**Exodus: Called to Freedom**

***Session 1: Exodus 1 – 2: A People and its Hero***

Introduction

* God did not just call His people out of Egypt to freedom. He is calling His people to something.
* The Exodus is not just a story of political liberation. In Exodus we see not only what God calls us from but what He calls us for.
* God does not merely want us to be free from something but to be free for something.
* The escape out of Egypt is only half the story. What is the goal of freedom?
* When the Jews observe Passover, they are to observe as though they themselves personally made it through the Exodus out of Egypt.
* In the Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul advises the Corinthians that they too are to see themselves as related to those who came up out of Egypt.
* They were to see the Israelites as their ancestors even though they are Gentiles.
* The story of the Exodus is our story. It is a story of who God is and what he calls us to be.

Chapter 1

* Jacob’s twelve sons settled in Egypt. All of the offspring of Jacob was seventy persons.
* In Genesis it is revealed that Noah had seventy descendants. The Jews believed that there were seventy nations.
* Seventy became an important biblical symbol for all the nations.
* Israel was to serve as a priestly kingdom to the seventy nations. That the offspring of Jacob was seventy is symbolic that they will serve the seventy nations.
* Israel represents the nations as God’s first-born son.
* A pharaoh came to power who did not know Joseph. In Hebrew the word for “to know” refers to a covenant knowing. A covenant relationship.
* In ancient near east documents the word “know” was used for a lot of covenant treaties.
* If someone says that they know somebody it means that they are in a covenant relationship.
* One of the major themes of Exodus is the theme of knowing (covenant).
* The population of the Israelites multiplied in Egypt. Pharaoh saw the Israelites as a potential threat and his concern was that they would escape.

To control Israel’s population

1. The Israelites were given hard work (slavery). In spite of the slavery the Hebrews continue to multiply.
2. The mid-wives are instructed to kill male newborns. The female Hebrew will be allowed to live. The Egyptian wives fear God and reject this order of genocide.

* The scripture reveals the names of the two head midwives but doesn’t reveal the pharaoh’s name.
* In both Hebrew and Egyptian culture to not name someone was a punishment. To not name someone was a judgement of their sin.
* In not naming pharaoh the biblical text is dishonoring him. That his name my be forgotten.

1. Pharaoh orders his people to take the Hebrew males that are born and to throw them in the Nile.

* This genocide of the Hebrew male infants leads us to the heart of the story.
* A Hebrew woman from the tribe of Levi will refuse to kill her son. This child will become a deliverer for the Hebrews.

Chapter 2

* A couple from the tribe of Levi has a son. Pharaoh has ordered that every Hebrew male born be thrown into the Nile.
* In time the female Hebrew children would have to marry Egyptian men.
* Moses’ mother placed him in a basket and placed the basket in the Nile.
* The word for basket in Hebrew, tevah, means ark. The very word found in the story of Noah’s ark.
* The ark that Noah made brought salvation to humanity. This little ark will bring about the salvation of God’s people.
* It is pharaoh’s daughter who finds the basket. Pharaoh’s daughter takes pity on the baby.
* She knows that the child is Hebrew. The child in circumcised whereas the Egyptians circumcise male children when they are thirteen years old.
* Moses’ sister Miriam followed the basket. Pharaoh’s daughter sees Miriam and advises her to fetch a Hebrew woman to be a nurse to his Hebrew child.
* Miriam goes to her mother. Moses’ biological mother was his nurse.
* The name Moses means “he who draws out of water”. The name Moses reveals his vocation.
* Moses will draw his people through the Red Sea. Through the water of the Red Sea God’s people will be liberated and free.
* As an adult Moses will see the plight of his people and will have compassion on them.
* When an Egyptian was beating a Hebrew slave, Moses kills him. Moses’ first attempt at liberation was violent.
* It is a great irony that the man who gave us the Ten Commandments commits murder.
* On the next day Moses sees two Hebrew’s fighting. He tries to be a mediator.
* Moses is rejected. One of the Hebrew men ask Moses if he will kill them as he killed the Egyptian.
* When pharaoh learns that Moses killed an Egyptian, he sought to kill Moses.
* Moses flees to Midian. Midian is in modern day Saudi Arabia. Moses encounters the seven daughters of Jethro at a well.
* Shepherds bully their way to the well. Moses defends the seven daughters of Jethro.
* Moses fulfilling his vocation to draw out of water, waters the flock of Jethro.
* Jethro gives his daughter Zipporah to be Moses’ wife. Moses names his first son Gershon which means, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land”.
* In Genesis 15, God made a covenant with Abraham. God tells Abraham the future of his descendants.
* ***“Know for certain that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be slaves there…”*** *(Genesis 15:13)*
* The cry of the Israelites regarding their bondage was heard by God. Egypt was the most powerful nation in the world.
* God hears their cry and sees their plight.