Bible Study Twenty November 24th, 2021

 The Book of Exodus (continued)

Moses and Aaron have failed in their attempts to convince Pharaoh to ‘Let the Israelites go free.’ Moses promises that great disaster will fall upon Egypt. The first comes in the form of the River Nile turning to blood. Yet Pharaoh does not relent as his magicians can do the same thing

The Nine Plagues that follow fail to persuade Pharaoh. We are left to wonder why the writer goes into such fine detail about each plague. Frogs; Gnats; Flies; livestock; boils; hail. Locusts; and darkness followed.

Each follows the pattern of Moses going before Pharaoh and the words: “Let my people go!” Pharaoh relents but immediately retracts when the plague is over. What is going on we ask?

To answer that question, we have to transport ourselves to when Exodus was written around 1100 BC, some 400 years after the events described.

The people of Israel, now occupying the ‘Promised Land’ have chosen Kingship while Samuel is the last of the Judges. They no longer think in terms of the Twelve Tribes, the Covenant with Moses, the Ten Commandments nor the Exodus. The writers are determined to illustrate the magnitude of what God did for Israel as a constant reminder that he is their God and they, his people.

The Plagues are leading up to something even bigger. We feel it in the writings. The central drama of the Book of Exodus is not the Ten Commandments, nor the dynamic crossing of the Red Sea, but the Passover.

The Passover is detailed. Detailed in the instructions Moses gives to the people in Chapter 12. It is to be remembered and observed forever in the minds and lives of Israelites from that night and forever.

This is the night on the tenth day of the month when the angel of death will pass through Egypt and kill every first-born male, Egyptian, slave girl or animal. The plague will affect every living creature including the Hebrews. The Passover is about salvation, salvation from slavery but also salvation from death itself.

 The Passover

Must take place the same month each year and on the tenth day.

Take a male lamb, without blemish, one year old and slaughter it on the 14th day. You must judge how many people are to eat and if necessary, invite in other neighbors and households. You must eat it standing, clothed as if for a journey, with staff in hand and sandals on your feet. You are to take the blood of the lamb and sprinkle it on the doorposts of the dwelling.

You will eat the lamb roasted over the fire, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

This is the instruction that Moses handed down to be repeated and relived each and every year on the same day and month.

“For this night I will pass through the land of Egypt and smite every first born child and there will be great wailing and mourning throughout the land.” Says the lord.

All comes to pass as Moses has predicted including the death of Pharaoh’s oldest son.

Israel marks the night and names it “Passover” for on this night God passed over the houses of Israel and spared their lives.

The instructions are repeated before the end of chapter 12 so that there can be no misunderstanding.

Read Chapter 11 and 12 of Exodus to 12:31.