



Meditation— Exodus 13.³⁻¹⁰

³“And Moses said unto the people, “Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. ⁴This day came ye out in the month Abib.

⁵“And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. ⁶Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. ⁷Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

⁸“And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. ⁹And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. ¹⁰Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.”

Meditation— 1

This meditation is an introduction to Exodus 13.³⁻¹⁰ as well as to this series of meditations entitled, “The Righteousness of Being Woke: Resisting the Un-biblical Anti-woke Heresy.”

These days, it is fashionable on America’s political and cultural right to complain about and rage against what it calls “wokeness,” or “woke culture” —as if sleeping and slumbering are somehow preferable to being awake! It is bizarre. And this is really saying something about a political and cultural movement that is increasing drunken with and in the thralls of the most bizarre and easily refuted conspiracy theories in America’s long history of infatuation with conspiracy theories. Tragically, there are those like Florida’s DeSantis who, for personal and political gain, cynically seek to further enflame and manipulate the frenzied anti-woke mind—often making appeal to the more rational mind by dressing up the hateful anti-woke heresy in the language of “parental rights,” or some such moral sounding garb.

One of the many tenets of this anti-woke heresy involves America’s history with slavery and racism. There is an attempt on the part of the slumbering right to deny this history; to deny the oppression African Americans have and do endure; and to deny that much of America’s economic “greatness” was built on the back of free and forced labor. The movement wishes to remove such truths from school curriculums. It wishes to keep our children asleep. Ignorant. Forgetful. All of this, we suspect, it does in order to maintain the ungodly white supremacy that has dominated America from its inception.

All of this must be challenged, resisted, and defeated. In this series of meditations, we resist the aspect of the anti-woke heresy that challenges the remembrance of America’s historical and systemic oppression of African Americans. We resist the anti-woke heresy with the Bible—a Book that so many anti-woke

warriors claim to know and love. It is yet one more of many sad commentaries on American Christianity that so many who claim the title, “Christian” have adopted the hateful anti-woke heresy that is so incompatible with the Bible.

Make no mistake about it. The anti-woke heresy that seeks to forget America’s past oppression and ignore America’s present oppression of African Americans is decidedly unbiblical. It is, in fact, about as unbiblical as one can get. To forget and ignore social injustice is antithetical to every Biblical and Christian principle. It is utterly un-Christian. If it is un-American to remember our own or any oppressive past or ignore our own or any oppressive present, then large swaths of America’s population is unbiblical and un-Christian.

We will begin this series of meditations and our resistance of the anti-woke movement’s slumbering denial and forgetfulness of America’s oppressive history toward African Americans with a story that is familiar to all of us: the story of Israel’s exodus from Egyptian bondage. The story is a staple of western culture. It is the central story of the Hebrew Bible. The story’s point is central to not only the Hebrew Bible, but the Christian Bible as well. It is the central point of Christian doctrine.

God is a Savior, a Redeemer, a Rescuer, a Liberator, an Emancipator. This reality is more than central to the Biblical witness, it is central to the Divine Character. But, for every Savior, Redeemer, Rescuer, Liberator, and Emancipator needed, there is an enslaver, an oppressor that must be humbled, resisted, defeated, halted and, where necessary due to the hardness of heart, annihilated. The two messages—Liberator and oppressor—go together, hand in glove. One cannot remember one without remembering the other. Nor should one.

The battle over wakefulness or slumber in matters related to social justice has a very long history, indeed, pre-dating, even, America’s existence. America’s re-branded dalliance with forgetfulness and ignorance is not new. Forgetfulness and ignorance are exactly what one would expect of every oppressor. But Americans, like ancient Egypt are called away from injustice. Americans, like Israelites are called to remember. They are called to wokeness. They are called away from forgetfulness. This series of meditations lends but one more voice to that call. This call to woke remembrance is not simply a matter of righting past wrongs. It is a matter of imagining and carrying out a more just future.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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meditation— 2

In our introductory meditation on this series entitled, “The Righteousness of Being Woke: Resisting the Un-biblical Anti-woke Heresy,” we strongly asserted that the American Right’s anti-woke heresy is un-biblical and contrary to biblical and Christian principles and virtues. This is so when it comes to the Right’s rejection of America’s past and present oppressive policies—especially its institutional racist past and present and its demand that this past and present racism be suppressed in our national shared memory and in the education of our nation’s citizenry, especially our future citizenry.

In this second meditation of the series, we have a look at a biblical example of extreme and unrelenting wokeness about oppression.

The first thing we note in today’s passage is that the woke remembrance of Israel’s oppression at the hands of the Egyptian superpower and of Yahweh’s deliverance of Israel from that oppression is one that

Yahweh commands. Woke remembrance of oppression and emancipation is envisioned as a righteous and essential element of Biblical worship and morality. It is of God. It is godly. As we will see, this necessity for woke remembrance is less about the historical past and more about a moral and ethical future freed from the past's errors.

The second thing we note is that the command for woke remembrance of Israel's oppression at the hands of the Egyptian superpower and of Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from that oppression is issued even before Israel experienced emancipation from the oppression. Surely, this is indicative of the priority God placed on woke remembrance of Israel's oppression and Yahweh's deliverance.

Third, we note that woke remembrance of oppression and emancipation is incumbent upon Israel long after the events. Even when things are going well and Israel is happily dwelling in and enjoying "a land flowing with milk and honey," the nation is to engage in woke remembrance of past oppression and emancipation. Israel, in fact, is to engage in woke remembrance as an "ordinance," and this "ordinance" is to be observed "from year to year." This stipulation is repeated elsewhere.

"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night... seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life."¹

Indeed, the inspired record stipulates that this woke remembrance, observed "from year to year" and "all the days of thy life," is to extend to perpetuity.

"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; *ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.*"²

But what, we wonder, is to be remembered? Some might want to claim that the remembrance is of Yahweh's emancipation, not the oppression from which Israel was emancipated. But this is pure sophistry. *Prima facie* nonsensical.

"Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, *out of the house of bondage*; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place."

One cannot rip the emancipation from its context of oppression. And so, along with the woke remembrance of Yahweh's "strength of hand," Israel remembers "the house of bondage" itself. Indeed, the sacred texts keep Israel's experiences in "the house of bondage" alive in its national memory.

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, 'Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply,³ and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.'

Therefore *they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens*. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses⁴... And *the Egyptians made the children of Israel to*

¹ Deuteronomy 16.^{1,3}

² Exodus 12.¹⁴

³ Here we hear the Egyptian version of "replacement theory," and see the word of God reveal it as evil; justification for evil perpetrated against "foreign" influences.

⁴ Here we see the use of free and forced labor and the increased profits they are meant to achieve.

serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."⁵

“From year to year” and “all the days of thy life” Israel has kept the memory of their oppression alive, nowhere more so than during Passover. During this “ordinance” the people remember their oppression and God’s response to it.

“And the Lord said, *‘I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows... Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.*”⁶

“And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and *the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*”⁷

This is some major, radical, concentrated, and unrelenting wokeness. America’s woke remembrance of African American oppression seems almost pathetic by comparison. We can have little doubt that Egyptians, like America’s anti-woke heretics, complained about this “unholy wokeness”: “Oh come on! It’s been three thousand years already. Give it up! Stop talking about it. Forget the past. Live in the present.”

But, we maintain, a God woke to oppression, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, demands of His people woke remembrance of oppression. So it was. So it has been. So it is. So it will always be.

But, again, this is not a matter of historical antiquarianism. Rather, it is about the present and the future, as we will see in upcoming meditations. A present and future devoid of oppression requires the woke memories of past oppression so that they not be repeated. Without the woke memory, oppression continues, often, unrecognized, and unimpeded. Such ignorance and immorality can only lead to the same tragic consequences that the ancient superpower, Egypt, experienced. Let America take heed. Let the anti-woke heretics repent.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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⁵ Exodus 1.^{8-11, 13-14}

⁶ Exodus 3.^{7, 9}

⁷ Exodus 2.²³⁻²⁴