

Exodus Lesson 7

A Warring Priesthood

Exodus 6:26 NKJV - *These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, “Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.”*

Exodus 7:4 NKJV - *... Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.*

Exodus 12:41 NKJV - *And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.*

Exodus 19:1-6 NKJV - *In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. **2** For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain **3** And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: **4** ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. **5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. **6** And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”*

Peter spoke almost identical words to God’s new multi-national people, the church thousands of year later: 1 Peter 2:9-10 NKJV - *But you are a chosen generation (or Race), a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **10** who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy*

Introduction: If they were no longer slaves then what were they?

A New Identity for the Israelites

- 1) The Army of the Lord
- 2) A Kingdom of Priests
- 3) A Holy Nation

Note: You will be an army who knows how to deal with the enemy and a priesthood who knows how to minister to God and to His people. That is the definition of a holy Kingdom nation!

1) The Army of the Lord

a) An Army: The Hebrew word translated *armies* is *šābā`* .

- i) This is a military word and it primarily refers to a large number of people assembled for military purposes, i.e. an army.
- ii) Some times it is translated *hosts* and it would also include the angels and celestial bodies, including the sun, the moon, and the stars, which are called the host (*šābā`*) of the heavens.

(1) In the Old Testament, God is given the title of the “Lord of Hosts” 221 times. Therefore, God is seen in the Scripture as the supreme ruler who leads the heavenly hosts to wage war for His people against enemies and earthly empires.

(2) Do you remember in the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of His arrest, Jesus referred to this heavenly army when He said that there were 12 legions of angels ready to defend Him (Matthew 26:53)?

*Joshua 5:13-15 ESV - When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” **14** And he said, “No (neither); but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” **15** And the commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.*

What we have here a ‘theophany’ which is a temporary appearance of God in human flesh. It was a ‘pre-incarnate’ appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

b) A Commander: Jesus is not just a *babe in a manger* or the *Lamb of God* on a cross; he is the Commander and Chief of the armies of the Yahweh!

- i) Make sure you see that this man had his sword drawn. This signified that the Lord Himself would be fighting for Joshua and the people of Israel.
- ii) By the way, how did the walls of Jericho fall? The priest blew the trumpets and the people shouted (no doubt praises to God) and the walls fell.

In this first major victory you can see the glimpse of the warring priesthood?

c) Training: God saw Israel as His army and desired that they leave Egypt and take possession of the Promised Land. But they would have to be trained first.

Exodus 13:17-18 ESV - *When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." 18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.*

i) God's training began with the 10 plagues of Egypt.

Note: This was the mighty hand of God. The Egyptians sorcerers told Pharaoh regarding the gnats, this is not magicians trick! We can't reproduce this one... this is the finger of God (see Exodus 8:19).

By the way, Jesus said, when I cast out demons it is by the finger of God... and that's how you know the Kingdom has come upon you (Luke 11:20).

ii) On the surface, it is easy to miss the spiritual warfare that takes place during the 10 plagues. Everyone of those plagues was an attack on a particular god worshiped by the Egyptians:

(1) Blood in the Nile River (Exodus 7:20)

Confronted Osiris: the god of the afterlife - The Nile was believed to be the bloodstream of Osiris.

(2) Frogs (Exodus 8:6)

Confronted Heqt: This Egyptian goddess of the resurrection was always pictured with the head of a frog. For this reason, frogs were considered sacred and could not be killed.

John 11:25 - *I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.*

(3) The Gnats or Lice (Exodus 8:16)

(4) The Flies (Exodus 8:21)

Confronted Seth: the Egyptian god of the earth and crops. Because the gnats and flies pestilence came up out of (or were infested in) the ground, this was a direct hit to the Egyptians confidence in this demonized idol.

(5) The Livestock (Exodus 9:2)

Confronted Apis: the bull-like god, which was the symbol of fertility

(6) The Boils (Exodus 9:10)

Confronted Imotep: the Egyptian god of medicine

(7) The Hail (Exodus 9:18-20)

Confronted Nut: the Egyptian sky goddess

(8) The Locust (Exodus 10:12)

Confronted Seth: the Egyptian god of the earth and crops

(9) Darkness (Exodus 10:21)

Confronted all the sun gods: Re; Aten; Atum; Horus and Pharaoh himself!

(10) The Firstborn (Exodus 11:29)

Confronted Isis: This Egyptian goddess was called the god of all life. Isis was also called "The One Who Is All."

- Note how the plagues increase in intensity.
- There is a build-up from discomfort, to diseases, to danger, and then to death.
- By the way, to say the final punishment of the killing of the firstborn was unfair is incorrect. Remember the Egyptians had done far worse to the Israelites for years by killing ALL their baby boys. Perhaps the blood of those baby boys was on the hands of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Since they would not repent, God judged them.

2) A Kingdom of Priests

Exodus 19:4-6 - *You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

a) Kingdom priests are mighty worshiping people.

Lets go back to our Hebrew word *Saba*:

Here is a very interesting usage of this word: Exodus 38:8 ESV - *He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting.*

i) Here this military word is translated "ministered." This tells us that ministering to the Lord in the tabernacle and worshiping God at this time was not only

considered to be a response of love and obedience, but it was also an act of warfare.

Work associated with serving in the tabernacle was seen by God as spiritual war.

I wonder if we should take another look at the worship and work done in His name at this church. Maybe that is why the enemy fights against the ministry of church volunteers.

- ii) How many times do we find in Scripture that God's enemies are defeated by or during the praises of God's people.

- (1) In fact when God lead the nation to make their move, He called for the tribe of Judah to go first.

- (2) Judah means "Yahweh shall be Praised."

- b) Worshiping God was what initiated the war with Pharaoh.

Exodus 8:1 NIV - *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'"*

They wanted to leave Egypt and have a feast unto the Lord and offer sacrifices to God.

- i) There is power in worship!

- (1) There is something powerful about praising God in the midst of a battle.

- (2) Learning to worship God in the face of a spiritual battle is so important in the training of the army of God.

- (a) Why? When you worship while under attack, it signals God that you have faith that He will fight your battles.

- (b) He will defeat your enemies.

The Amalekites are defeated with uplifted hands.

The posture of Prayer and Worship (Exodus 17:11, 12) - Moses' holding the staff of God above his head with both hands symbolized Israel's total dependence on the power of God. *When* Moses lowered his hands, a picture of lack of dependence, the enemy was winning. With the assistance of Aaron and Hur, Moses' hands remained uplifted and a great victory was secured.

Note: I am convinced that this is part of the training for the people to become a *Warring Priesthood*.

God is looking for a people who could possess their promised land and dispose of God's enemies.

- ii) God wants ALL His people to be Kingdom priests. Take a look at the verses where Pharaoh says you can take the men only.

Exodus 10:7-12 NIV - Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the Lord their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?" 8 Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the Lord your God," he said. "But tell me who will be going." 9 Moses answered, "We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the Lord." 10 Pharaoh said, "The Lord be with you—if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil. 11 No! Have only the men go and worship the Lord, since that's what you have been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence. 12 And the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over Egypt so that locusts swarm over the land and devour everything growing in the fields, everything left by the hail."

(1) God says nope, they are all coming out of Egypt; they will all be My Warring Priesthood who will worship all the way into their promised land.

(2) I love to claim this verse for my salvation and my household salvation.

(a) It is time to break free from the bondages of Egypt. It is time to declare freedom to your family. I'm leaving Egypt and my family is coming with me.

(b) And, since I am a soldier in the Spirit and since Jesus is my commander and chief, I think I have a right to fight for it!