

#13 Shemot Exodus 1:1-6:1

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Sometimes our interests divert our attention from God. They can even replace biblical truth.
- * How do we view man-made ideas and philosophy? We are all seeking truths. What is your truth? Are we looking for short cuts for life or for riches just for the taking?
- * There is blessing in doing things God's way. There is a steep fall off for those who replace God with worldly ways.
- * Just doing things God's ways brings blessings. Casting aside God requires effort. Why cast aside your blessings?

Shemot means, "names." This portion begins by saying that originally seventy men of Israel came into Egypt. All that generation died and the children of Israel multiplied and became so powerful that the Pharaoh became alarmed with their numbers. So, he made them into slaves and worked them hard. Also, Pharaoh told the midwives to kill the baby boys, but the midwives feared God so they didn't kill the baby boys. They told Pharaoh that the woman had their babies quickly and God blessed the midwives for not killing the babies. Then Pharaoh ordered all the baby boys thrown in the river. A Levite couple hid their child for three months, but eventually had to put him in the river in a basket. Pharaoh's daughter heard the baby crying and had pity on the child. She had her slave find the mother so she could nurse the baby for her and Pharaoh's daughter called him Moshe and she raised the child as her own.

After Moshe had grown up, he saw an Egyptian strike one of his own kinsmen and he waited until no one was around and he killed the Egyptian, but what he did was found out. Pharaoh tried to have Moshe put to death, but he fled to Midyan. In Midyan, Moshe ends up defending a woman at a well and their father tells them to bring Moshe over for some food. Moshe ends up staying with them and is given Tziporah as his wife. Meanwhile the Pharaoh that tried to kill Moshe died, but the children of Israel remained slaves. God heard their cries.

Moshe was tending the sheep of Yitro and he came to the mountain of God, Horev, where the angel of God appeared to him in a fire in a middle of a bush that did not burn up. He is told to take off his sandals and God identifies Himself as the God of his fathers and Moshe was afraid to look at God. God tells Moshe that He has heard the cries of the Israelites. God then tells Moshe that He is sending him to free Israel and Moshe asks how he could do that and God says that He will be with Moshe. God tells Moshe that Ye-ho-váh (יהוה) is to be His name forever (Exodus 3:15).¹ Moshe is to get together the leaders of Israel and tell them that God is going to force Pharaoh to let them go and they will be given gifts when they go.

Moshe doubts that the people will believe him when he gets there, but God turns Moshe's staff into a snake and back again and made his hand leprous and then normal again. God also said that Moshe could turn water into blood. Moshe then says that he is not a good speaker and God then has Aharon come to meet Moshe and be Moshe's speaker. Moshe leaves for Egypt with his family and Moshe encounters God along the way again, and at that time Moshe's sons are circumcised. Moshe and Aharon talk to the leaders of Israel and the leaders believe them. Moshe and Aharon then talks to Pharaoh, but he will not let the people go and he imposes more work on them and mistreats the people. The leaders of Israel were upset with Moshe and Moshe is now also upset. God then tells Moshe that He will force Pharaoh to set Israel free.

¹ Over 7,000 manuscripts have been searched and the name of God as Yē-hō-vāh (יהוה) has been found over 1,776 times pointed as Yē-hō-vāh. Only one time in over 7,000 manuscripts has it been pointed differently as Yē-hō-vēh. Information provided by Nehemiah Gordon.

As we know, Abraham prophesied that Israel would be slaves. This portion jumps ahead some 215 years. The 430 years included time in Canaan.² We find out that Israel is being treated badly because they are doing well. The Jewish people do well because they follow the true God and His laws, and God blesses them and the Gentiles become afraid of them or are jealous. The fact that the followers of the true God do well is a testimony to the goodness of God and also to His future promises to them. The Egyptians were treating the Israelites ruthlessly and having their baby boys killed, but God was going to keep His word to Abraham and bring them back to their land.

In this portion there is an appearance of God as a man in the fiery bush. It says that the angel of God appeared to Moshe. Angels look like men; for example, the angels that visited Abraham in Gen. 18; God also appears as a man there too. Then in Exodus 4:1, the angel in the bush is called Elohim and then later, yud-hey-vav-hey (יהוה), Yehováh tells Moshe that He is mightier than Pharaoh and the Israelites will be set free. God tells Moshe He will be with him. In our era, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit and is with those who believe on Yeshua the Messiah. Israel has doubts throughout this portion, but God is greater than the people's doubts. God is not subject to us, but we are subject to God and we are to trust in Him.

Sometimes our interests divert our attention from God. They can even replace biblical truth. Ancient life was filled with superstition and instead of trusting in God, people often did things to avoid evil coming upon them. For example, glass being broken at a Jewish wedding was to scare away evil spirits. People can be superstitious and also wary of others intentions. There are many things in the present that can divert our attention from God.

We can become overconcerned with safety when there is no real problem. We should make informed decisions. God says we are not to be like other people and be filled with fear. "Do not say, 'A conspiracy' concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread;" Isaiah 8:12-13 NKJV. **God commands us not to think like others and not be concerned with conspiracy, threats, or be troubled.**

Perhaps we grew up in an environment where conspiracy and superstition were often talked about. I used to play baseball and from the time I began to play I was taught to be superstitious. God commands us not to be like that, but instead to fear God. Be sensible. We need to listen to God and fear God. It says to let Him be your dread. What incredibly good advice. Or we could make man-made philosophy and man-made ideas our basis for how we live. I'd rather trust God.

We want truth, but what is our truth? Are we looking for short cuts to life? Are we only looking for quick riches? I know people who used to gamble their money away thinking that they might win a whole bunch of money. This one guy I know wasted his paycheck one time on gambling and he had a family to support. What was his family supposed to eat? You can't eat folly or eat the fear that is driving you to act out of the ordinary.

We are commanded to fear God and the Bible says He will preserve us. "And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive,

² Jewish Antiquities 4.15.2; Josephus says, "They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the fifteenth day of the lunar month; four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt. It was the eightieth year of the age of Moses, and of that of Aaron three more. They also carried out the bones of Joseph with them, as he had charged his sons to do." The Septuagint also includes Canaan in the 430 years.

as it is this day." Deuteronomy 6:24 NKJV. It says this over and over in the Bible. They could have gotten superstitious and afraid. They were not supposed to do that. I'm sure the Israelites had thoughts about the gods of Egypt and other things they were afraid of. They even made a calf god while Moshe was getting the 10 commandments. We need to make sure we don't allow fear to control our lives and most of all, we need to trust God.

It says that God will be good to those who fear Him and trust in Him. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men!" Psalm 31:19 NKJV.

If you want to be blessed, fear God and keep His commandments. "Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments;" Psalm 112:1 NKJV. "He will bless those who fear the Lord, both small and great;" Psalm 115:13 NKJV. It doesn't matter if you are a person of influence or not. God will bless those who fear Him.

There is blessing in doing things God's way. There is a steep fall off for those who replace God with worldly ways. "The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited with evil;" Proverbs 19:23 NKJV. In Proverbs 22:4-5 NKJV it says, "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life. Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; he who guards his soul will be far from them." It tells us to listen to God and fear God.

People that don't trust in God and break God's commandments are most often rewarded with trouble and problems. Why wouldn't we want to trust in the creator of the universe? Start living in faith and trust in God. Israel had lived in Egypt with all its ungodly influence and somehow, they got things together enough to trust in God. I have heard Bible teachers say Israel didn't trust in God. About 2 million people left their homes in Egypt trusting in God; that is some amazing trust. God told them to trust in Him. God came through for them. Why don't we get with it like Israel and trust in God?

Just doing things God's ways brings blessings. That's what God says and I have found that God brings blessings to those who fear Him. At one time in my life I had some troubles, but because I feared God, I got through them. I had no money, no food, and no job. Miraculously, I had food, a place to live, and God provided a job so that I had what I needed. No money, no food, and no job are a serious issue. It was amazing how God helped me.

Of course, I had to make an effort to get what I needed and I did it without steeling or taking advantage of anybody. Casting aside God would have required effort. Instead I decided to put my efforts into being godly and God helped me. Why cast aside your blessings? We can be accomplished or not so accomplished, but if we fear God, God will bless us. Psalm 145:19-20 NKJV says, "He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy."

We are supposed to fear God and not be afraid or troubled. Don't you think Israel had a great deal to be afraid of as they left Egypt, but they left and trusted in God. Leave your fear behind and go forward trusting in God. Fearing God is a commandment of the Lord. God tells Israel, "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord, who makes all things Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;" Isaiah 44:24 NKJV.³

³ We should especially be thankful. It is difficult to be filled with fear and dissatisfaction if we are thankful. Do you want your life to be filled with fear and dissatisfaction or peace? Be at peace and allow God to guard your heart. Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

Is there anything too difficult for God? Have we lacked trust towards God? God brought back (redeemed) Israel to Canaan from Egypt and He can do mighty things for you too. Be thankful and don't be afraid. Isaiah 41:10 NKJV says, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Those who are wicked and don't trust in God will often bring evil on themselves for their lack of faith in God. If not in this life, the Bible says they will be punished for eternity for not living right. Those who fear God can have the best of both worlds. A great God who loves those who fear Him and eternal life with Him in His glorious kingdom someday in the future.

God set Israel free and commanded them to do what He says and fear Him. It was for their own good. The Bible says that if we fear God, He will bless us. Who wouldn't want to be blessed by the God of the universe? We are not to be afraid of conspiracies or threats, as well as superstitions for that matter. We are not to be concerned with troubles. God says He is with us. About 2 million fled Egypt and put their trust in God. Will we fear God instead of the "Egypt" of our lives and move forward with our lives? Will you obey God and fear Him like Israel did when they left the pagan life of Egypt behind?

tells us not to be filled with fear. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."