

CONTINUING THE “GREEN LETTERS”

FALL : 2023 - SPRING: 2024

CHAPTER 45, pg. 203-206

11/29/2023

I. GOD COMMUNICATES WITH MAN IN WRITTEN FORM - THE TANAKH

A. What we call the Old Testament has at least four prominent purposes or uses.

- 1. To give us an accurate history and historical count of real people, in real places, in real time. From Genesis 12 to the end of the book is an accurate history of God’s chosen people, Israel, and the countries/nations/peoples who interact with them*
- 2. To give us an accurate hope (confidence) in the future through the prophetic Word of God; it specializes on revealing God’s redemptive plan through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God and King of the cosmos*
- 3. To encourage us with sound wisdom from God for living in this present age as found in the wisdom literature; we can know God’s will for how He wants His people to live among the nations who, as yet, do not trust Him; this wisdom gives us songs to sing and prayers to pray that we can know are in His divine will and will therefore be answered*
- 4. To give us analogies and examples of greater spiritual truths as seen in real life issues of historical consequences*

B. Let’s look at the latter purpose (#4) to see an example or analogy of the principle of growth found in Chapter 45, Reckoning from Romans 6.

- 1. Romans 6 is about life springing from death. It is about the end of one way of living that makes way for the next way. It speaks of the importance of the “death” of the old man, “death” to a former enslaved way of living that is essential to living the godly life of the citizen of the kingdom of God. One cannot enter or even see the kingdom of God if he is not born again in this way.*
- 2. One of the biggest issues of Old Testament history is how God is going to fulfill His promise to Abraham of a godly people living in a God-restored earthly kingdom that gives*

all nations the blessing of God. The main obstacles are the untrustworthiness of man toward God and one another and an angelic host of heaven broken by a rebellion against God. He has a plan from before time that He slowly reveals to mankind through the prophets of Israel and ultimately through His own begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals this through one major episode in the life of Israel as it becomes a nation: the Exodus from Egypt!

II. THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT AS AN ANALOGY FOR THE BELIEVER'S DELIVERY BY CHRIST FROM SLAVERY TO SIN AND SATAN

A. Through the subtlety of gradual slavery to the gods of Egypt

- 1. Their ancestors had a personal relationship with the LORD but these people had not. Joseph had been the last of their relatives to have a personal relationship with the LORD and he had been gone awhile. Through just everyday living to thrive and succeed they had grown accustomed to the theology of their surroundings. Whether they believed in the gods of Egypt or they just tolerated them by indifference and necessity, they were still living under them and somewhat practice their ways. When a pharaoh arose that had no clue of their heritage and who feared their growing numbers, he became much more forceful in enslaving them until they had no freedom. They were the slaves of the Egyptian gods and their human servants.*
- 2. God chose one of the Israelites as His messianic deliverer for these people He had loved from the past. He brought that one out of Egypt and into the wilderness where he met the Lord and received his mission. He was to gain the release of the captives from the gods of Egypt and their puppet human king and bring them into the land He had promised to their ancient father, Abraham. They would learn about Him through personal daily encounters; they would learn of His powers and might through the plagues; they would learn of His choice of them through the selective destruction of the first born of everything not "under the blood" of the lamb.*
- 3. By trusting what the deliverer had told them about God and putting their trust in the promise of God, they were delivered in a single night from slavery to the Egyptian*

gods. But that did mean leaving behind their slave homes, their slave lifestyle, and their slave “comfort” of knowing for certain (?) what each day would hold (the security of captivity).

4. At any point in their flight they could have turned back. But the joy of being free and the promise of their own land, their own fields, their own culture, their own food, their own choices, their own homes and freedom was enough to lure them as long as there was no obstacle before them.
5. But when they reached the Red Sea while being pursued by the mightiest army of the then known world, their joy and thoughts of freedom turned to ashes. Fear set in; regret would follow...but God once again made Himself personally known to them and they would cross the no-turning-back Red Sea and be committed to going on with God since all last connections to survival had just been cut off. Their enemies and former protection were drowned in the sea; any hope and security from the old way of life was gone. **They were dead to Egypt but alive to God.**
6. Egypt could offer them no security. The old ways were lost to them. Unfortunately, it was not dead in their memories. The hope of something better had not entered their imaginations. They heard the words of YHWH given by Moses of the promised land flowing with milk and honey but that had not captured their imagination. But they did know they were free of slavery! But slavery is security if you know of nothing else and security, even if maintained by tyrannical dictatorship, still brought some level of peace of mind. Freedom is hard to live with. They did not have security and peace of mind with this new god who had just killed so many people; this god who lives in a whirlwind of fire and cloud, who is frightening just to be around. They had no idea where they were going, how they would be provided for and they were unsure Moses knew anymore than they did. **They knew they were dead to Egypt but they were not secure yet with this new god.**
7. They would have to test Him and His deliverer, Moses, and test Him they did, time and again. When they lost track of Moses, they defaulted to all they knew and bolted back to idolatry, back to the old ways. This they did through their

memories of the old ways, for the presence of the old ways was dead (separated from them). **Their crossing the Red Sea is analogous to water baptism for us; it is our acknowledgement that we have left behind our slavemasters and have determined to follow Jesus and His promised homeland even if we had only His word to go on that it would be worth it all.**

8. The goal of this delivery, this Exodus, was NOT simply to get away from being a slave and to escape the hopeless hell that it meant. The goal was NOT to wander aimlessly in the wilderness where Azazel could use his weapons and allies to destroy the people of God. **The goal was to separate them from their former identity, to learn to trust God, YHWH, to learn their new identity and to get to a land where they could be blessed daily with the sumptuous provision of God.**
9. **As long as they focused on their former identity as slaves who had now been taken away from that secure identity into this unknown insecurity, they were going to be failures, even though they were no longer in Egypt under servitude.** As long as they were in that mindset they were unsuitable for the blessings of the promised land and the LORD who would lovingly, graciously, and generously lavish His care on them. As long as they demanded to know every detail of how they were going to live and survive, they would wander in the wilderness. As long as they demanded the security of knowing exactly what this path was they were doomed. They would have to trust that the new Master knew what He was doing and knew how to get them there. They just would not do it.
10. **Bottom line: they did not trust God!** They trusted only what they already knew and hoped only for what they could imagine would get them by each day like they had as slaves in Egypt. Reckoning themselves dead to Egypt DID NOT reckon themselves alive to God. They had experienced delivery but they had not experienced hope so the dominant power at work in them was the idolatrous memory of the only life they had known. They were glad to no longer be

under the Egyptians but that alone did not make them glad to be under YHWH!

11. **For us to experience Romans 6 reckoning we MUST reckon not only on the crucifixion delivery from the old man but on the new life delivery by a greater master (the Lord Jesus Christ) of the new man.** *The people of Israel did not die, Egypt did not die, idolatry did not die, the inner self of the people did not die, their personality did not die. What died was the master of the slavery mindset that kept them enslaved in the power of surrender. The slave master was separated from them. They could not deliver themselves; they could not simply imagine being free. They had to surrender to a newer and greater master and trust Him, the living, resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is the essence of chapter*

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III. REMEMBERING THE TERMS OF OUR FAITH: IDENTIFICATION, POSITION AND CONDITION.

- A. Our **identification** is as the children of God. *This is why the Father sent the Son to be the “rescuer” of the children of God. The good Shepherd came looking for His enslaved, lost sheep. You were His sheep even when you did not know Him and were as lost in your ways as possible. You may not have known enough to know you were lost! But He came looking for you just as Moses came looking for the enslaved Israelites to bring them to the promised land for blessing.*
- B. Our **position** is dead unto sin, alive unto God; seated with Christ in the heavenlies; Christ in you the hope of glory; in Christ; born of God; child of God. *Our position is secure as it was given to us by God, not something we did for ourselves. Only God could give you a new position. Just as crossing the Red sea testified of their full departure from slavery into a new condition as the people of God, so too our water baptism testifies of our having left the slavery of sin and become the children of God through Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- C. Our **condition** varies from day to day. *But our condition does not affect our position. Eating the manna daily testified to the children of Israel of God’s provision for them; as they ate it with faith and thanksgiving their condition would be renewed; it had to be daily and could not be carried over to the next day. So too,*

our participating in the Lord's table with faith, confession of sin and thanksgiving renews our condition each time we do so. It reminds us of Christ's death which delivered us from slavery of sin and of His resurrection which has secured our position with Him forever.