

Kingdom Report

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The Plan for Discipling the Nations: Abraham the Evangelist, Joseph the Economist and Moses the Apostle

I want to give you a template in the Old Testament to help understand God's strategy of discipling the nations – which I believe is the era we as a church are now in. And especially now needed as the disaster and tragedy of what is unfolding for millions in the Middle East.

We need a reminder of the great work God did for the people of Egypt through the evangelistic work that Abraham did in Egypt, the economic plan of Joseph and the Apostolic and Prophetic work of Moses.

The Bible tells us that Abram was a Hebrew (Gen.14:13). But who or what was a Hebrew? Bible commentators actually do not know. Ungers Bible Dictionary says, "The origin of the name Hebrew offers difficult problems" (p.547). Unger says that the word can come from the Hebrew verb meaning to "cross over". So a Hebrew was one who "crossed over". The other usual interpretation is that Abram was a descendant of Eber but the problem here is that there were other descendents of Eber that were not called Hebrews. And there were descendents of Abraham that also were not called Hebrews (Ishmael, Esau etc.)

What happened was this: Abram was an evangelist for the Lord God spreading the gospel of the One true God to kings and people living under the deception of multitudes of false gods and idols spread by the Chaldean's of UR. Adam gave that gospel story personally to Lamech who personally told it to Shem who was the king/priest Melchizedek of Jerusalem who personally told it to Abram. God appears to Abram in Ur and tells him to leave. He eventually ends up in Egypt. God had a plan of salvation for the Egyptians.

The Egyptians were caught up in Sumerian/Chaldean lies of who the gods were and who created man and the world. The Sumerian god Enki who saved mankind through knowledge was at war with the main god Enlil who created mankind and wanted to destroy mankind. These were the lies discovered in the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Eridu Genesis.

So the Lord sent Abraham to Egypt and devised a plot to get him an audience with the Pharaoh. Genesis 12:14-20 tells us that "the Egyptians" saw Abram's wife was amazingly beautiful and told the "princes" who told Pharaoh. He grabs her for himself and then God

starts plagues on Egypt. Pharaoh gets the message and urgently restores her to Abram. You can imagine what is happening now...the whole court and the nation is buzzing...who is this man and who is his God? Our Pharaoh is dead scared of him and our gods are powerless to protect us from his God. You can bet Abram had a great opportunity to witness for the truth. The exact same scenario played out years later with king Abimilech (Gen.20:14).

Now lets thicken the plot a bit further. The people we call "Israelites" in Egypt were not known by that name but were called "Hebrews" by Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And Numbers 1:46 tells us that at the time of the Exodus there were 603,550 men of fighting age. Now add women and children and elderly to that number and you have about 3 million Hebrews coming out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

But here is the problem: Gen.46:26-27 tells us that there were 70 who went with Jacob into Egypt and Numbers tell us that 3 million came out. The further problem is this: Numbers 26:59 indicates to us that Jacobs descendants were in Egypt for four generations. Some think they were there 430 years from Paul's reference in Gal.3:17 but that is incorrect. Paul is referring to Abraham from his time in Canaan (which was under Egyptian control) to the Exodus . The actual years in Egypt itself according to the Rabbi's of the Talmud (and Josephus in his history of the Jews) was 225 years. So the mystery deepens...how do you get from 70 to 3 million in four generations or about 225 years? You cannot do it by producing large families. So the mystery deepens...who were the Hebrews?

But now the excitement is around Abram's God, the only One true God. The conversions start en-masse...people "cross over" from false idols to faith in the one true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are called "Hebrews", people who have crossed over. History records a famous Pharaoh by name of Akhenaton who years after the Exodus abandoned the false gods of Egypt and proclaimed there was only one true invisible God. Today a similar phenomenon...by the hundreds of millions people are being called the "born again" crowd. You know them...they worship the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They also have "crossed over".

God had a plan for His "Hebrews" to get them out of Egypt.....

Years later Abram's great grandson Joseph ends up as the Prime Minister after saving Egypt from famine. He is a national hero and everyone remembers the amazing story of Abram. And more "cross over" from heathen idol worship to the God of Abraham, and Jacob and Joseph.

Now here is something important to note which is applicable today. Joseph had this prophetic vision of 7 years of plenty and 7 years of drought. He devised a very clever plan to store the bounty at cheap prices and then sell it for much higher prices during the great famine. The results were economically devastating for the people. Joseph managed on behalf of Pharaoh to not only corner the grain market but the people ran out of money

to buy grain from Joseph and eventually had to mortgage and sell all their land and animals to Pharaoh to survive:

Gen 47:20-23 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.

Gen 47:23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.

The whole land ended up as the Pharaoh's property and the people as his working serfs. What we would call today "sharecroppers". They owned nothing. Except the priestly class. They did not have to sell their Temples. Pharaoh took care of them.

While Joseph was alive all went well. Everyone was treated with respect and paid well for their labour. But after Joseph died the people were abused, wages dropped and became landless peasant serfs of the king. The worst treated especially by the ruling priestly and noble class were the "Hebrews" who no longer believed in the gods of Egypt.

God had used Joseph and the great drought to set up an economic system that took away their land and property assets in Egypt, turned them into wage slaves and caused great economic hardship for them and their children. The Lord in effect set up the circumstances for their exit, for their longing for their own land. Ready for Moses the deliverer with a message of salvation and a land of their own. They wanted out!

Moses took them out with a promise of a Promised Land. But first they had to be "born again" from Hebrews to Israelites. At Sinai the Lord said I want you to be My people". I want you to be a nation of priests and kings and be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

The Message of Today....

God's promises to Abraham are now passed on to the church....his "seed"...

he much preached on prophecies relating to Abraham are:

- The Lord would make him the father of a multitude of seed who would be like the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea. (Gen. 28:13-14)
- The Lord would bless all nations through his seed. (Gen 12:3)
- The Lord would give his seed a land inheritance
- He would be the father of many nations.(Gen 17: 4-5)

Today a similar phenomenon...by the hundreds of millions people are being called the "born again" crowd. You know them...they worship the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They also have "crossed over". Coming from all nations tongues and tribes they have a new identity. "Born Again" by the Spirit into a new identity in Christ.

And this is the point that Paul was trying to make in his great epistles of Romans and Galatians. Being a genetic Jew means nothing to God. Paul realized who the "Hebrews" were. They were not the physical descendants of Abraham. They were his spiritual children. ***"Know you therefore that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham"*** (Gal 3:7) The church of Jesus Christ is the Israel of God and the new Promised Land which is our inheritance is all the earth (Romans 4;13)

A question to those Christian Zionists who think the Jews in Palestine are the Israel of God here is a simple question:

- who has been a blessing to all the families of the earth? The Jews or the Church of Jesus Christ who have taken the gospel of salvation to all people and all nations?
- And if Abraham and Jacob both had promises that they would be the father of many nations to the north, south, east and west....who and where are these multitude of Israel nations? (Gen. 35:9-11)

And who is the nation born in one day? Isa. 66:8?

Who is the nation that fulfills what the Lord told Israel....

Exodus 19:6: ***"And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."***

Deut. 7:6: ***"For you are a holy people unto the Lord your God: the Lord has chosen you to be a special people unto himself..."***

Shall a nation be born in a day?

But now lets move the story further and from this mystery explained, we can now answer the mystery of Isaiah 66:8, ***"Shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children"***. And this is where we get understanding about prophecy in the Middle East.

Every prophecy book I have read refers the fulfillment of this verse to the day in May 1948 when Israel declared herself a nation once again and was recognized as such soon after by most nations in the world. Evangelicals rejoiced at this apparent miraculous fulfillment to prophecy. But was it really?

The key to understanding who Israel is and more importantly where Israel is will be found in Psalm 132:13. Israel was called to be the habitation of God on earth. The people among whom and in whom God dwells. This is important: If you can find out where God dwells in the earth, where His manifest presence is in the earth then you have found Israel. Just because people speak Hebrew does not mean they are Hebrews and just because you draw lines on a map and call it "Israel" does not mean it is Israel. The issue is: Where does God dwell, that is where Israel is.

When Israel left Egypt the presence of God was present with them in the form of the glory cloud and fire over their heads. God dwelt among them therefore they were to be holy.

When Israel entered the Promised Land the presence of God was to be manifested in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. The glory flame of God's presence was manifested over

the Ark between the Cherubim. This was so awesome that they tied a rope around the High Priest to pull him out in case he died in the fearsome presence of God.

The first place where God established His presence was in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1; Jeremiah 7:12) In the days of Eli the priesthood corrupted itself and God removed His presence from Shiloh (Psalm 78:60) and moved it to Jerusalem (Psalm 78:67-68). But the nation corrupted itself and God lifted His presence from the Most Holy Place to the hill outside Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives (Ezekiel 11:22-23).

And from the Mount of Olives the glory of the resurrected Jesus ascended to heaven no more to dwell in temples but it returned 10 days later in the Upper Room which was located on Mount Zion and fell on the 120. We Charismatics make a big deal about the sign of speaking in tongues that manifested that day. But we forget about the fire that appeared over their heads. The glory fire of God's presence had returned to earth! But no longer to dwell in temples made by hand but to dwell in His people, the Israel of God. John the Baptist prophesied this when he said I baptize you in water but He, Jesus will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire!

That is why on the day of Pentecost when the glory of God came down and filled the disciples, a nation was born in one day fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. The nation of Israel was reborn on that day. Jesus told the Jews of his day, ***"Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."*** (Math. 21:43) That nation was formed on the day of Pentecost!

Peter was there and knew a new nation was born that day when he preached and thousands "crossed over", which is why he wrote, ***"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood a holy nation..."*** (I Peter 2:9). Paul knew what this great sign meant. That is why he said we individually are now the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:15) and we collectively, the Church are His temple (Eph. 2:19-22). That is why we are the Israel of God. He dwells in us and among us. Where two or three of us are gathered in His name there is Jesus in our midst.

As Jacob's 12 sons and the 70 went into Egypt and came out with a nation of millions of "Hebrews", so also Jesus sent His 12 and the 70 to preach the gospel of the Kingdom and hundreds of millions of "Hebrews" or "born-again" have come out to form a new nation of the Israel of God.

And now we must get out of the dead end of Christian Zionism and looking to the Jews of Palestine as the seed of Abraham, Let's take the wonderful message of Luke 4:18-19 that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us with a gospel of good news to the poor, the brokenhearted...just like those poor Egyptians were poor and broken hearted they received the message of redemption from Moses and "crossed over" and became Hebrews and disciples into Israel a new nation at Sinai.

We need to carry that same message to all the world and create new Hebrews and Israelites and new nations for Jesus to inherit. (Psalm 2:8)

