

THE BIBLICAL WILD

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WEEK IV: Exodus 1-18, Psalms 18-22

From Psalm 22, let us pray.

Oh God you are Holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried and were saved. In you they trusted and were not put to shame. Oh Lord deliver me. AMEN.

This week we turn our attention to the book of Exodus and one of the seminal stories to give shape to the people of Israel and even to us today.

Joseph had lived, Joseph had died, and now arose in Egypt, a pharaoh who did not know Joseph. And so it was that the Israelite people found themselves in deeper bondage, put to harsh work, and under oppressive kinds of conditions.

There was a man, an ancestor of Jacob, who married and bore a son. And because the Pharaoh had declared that all of the male sons born of the people of Israel would be killed, this child was hidden. When he became older he was placed into a basket of reeds into the Nile and Pharaoh's daughter found this child. He came to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and came into the household.

Like many of us Moses has grown up in a rather privileged position and finds himself in young adulthood going out and having his eyes opened for the first time to the injustice and oppression that is around him. He sees the severe harsh treatment of one of the Hebrew slaves and it brings him to a righteous kind of anger - an anger that ultimately results in his killing one of the Egyptians.

Moses flees from the land of Egypt into the land of Midian. There he met a woman, Zipporah, and married her and became a tender of the flock.

Moses experiences a bush that is burning. And from this bush that doesn't seem to disappear but continues to burn endlessly comes the voice - a voice that claims to be God and Moses listens.

God says to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob has appeared to me. I given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. And I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt.'"

Moses, like you and like me, resists that initial call from God. It seems too daunting, it seems impossible, that he could live into it, he doesn't have the gifts - there are all kinds of barriers that Moses puts before God. God dismisses all of them and instead reminds Moses that he will be with him through it all.

So he goes back to the people and through a series of conversations and attempting to get the people together and negotiate with Pharaoh, well, it is not to be. And so there are plagues that come across the land and a way for God to help Pharaoh's heart to no longer be hardened and for Pharaoh to let the people go. And yet nothing seems to work.

In the end Moses called the people to flee from Egypt and they were followed by the Egyptian army. They came to the Red sea and the waters were miraculously parted so that the Hebrews could get through and the Egyptian army was vanquished.

This part is the beginning of the Exodus, the fleeing from Egypt; the time when the people were delivered from captivity and bondage and oppression by the God that loves them and makes covenant with them – a God that keeps God's promises.

As you continue your study and devotion this week I have some questions for you: How do you resist God's call? -How does that resistance fall away? In what way is God calling you to be a voice against injustice?

I invite you to share your insights and to place something in the comments section available on the website: www.thebiblicalwild.org.