

## THE NIGHT TO BE MUCH REMEMBERED

This tradition of the “Night to Be Much Remembered” has its roots in the night that Israel left Egypt on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month about 1445 BC. We read the following in **Exodus 12:41-42**:

And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

We are told that this event was held on the anniversary of another event 430 years earlier. What was that event and does it have any meaning in relation to this night we are observing? The verse we just read does not say what that event was but the apostle gives us a clue in **Galatians 3:16-17** where he writes:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

The promise to Abraham noted here happened 430 years before the year they received the law at Sinai. Now there were several times that God conveyed promises to Abraham. Just when in Abraham's life did this one occur?

If we combine the genealogies with Josephus' record that Jacob moved to Egypt at the halfway point 215 years later we find that 430 years earlier was when Abraham at the age of 75 left Ur of the Chaldees for the land of Canaan, the promised land.

According to our opening verses it appears that Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees on the very same day on God's Calendar that the Israelites left Egypt.

Just as Abraham came out of the society he was living in, the Israelites were coming out of Egypt with all of its corrupting influences. Just as Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees that for the promised land so too were the Israelites.

**1 Corinthians 10:11** says that:

All these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The Old Testament festivals had one level of understanding for Israel in Old Testament times but for us we can see a duality, another level of understanding that relates to the great Plan of God to save not just Israel but all mankind.

For those of us in the church we celebrate God's calling to us and coming out of this world and its corrupting sinful influences. I know for me discovering and beginning to attend God's church some 28 years ago now was a great thrill and the start of a wonderful journey in God's church.

**Romans 6:17-18** says:

But thanks be to our God that you were the slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered...being made free from sin.

The apostle Paul here refers to sin as slavery from which God has freed us. We celebrate God's calling and freeing us from the slavery of our past sins through the blood of Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

This release from the slavery of sin is not a one-off thing, it is a regular ongoing thing as we gradually break from sinful habits and strive for God's righteousness empowered by God's spirit.

As someone who has battled long term addiction the concept of sin being slavery is a very vivid one to me. I am often remind of something I heard many years ago by Raymond McNair in a sermon when he said that it was easier to take Israel out of Egypt than take Egypt out of Israel.

The apostle Paul captures this ongoing battle where God is freeing us from slavery in his epic passage in Romans 7 and I'd like to quote verses 15-25 from "The Message". I am not a big fan of modern free paraphrase versions but this translation in this passage is a brilliant exception. Starting in verse 15 Paul writes:

What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary.

But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

As frustrating as the battle can be sometimes God is there to help free us of those binding habits that hold us and see us through to the goal of being an overcomer and make it into our Promised Land of the Kingdom of God.

For Israel, the story of their coming out of Egypt isn't just limited to the event that took place back in the Old Testament, modern-day Israel will once again be delivered out of slavery from the Beast power when Jesus Christ returns.

We read of this great exodus in **Jeremiah 23:7-8**:

'Therefore, behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land.

Just prior to this event the Beast power will be punished by God with a series of plagues spoken of in the Book of Revelation just as Egypt suffered the Ten Plagues. **Isaiah 11:15** speaks of the Nile being made dry for returning Israelites. Just like God proposed the Old Covenant to Israel during the Exodus He will propose the New Covenant to Israel after their future release from captivity.

This first night of Unleavened Bread, the Night to Be Much Remembered pictures the start of our christian journey which is symbolised by the whole of the Feast of Unleavened Bread culminating on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread.

The culmination of our christian journey, the ultimate deliverance those of us in the church will be when we make it into God's Kingdom as described in **1 Corinthians 15:51-54** where we read:

Behold, I speak a mystery to you; we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in a glance of an eye, at the last trumpet. For a trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and when this mortal shall put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory'.

**Romans 8:21** speaks of the creation and us being freed from the bondage of decay and corruption.

This event celebrates our freedom from the bondage of mortality.

**1 John 3:9** speaks of that glorious freedom we will one day celebrate:

Everyone who has been born of God does not commit sin, because His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

The Night to Be Much Remembered celebrates many things in the plan of God from Abraham coming out of Ur and sojourning in the Promised Land to ancient Israel coming out of Egypt to those of us in the church being called by God and coming out of this world.

[After I presented this at a Night To Be celebration we then shared stories of how we came into the Church or God brought us to conversion for 2<sup>nd</sup> generation christians].