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19

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The Real Story of the Exodus, 1982.

THE REAL STORY OF THE EXODUS

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

April 23, 1982

I want to speak with you this morning about "truth". Our neighbors celebrate today an event which may never have happened and which many of them recognize may not have happened. Wednesday night we celebrated at our Seder, the Exodus from Egypt - an event which, presumably, saw the liberation of slaves, their safe passage through the Reed Sea, the destruction of the pursuing host, and the arrival of the children in the Promise Land. It, too, may not have happened. The Biblical chapter which describes the Exodus tells us that on the night of the tenth plague, that terrible disaster which killed the first born in every Egyptian home, Pharaoh recognized that he could no longer delay granting the Hebrews permission to leave. Though it was near midnight, he summoned Aaron and Moses to the palace and he told them _____
_____. "up and get out from the midst of my people."
The common people were even more insistent _____
_____, "make haste for they said that unless you leave, we will all die."
Though it was night, the Hebrews assembled quickly; and, according to the text, 600,000 adults, not counting the children and a group of people called a mixed multitude together, their herds and cattle, left Pithom, one of the Pharaoh's store cities ~~where they had been working~~ ^{where they had been working} for a town a few miles to the southeast called Succoth. From there they moved off into the wilderness. That's the story as at least one chapter in the Bible tells it.

IF WE SERK **DID IT HAPPEN JUST THE WAY?**
The literal truth we must ask: ~~When?~~ When? How many were really involved?
Clearly, the Biblical description cannot be true as it reads. If 600,000 adult Jews left Egypt, and let's say half as many children together with the mixed multitude, we are talking of a population movement of about one million people. In the New Kingdom, at the height of its glory, there were probably no more than two or two and one half million people in all of Egypt. No population movement in ancient times ~~was~~ ^{was} anywhere near this size. The numbers are simply implausible. So some retranslate the Hebrew which says that 600 ELEF left Egypt to mean not 600,000 left, but that 600 companies left, and if a company numbered five or ten, the Biblical numbers become plausible. But that is not what the Biblical text says. It says that 600,000 men left Egypt not counting the children and the mixed multitude.

On the surface the Biblical story is not true, ^{So those who} ~~if~~ are interested in historic truth, ~~we~~ must ask after the factual kernel around which the legend grew. To do so is to face ~~a great deal of~~ ^{filled on uncertainty.} uncertainty. The Torah is more than vague on all the relevant details. The Torah never tells us which pharaoh was involved. Pharaoh simply means king. The regnal years of the pharaohs of the New Kingdom are well established. If the Bible had named a pharaoh we would be able to date the Exodus. But we do not know either the pharaoh under whom Joseph came to Egypt, or the pharaoh who knew not Joseph and who enslaved his descendants. All attempts to date the Exodus have faltered on such uncertainty.

Since there is no ~~reference~~ ^{in contemporary documents} to the Exodus ~~of~~ the Bible, attempts to date it require that we engage in imaginative scholarly deduction. Here again, we face problems. The Bible tells us that the Hebrews were set to work on two cities, Pithom and Ramesses. Ramesses was probably named after the pharaoh. Ramesses II, who lived between 1300 and 1250 ^{and} was one of the Napoleonic builders of ancient times.

It is tempting, therefore, to say that the Hebrews were set to work around 1300 on Ramesses' building projects and that perhaps a generation later, say around 1260 or 1250, they left Egypt. But this is pure speculation, and there's another way of ^{reasoning based on} ~~arguing~~ ^{from Israel,} ~~some site~~ archaeological evidence. Research in Israel has shown that a number of the Canaanite cities were destroyed between 1250 and 1180, and ~~that~~ ^{subsequently} ~~they were~~ ^{rebuilt} ~~in~~ ^{on a} much smaller ^{scale} ~~size~~ by a people less wealthy and less ^{culturally} ~~ultimately~~ advanced. This evidence suggests that at ^{conclusion} ~~the~~ and rebuilders ^{were} ~~were~~ the Hebrews and that the period of the Conquest is to be dated between 1250 and 1180. If so, the Exodus ^{would} ~~should~~ have taken place a generation or two earlier, ^{which brings the Exodus reasoning into question.} ~~Still~~ others argue from an inscription of Pharaoh Merneptah, who ruled around the year 1220 and in which he boasts that "Israel is no more." If Merneptah was not engaged in idle boasting ~~there~~ ^{must} have been established ~~Hebrew cities~~ ⁱⁿ Canaan long before the year 1220, and if so, we push back then the date of the Conquest and of the Exodus into the thirteenth or fourteenth century. It's a puzzlement.

Given this uncertainty, it is a matter of some interest when a well-known scholar announces, as one did this year, that he can date the Exodus to a given year and that he has found corroborating evidence of the Exodus outside the Bible. That man is Hans Goedicke, an Egyptologist who is chairman of the department of Near Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Goedicke basis his claim on a retranslation of a rock inscription from a temple in middle Egypt built in the fifteenth century by Pharaoh Hatsepsut - a reigning queen. According to Dr. Goedicke this inscription makes it clear that the Exodus is to be dated to the year 1477 BCE. He ~~further says that in 1477~~ ^{identifies the eruption with that of} a volcano on the island of Thera, an island about 30 miles southeast of Crete, ~~erupted~~ ^{which in 1477?} and poured hail and brimstone on the advanced Minoan civilization of Crete, in effect, ending its period of glory. According to Dr. Goedicke when the Bible describes the Tribes as led by a pillar of cloud by day and by a pillar of fire by night, it refers to the fire and brimstone which were seen over the entire eastern Mediterranean when Thera erupted.

The Hatsepsut inscription is a difficult one, ~~and~~ Goedicke claims that he is the first to have correctly deciphered it. According to his reading, Queen Hatsepsut ~~writes that some years earlier~~ ^{says during the reign} while she was still establishing her power, it was unusual for a woman to rule and her rule was contested, Asiatics took advantage of the unrest and rebelled. After she had asserted her authority, her uraeus -the cobra-headed symbol worn on the crown of the pharaoh, breathed fire and she put down the rebellion. The footsteps of the Asiatics were blotted out from the face of the earth ~~because~~ ^{when} the God Nim, the god of the primal waters, one day asserted his power. According to Goedicke, this means that a great flood, a tidal wave, consequent upon Thera's eruption brought disaster and sudden death. The uraeus spitting fire, in his ~~explanation~~ ^{explanation}, refers ³ to the volcanic eruption and the fire that accompanied it.

He puts the story together this way. In 1477, the Hebrew slaves happened to be in flight. They had camped ~~at night~~ on some high ground in the Delta area. The low ground was occupied by their pursuers. When the tidal wave struck, the military police encamped on the low ground were ~~slain~~ ^{slain} and the Israelites on the high ground were saved. And that's the miracle of the Reed Sea.

I must tell you that almost no one besides Dr. Goedicke believes this version. Most of those who have looked carefully at this text say: (1) that it does not say what Dr. Goedicke would have it say, ~~and~~ (2) even if it says what he would have it say, it speaks of Asiatics and not of Hebrews. (3)

(4)
It says the Asiatics died not the Egyptians and the language, "the uraeus spitfire" is an idiom which means only that the queen was ~~very~~ angry.

I find it fascinating that again and again ~~there~~ ^{are} attempts made by otherwise rational people to line out the historic basis of the Exodus. Some twenty years ago I was invited by a member of one of the literary groups in our town to ~~attend~~ a meeting he thought I would enjoy. A ~~noted~~ geologist was scheduled to speak on the Exodus. This geologist was a professor at Case who was otherwise rational. He had done a good bit of research into weather patterns and geological formations. He had read the story in the Bible which says that a great east wind blew over the ~~Red~~ Sea causing the waters to back up and allowing the Israelites to cross dry shod, and that when the winds had receded, the waters had reverted to their previous level and had drowned the pursuers. He had charted various weather and earthquake patterns and claimed that he could place exactly where the Israelites had crossed the Reed Sea. They had begun to cross at a point twenty miles below the north tip of the Reed Sea. He knew the spot. He had visited it. The sea ~~There~~ is only a kilometer or so wide. The waters are shallow, ~~and~~ ^{There} is good footing underneath. I listened to the speech and to the discussion which followed until I could resist no more. ~~Finally,~~ I raised my hand, "Doctor, what you've told us is interesting, but there's a problem. Some years ago Egyptologists discovered that the word ~~YAM SUP~~, does not mean Red Sea. ~~SUP~~ turns out to be an Egyptian word which means reeds, or bulrushes. The Bible, thus speaks of a sea of reeds, most likely one of the bayous in the Delta area in which the papyrus and other bulrushes grow in profusion. The ~~Red Sea~~ translation ^{Red Sea originated} ~~came~~ with a scholar named Jerome who made the first translation of the Bible into Latin. Jerome was a good Latin scholar and knew Hebrew but not Egyptian. He didn't know the word ~~SUP~~. The Red Sea was the only body of water which made sense in context. So ~~SUP~~ became red and this translation has been present among generation until now.

He thanked me for my comment and went right back to his lecture. About a year and a half later I noticed that he was scheduled to give the same lecture elsewhere in town, and I'm sure he submitted the same conclusions.

There is simply no way of knowing when the Exodus took place or where or how many were involved or whether the events occurred ~~that~~ ^{as} the Bible describes. We do know that in the thirteenth century BCE a loose confederation of semi-Bedouin tribes -The ~~Habshi~~ ^{Hebrews}- began to infiltrate into Canaan from the East, a ~~population explosion seems to have occurred among these West Asians for reasons which we do not yet understand~~ ^{that catalyzed the population movement} Some of these tribes moved into Canaan before the Exodus could have taken place. Scholars no longer believe all of the tribes were involved in the Egyptian episode. Only later did these various tribes ~~come and~~ ^{some of them} draw together into a confederation, and when they did, they bound together various historical memories and rules ~~which in time became common property~~ ^{into a single historical consciousness}. We also know that the movement of Asiatic herdsmen from the near east into Egypt was not unusual, nor was the enslavement of such Asiatics in Egypt. Drought brought them down and dynastic changes often ~~took~~ ^{strip} away their privileges. Those who had been welcome by one pharaoh were often enslaved by the next. We also know that the pharaohs of the New Kingdom required large numbers of slaves for their building projects and ~~what better source than among these who were non Egyptians.~~ ^{for new supplies used for the camps of} The story of Joseph is also not implausible. Between 1850 and 1650 BCE, an ~~alien~~ ^{Hyksos} ruled Egypt, as feudal lords. ~~They were hill people from the Anatolian Mountain area who were militarily superior to the Egyptians. They had developed the war chariot. But they did not have the sufficient number of people to manage a successful administration. They needed outside help to administer Egypt and they encouraged those who could read and write among other West Asians people to come down and join their bureaus. The Joseph story is not implausible, nor is the enslavement of the tribes, nor is a small scale slave breakout; but, we know not how or when or why or where. We don't know if they were led out of Egypt by Moses, or whether Moses is the name of a leader of another generation whose career was somehow enlarged to include the Exodus. We don't know with any procession the history which lies behind the Biblical tales. All we know is that our people carried ~~with them~~ ^{came to clear} this historical memory and gave it meaning.~~ ^{sacred}

What is special about the Bible is that the Hebrews were able to look at an event which might have been explained as a matter of luck - a few ^{had} escaped when their masters were occupied elsewhere, and instead of seeing only the event, ~~they saw~~ ^{somehow} its deeper meaning and found the will of God in it. Somehow they ~~Is and its~~ recognized that God meant them to be free and that their freedom was a symbol that all mankind was meant to be free. Somehow they recognized that freedom from 'is not the same as freedom for.' The slaves were still difficult lot. ~~Afterward~~, Pharaoh no longer had the power of life and death over them; yet, their lives were stunted. Freedom ~~from~~ ^{fully achieved by} is not ~~fulfilling~~ political independence. Freedom from ^{must be complemented by} ~~provides~~ freedom from ignorance, freedom from passion, freedom from bigotry, freedom from ~~all limitations~~ ^{addiction, freedom from self doubt,} which shackle the ~~human spirit~~ ^{Full}. The Bible recognizes that freedom in this sense ~~this~~ comes only to a free people deeply committed to a grand cause.

~~Somehow~~ Biblical man saw the wilderness trek not simply as a journey from here to there, ~~as we~~ describe the trek of those who took the covered wagons west. ~~The Bible does not set out to describe~~ ^{how they} went from one fort to another and what Indian attacks they endured, ~~but that~~ ^{the wilderness trek became} a unifying experience in which ~~a people was forged out~~ ^{an assembly of desperate} individuals.

but as a journey from purposeless noise to

purposefulness

The encamped slaves were a cantankerous lot ^{They} who couldn't agree on anything. ^{There were constant rebellions in the camp.}
They complained against Moses. Within a day or two, they cried, take us back ^{soon as we can}
to the fleshpots of Egypt. ~~The Bible suggests the elemental truth that this Exodus~~
~~must be followed by a Sinai, an acceptance of - a way of life - a vision-~~
^{- every true freedom is a vision -}
a rule, which gives the people coherence, direction and a sense of purpose.
Not ~~only~~ freedom from, ^{but} freedom for. ^{Must be complemented by}

The issue is not, ~~Did~~ the Exodus take place in 1477 BCE or in 1250 BCE or
whether all twelve tribes were involved or six or none? The question is whether
we ^{understand and} can relate to the Biblical truths.

The question is whether we can align our lives with the meaning implied in
these ancient events? — God wills man to be free.

Have we made the best use of our freedom?

Are we committed to policies which will encourage freedom for the peoples of the
world?

Do we use the opportunity which is freedom for the greater good or are we like
the liberated Israelites who ~~were~~ still-necked and ~~were~~ cantankerous, ^{Do}
who ^{think} thought more of ^{their} bellies than of ^{their} opportunity ^{and who were so}
caught up in that which does not broaden the spirit and does not grace life,
that God ^{will have} had to destroy ^{can} their whole generation in the wilderness ^{so as to allow}
^{A generation of more thoughtful people to take up}

The Bible is true in the sense that it gives meaning to life and, I submit,
there is no greater truth.

The motto of
Responsibility.

21. How can the description of the Exodus be
be taken literally - unless one believes in ~~magic~~ - in a
supernatural power which strikes by the 1st born out of
nature Egypt by which one can account of the
number of
population at that time, at present time, by the time of
the Exodus - Egypt's middle kingdom - lower kingdom
probably not more than 2M people of all races &
languages in all of Egypt - a population shift of
over 600T would have ~~been~~ ^{been} necessary to do
more over the entire country

What was the time of the Exodus?

The world ~~was~~ ^{was} that was the early time - probably some one specific

reference to the Exodus in the 1st century and the
Bible and ref. are ~~about~~ ^{about} 1000 or earlier
centuries. Ex. 14 seems to present a
Pharaoh's M.I. - ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~see~~ ^{see} on
day 14 - the process during the text now
when the ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~just~~ ^{just} of the ~~number~~
return to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~land~~ ^{land} = Ex. 15 -
the ~~story~~ ^{story} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Exodus~~ ^{Exodus}

in fact many scholars believe that the oldest fragments
of the Exodus in the Torah, making one mention of
Moses' passage and some others to Israel - which
states without saying the names which are
transmitted to Egyptian people -

where is the Sea of Reeds -

What happened there to make allusion for

the story of Israel's escape from Egypt

Who did call them into place? The Bible

never mentions the particular names of the people or the place

the knowledge of the time of the Exodus is
less than a century ago - we can not

date the Exodus event by means of scientific
for many related events - found in Egyptian

texts - The Bible: Perhaps the most useful

a central date of the Exodus is the date of the

Exodus in the 13th century BCE in the time of

an Egyptian monarch in Egypt which was

known as the first time a number of important

WRHS



commonly believed and that he did so under some of
a non-physical fact and indeed, specifically to that
point - of H.G.'s time and we would have
confirmation of an Enigma of something we have not had
before. H.G.'s time not primarily a response to but
some of the indignities and on the other hand
from Ben Hur - Middle East - the enigma
discovered
- a H.G. discovery it - new millions years to rest of
America that report - it speaks of controversy and
discovery and Enigma discovery to see how the internal
while he was in the area of his
age at the discovery
AGAINST his enigma - that the enigma was
leveled on "THE EARTH" discovery Ben Enigma -
an and related to an unexpected display of
power of the word NON - was related to
PRIMITIVE waters -



The response to the Thurs of fine against
has enigma H.G. related to a well known
enigma of the discovery Enigma related enigma
in 1477 discovery and related a tidal wave and ENR
BSL was related to Enigma related - Enigma related
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which design is likely referred to in the trial of
Cuba at the same time - 2 H.G. seemed to be
the subject of the trial - The trial
seemed to be a very large trial -
which the subject of the trial - The trial
and the subject of the trial - The trial
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(The trial - The trial - The trial)



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in which on a number of occasions people were not to be seen
until Egypt or ~~France~~ at places in the desert lands -

Finally, the text under no specific title of the
number of them - all at once a land which it was
known - my unknown (perhaps) of which I have seen
to great my interest - H.C. which was during
as a surprise surprise - but apparently it is not
even more of a surprise second surprise surprise the
last surprise.

I'm afraid to find that the French still consider as -
rule of the
that no better than land of today's and yesterday's
the - looking forward - The House of Egypt in the
result of the official committee [perhaps in 1930
in 1930] - I - probably seen the present state
as a new Egypt - The Egyptian under Egypt - under
the law for inspection with the federal military
the committee also found to come down of the
the law bureau, committee - after -

as well as a period of time last winter changed
slightly - ~~the~~ ^{the} of the Egyptian now with my
national - ~~the~~ ^{the} is not just a
influence - ~~the~~ ^{the} the ~~the~~ ^{the} the
last military force can be seen in the present -
The Hebrew ~~the~~ ^{the} the ~~the~~ ^{the} the - for a while

but the relation between the two - ~~the same~~ - ~~the same~~ - ~~the same~~ -
1. yet another, by escape - - & power of the relation
that escape to the sub & super of land -

That's all we can really say about the relation -
except to say that the primary question that any - small
part of which seems to be the total capitalization of the
system is the order - related time now to have
larger the capacity of the system and before the order

but this seems - - since - the not
to rule out - in the order of the system
when they were out of the system - but
a comparison of the order of the system with the order of the system
which is conflict between the order of the system and the order of the system
which is a particular industry and the order of the system

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to write on it to write 7 down
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only rule - as you write what
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and also possibly in all ways
the Board will be able to do that
from the case of opinion - 5 ways
which is possible - look at the
subject - as an act and

a rule rec also
a rule rec also

which will be the most likely to be used
to write under the rule rec also -
- will be used to write the rule rec also

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cup // — The cup cup cup cup cup cup cup cup cup cup
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