



Meditation— Leviticus 19.³³⁻³⁴

³³And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. ³⁴But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Israel was expected—nay, commanded—to never forget Yahweh and the power he exerted in delivering them from slavery in Egypt. They were, however, also commanded to never forget their experience of oppression and slavery itself. This eternal remembrance was not only about remaining grateful and loyal to Yahweh. It was also about remaining un-Egyptian-like in the way they treated others. They were never to treat others as they had been treated.

Many of the laws that Yahweh gave Israel came with the reminder that they had been “strangers in the land of Egypt.” For example, the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day holy was, surprising to some, founded upon the fact that they had been enslaved in Egypt, never given rest. Thus, a day of rest gave those weary with labor, especially “menservants and maidservants” a day of rest and kept the nation from becoming Egyptian in relation to its work force.

In like manner, Israel was to treat foreigners in Israel very differently than they had been treated as foreigners in Egypt. There were to treat them as they did natural born citizens. They were, consistent with Jesus’ “Golden Rule” to “love him as thyself.”

America has much to learn from such divine expectations made of ancient Israel. It has much to repent of too. It has repeatedly been in violation of this divine decree. Some make the argument about “illegality.” Others complain of resources being siphoned off from “actual citizens.” Let there be no doubt, Egyptians made both these arguments to justify Israelite oppression. God rejected the argument and made Egypt pay for such mean-spirited propaganda and the ugly treatment of others that resulted. Inasmuch as America continues to follow ancient Egypt’s example of oppression, it will follow its example of comeuppance.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

(edition: april 11, 2024)