh) God reveals that He is the ever-present, unchangeable, active, and authoritative, real and effective covenant-keeping LORD. The full import of this description is given here by God. The LORD is a covenant-keeping God and is concerned about His children. The LORD rescues, redeems, adopts, sustains, and gives to His people.

God revealed to Moses seven things that He would do with regard to Israel, His children. Each begins with the phrase *I will*:

1) *I will bring you out from the burdens of the Egyptians,*
2) *I will rid you out of their bondage, and*
3) *I will redeem you,*
4) *I will take you to me for a people, and*
5) *I will be to you a God,*
6) *I will bring you in unto the land,*
7) *I will give it you for an heritage:*

And the reason - that they might know that *I am the LORD* (*ani Yahweh*).

This historic deliverance of Israel, the children of God, from bondage in Egypt dramatically illustrates the redemption of our spiritual life. We were once under bondage of sin and Satan. And the same LORD has delivered us from that by the redemptive work of Christ Jesus by paying the penalty of sin and conquered and judged Satan at the Cross. It was by the shedding of the precious blood of the LORD Jesus Christ that we are all redeemed.

He has taken us to be His people and He our God. He has taken us from the

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[1] God made known to Abraham that He was the Almighty God --Genesis 17:1 *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

Isaac, in blessing Jacob, used the name of God, *Elohim*—Genesis 28:3 *And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;*

Jacob sending his sons to see Joseph in Egypt used the name of God Almighty in blessing his sons—Genesis 43:14 *And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.*

kingdom of darkness into the marvellous light of His Kingdom, and we trustingly and joyously wait for Christ's return when He will set up His millennium reign on earth. The Lord be praised!

An interesting and significant fact is that each of the verbs of the seven *I will* is in the emphatic perfect tense in the original Hebrew text (but translated into English as future). What does that mean? Insofar as God is concerned the promised events were already accomplished as having completed—a done deal![2] God thinks and sees things not as we do because He does not live in the sphere of time and space like we are. As far as God is concerned everything is in the present. What He intends to do, He does it and it is done! But with us, who live in the sphere of time and space, there is a period of time for actions to be accomplished

This is a great comfort and encouragement to all who love and serve the LORD. God's word is true and sure and it will come to pass in His time

[2] In theological jargon, it is called the Hebrew prophetic past.

The LORD Repeats His Charge to Moses to Speak to Pharaoh

After the LORD had given His assurance to deliver the children of Israel to Moses, we observe that he did not raise any objection or question. He immediately spoke all the words of the LORD to the children of Israel (v.9). Moses was encouraged. But the children of Israel refused to listen to him. They were *anguish of spirit* (literally, shortness of breath). The emotional and mental pressure was too much to bear. They showed a broken spirit because of *the cruel bondage*. They were dejected. A lesson to be learned here is that our spiritual life for the LORD our God can be negatively and adversely affected by conditions and circumstances in which we live. Therefore, we need to be aware of this tendency and prevent ourselves from sliding into such an attitude that deprives us of the LORD'S wonderful spiritual heritage and blessings for us.

And this spirit of the children of Israel affected even Moses although he was encouraged by the words of the LORD. Moses began to feel once again of his own inadequacy and despondency (v.12). When the LORD reaffirmed the call and commanded Moses, *Go in, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he*

let the children of Israel go out of his land (v.10) Moses once more raised an objection. Moses argued that if he could not impress upon his own fellow brethren, it would even be worst before Pharaoh. He raised again the objection which he had earlier brought up to the LORD that he was *not eloquent*, and *slow of speech*, and *slow of tongue*. This time he did not use the same words. He described figuratively that he was of *uncircumcised lips*. Circumcision is an act of purifying or making good. The process of circumcision of any part of the body makes it better.[3] Unbelief in the midst of God's people is contagious. It affects others and it spreads, even to Moses. Check our unbelieving heart.

The Genealogies of Levi and Aaron

This section in a way interrupts the flow of the narrative events. We are given here a list of genealogies. It started with the mention of three of the sons of Jacob, namely, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, and the names of each of their sons are also given. They were the sons born by Leah to Jacob. Reuben was the first born and the names of his sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. For Simeon, the second born, the names of his sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar and Shaul. The third son after Reuben and Simeon, was Levi, whose sons were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. And the age of Levi was given an hundred and thirty seven years. We observe that Reuben and Simeon, after the brief mention of them, were not mentioned anymore. It seems that the purpose in mentioning them is to give authenticity the historicity of their existence. They were the sons of Jacob, who were God's chosen people.

Levi was significant because of Moses and Aaron. In chapter 2, the names of Moses' parents were not revealed. But they are mentioned here. Kohath, the second son of Levi, had four sons, namely, Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel (v.18). Amram the eldest married Jochebed, who was Kohath's sister, bore Aaron and Moses. Now the age of Amram was given an hundred and thirty seven years (which was the same as Levi, his grandfather). Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, and she bore him four sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These were faithful saints who served the LORD diligently. Later in the history of Israel

[3] George Bush, *Exodus,* 86.

they belonged to the priesthood, Aaron being the first High Priest. Moses' and Aaron's cousin, Korah, son of Izhar, who was the brother of Amram, later in the history of the nation rebelled against Moses, and was severely punished by God (Numbers 16:19). One more person was highlighted and he was Eleazar. He was Aaron's son and married Putiel and she bore him Phinehas. So Levi's genealogy stretched five generations – Levi to Kohath to Amram, to Aaron, to Phinehas (who was the great grandson of Levi).

One of the purposes of the genealogy is to show Aaron's call and credentials and the legitimacy as a leader with Moses. It also explains the importance of the Levites and their role and function in nation building.

The LORD Speaks to Moses Again

Having established the genealogy of the Levitical tribe, the LORD turned to Moses and repeated His injunction to him to speak to Pharaoh all the things He had told him to say. Moses was to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt. Once again, Moses tried to excuse himself by saying that he was *of uncircumcised lips.* What Moses was saying was that he was not eloquent as he had mentioned in the beginning when the LORD called him (4:10). In the next chapter, the LORD would respond to his excuse.

Practical Value

We learn in His dealings with Moses that God was patient, longsuffering, gentle and kind. God accepts people as they are. Francis Schaffer once remarked that with God there is no "little people." Every child of God is important to Him and He has a place for that person in His overall plan and purpose in the world. We should prayerfully find out what role or function we play in God's vineyard. This is a great comfort and encouragement in our walk with the LORD. While we cannot understand or explain the failures and disappointments in life, and feel dejected and despondent, we should still keep trusting in the LORD. The LORD sees, and He knows and He will act just as He saw and understood the sufferings of His people in bondage in Egypt.

We learn also that we should not dwell on our past experiences, whether good or bad. Just as the LORD looked ahead and told Moses what He intended to do, we ought to have that attitude in life. Stop complaining or resting on the

laurels of the past, but start thinking and planning what to do next. Move on.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart presents a very sobering lesson to all of us. We should not harden our own hearts when God has spoken to us. Do not let our pride and self-conceitedness cause us to resist the LORD. If we keep on hardening our hearts against God's prompting, God will give us over to our own reprobate minds and hearts, and judicially harden our hearts beyond the point of no return. Today if we hear His voice, harden not our hearts (Hebrews 3:15).

The list of genealogy highlighted both saints and sinners among the descendants of Levi. They are examples for our learning. The text is equally God-breathed and is *given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). AMEN