

Lenten Devotional 2020

Tuesday, March 17, 2020
Day 18, [Exodus 18](#)

The Missional Impulse

Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly. (Exodus 18:11)

What has the exodus been about? Was it simply a rescuing of an enslaved people? Setting right a wrong? Was it to show the power of the God of creation? We can answer yes to these things, but that's not all. To really get a handle on what's happening we have to go back to Genesis again. It is not simply the prologue to Exodus. It has its own important theological claims that frames and makes sense of the book of Exodus.

In Genesis we have the creation narrative capped off by God making *ADAM* in his image; male and female he makes *ADAM*. Notice I'm not referencing Adam. I am talking about humanity. He makes humanity—male and female—in his image. This image bearing of God is humanity's vocation. We are designed to apply God's image to all of creation (be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth) and we are to gather up the praises of all creation and offer them back to God in worship (priests in the temple/garden). This, of course, has been marred (not lost) by sin entering the picture.

We then have the question of how the story will move forward after the couple (Adam and Eve) are ejected from the garden. This is when we have the promise that the line of the woman will crush the line of the serpent, both proceeding from the woman. We then have the antediluvian history of crisis (e.g. Cain kills Abel) followed by promised solution (Cain is banished and Seth is born). This carries on until the tower of Babel. At the end of chapter 11 we have only God's judgment, there is no word of promise or hope. That is until chapter 12 when Abram is called. The Lord tells Abram that through him and his descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed. The opening tension of Exodus is, how will Abraham's descendants bless the nations if they are enslaved.

Enter the deliverance of Israel. What has the exodus been all about? God's rescue plan for the world. A world that had forgotten its creator God who is determined to redeem it. By delivering his enslaved people from Egypt using tremendous power that judges their gods and reveals his name. Israel is fulfilling her vocation of bearing God's image to the rest of creation. So it is significant when Jethro the high priest of Midian comes and worships the God of Israel, YHWH, and declares him God over the gods.

Jethro then becomes instrumental in broadening out the knowledge of God within Israel itself. He tells Moses that his sitting alone in judgment over Israel is too taxing. The result is more of Israel's leadership know of God and his laws and the image of God is furthered once again.

The application to our own lives should be obvious. We are the conduits of God's grace to the world. We have been called to go into all the world making disciples and teaching them everything Christ has taught us and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It isn't coercion (if it is we're doing it wrong), its proclamation of Good News.

Prayer

Lord of the nations, help us to share this good news of Jesus with our neighbours. May your peace for the world channel through us in transformative ways. Amen.