

Feb. 25, 2011

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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“ In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am, And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.” Spurgeon

## No Commentary Needed...

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, ...be content with your wages. Luke 3:14

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that* is an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said to them; Go also into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and said to them, Why stand here all the day idle? They said to him, Because no man has hired us. He said to them, Go also into the vineyard; and whatever is right, *that* will you receive. So when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, Call the laborers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last to the first. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, each received a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they also each received every a penny. And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have worked *but* one hour, and you have made them equal with us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do you no wrong: did you not agree with me for a penny? Take *that* which is yours and go your way: I will give to this last, even as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is your eye evil, because I am good? Matthew 20:1-16

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. So, having food and clothing let us be therewith content. But they that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts... 1 Timothy 6:6-9

•t&dw

*Through the Bible in 2011: Part 7*

## The Womb of the Promised Seed

*Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go... Exodus 4:22-23*

*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. Hosea 11:1*

*When [Jacob] arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.” Matthew 2:14-15*

We have seen how Israel’s (Jacob’s) family went down into Egypt under Joseph, and through four hundred years, seventy souls became over two million strong. Having been placed under bondage as slave labor, God raises up Moses to be the deliverer of His people. The land of Egypt, because of Pharaoh’s obstinacy, suffers a series of ten judgments (plagues). In conjunction with the tenth — the death of the firstborn of man and beast — the Passover feast is instituted, and those under the blood of the lamb are saved; the typology here is vivid (1Cor 5:7). God then delivers the tribes of Israel from captivity as they are “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1Cor 10:2). Then, at Sinai, Yahweh unilaterally establishes the twelve tribes, descended from Abraham, as a covenant nation. I have glossed over a tremendous amount of important details and typology, but my purpose here is to get the ‘big picture’ of what the Lord was doing eschatologically. First, let us establish an important connection.

When Jesus was an infant (probably nearly two years old), Joseph and Mary fled with him into Egypt to avoid Herod’s murderous rampage. After Herod’s demise they returned to Israel. Matthew’s commentary on this concludes, “*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called my Son’*” (Matt 2:15). Matthew’s direct reference is to Hosea 11:1, where that prophet clearly points back to the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt; there seems to be particular reference to *Exodus 4:22-23*. One’s first reaction to this might be that Matthew was grasping at straws to connect incidents in Jesus life to OT prophecy. But if we believe in (know) the inspiration of all Scripture, there must be a greater significance to this reference. Jesus’ going into Egypt as a child, in itself, is not all that important to the unfolding of the Gospel. The real significance is in the *linking* of Christ with the Exodus account. Remembering that the focus of the Abrahamic

Covenant was the coming of *Abraham's promised Seed*, through Whom all the nations of the world would be blessed, our focus must remain on the eschatological 'brining forth' of that Seed. In Matthew's reference we are again reminded of this very point. As the New Testament unfolds, the connection only deepens. The Seed *is* the continuity of all scripture, indeed, of all human history. *When the fullness of time was come, God brought forth His Son, made of a woman (the Seed of the Woman—Genesis 3:15), made under of the Law (in accordance with the Books of Moses).* Jesus plainly tells us, "*Moses wrote of Me*" (John 5:46). So, as we look at the emergence of Israel out of Egypt to become, by divine covenant, a great nation under God, we must be quick to view all things in the light of the Promised Seed.

What did God do at Sinai? In a nutshell, ***He created a womb in which the Seed would be protected and preserved until the fullness of time***—the 'due-date', so to speak. It was necessary to build a framework which separated Israel from the rest of the world, keeping them as a distinct and 'peculiar people'. The Old Covenant, written on tables of stone, and 'fleshed out' in the rest of the Mosaic commandments, did precisely that.

To Israel were given divine standards of civil righteousness to preserve moral light in the world. (Upon these have been built the legal foundations of western civilization). Attached to the Law were temporal incentives for obedience—the blessings and the cursings. This was absolutely necessary prior to the *indwelling* of the *New Covenant*. The promise of *earthly* blessing would be a national impetus toward keeping the Law; the cursings would be a goad to drive them back to Yahweh and the Law whenever they had strayed too far. The severity of the judgments in the dispensing of the Law, individually and nationally, continually reinforced the concept of God's absolute holiness. As Divinely administered, all of this served to preserve Israel as a distinct people, comprising a womb for the Promised Seed.

In addition, through that very same Law, the *pre-adventic witness* of the Seed comes to its fullness. From the proto-evangel in the Garden (*Gen 3:15*) onward, the *lineage* of the Seed was to be a light—a witness to the world, both of the *truth* of God, and of the *redemptive Promise*. That witness reaches its zenith in Israel's covenant statutes. In the fabric of the Law, and especially the cultic (ritual of worship), was embedded the Person of Christ. Like early sonograms, projected images from the womb of the Law gave shadowy pictures of the coming Seed and His kingdom. The commandments, the temple, the priesthood, the sacrifices, along with the divinely directed histori-

cal narrative of Israel, all gave witness to the glory of the Lamb, and of the coming Day when the messianic (anointed) Seed would emerge from the womb of *Covenant Israel* and provide complete and full redemption for *all His people* - from every nation, tribe and tongue (*Mt 1:21; Rev 7:9-10*). His would be the consummate Kingdom, the true *Israel of God* (*Gal 6:16*), of which there would be no end (*Isa 9:6-7; Lk 32-33; Eph 3:21*). The perpetuity of His Kingdom is embedded in the numerous '*forever*' promises of the Old Testament. Some would apply them to *earthly* Israel; but we must remember that the promises were delivered in the *language of types - the descriptive rhetoric of the womb*; their true fulfillment is in the living Christ and His eternal kingdom.

I would call your attention to the fact, that once a baby is born, we do *not* look to the environment and structure of the womb as the *norm* for the living child. The amniotic fluid, the placenta, the umbilical cord, etc., *which were all absolutely essential to the development of the child in the womb*, now have no place, post-birth. They vanish away (*discontinuity*). Yet, as we look at the *pre-birth sonograms* (with new eyes!), we see clearly that the babe is there, and we recognize that all the features and characteristics of the child himself, when he was yet in the womb, remain in him after birth (*continuity*).

It is sad, in my estimation, when Christians seem to deem the *womb* as of greater value or significance than the *living Child*. Whether it be in their approach to 'living for God', or in their views of eschatology—they seem either to try to bring a restored umbilical cord from the womb to wrap around the necks of the Kingdom's living children, and/or, they look to a 'glorious' restoration of the womb as the consummation of this age. In all of this, the recognition of the *glory of the living Christ*, the present *indwelling of His Spirit*, and the present *triumph of His kingdom*, all seem to be lost, or at least, greatly diminished.

Therefore, as we return to the biblical historical narrative of Exodus (and of the whole Old Testament), let us continue to see the glories of the *Promised Seed* within the *womb of Covenant Israel*; let us also recognize that, this side of the cross, *that covenant* has been done away in Christ (*2Cor 3*). The Child has been born, and of *the increase and peace of His government there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom from that time forward, even forever!* (*Isa 9:7*). ●ejr3

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