

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: "Whereas the Lord was there." [Ezekiel 35:10](#)

Exodus 1:8-14; Exodus 1:15-21

Step #1 — Afflicting the adults (v. 8-14). God had told Abraham that his descendants would go to a strange country and there be enslaved and mistreated, but He had promised that He would set them free by His power at the right time (Genesis 15:12-14). God compared Egypt to a smoking furnace (v. 17; see Deuteronomy 4:20) where His people would suffer, but their experience in that furnace would transform the Israelites into a mighty nation (Genesis 46:3).

During the centuries the Jews had been in Egypt (15:13; Exodus 12:40-41), they had seen many Egyptian dynasties come and go; but who was the new king who was ignorant of Joseph and his family and tried to destroy "the people of the children of Israel"? The 17 th Dynasty, the Hyksos, were foreigners and "strangers" in the land as were the Jews, so they were probably sympathetic with Israel; but the 18 th Dynasty was Egyptian and their rulers expelled foreigners from the land. This may have been the dynasty that began the persecution of the people of Israel.

Why would the Egyptians want to make life miserable for the Jews? Israel was a source of blessing in the land, as Joseph had been before them (Genesis 39:1-6), and they weren't causing trouble. Pharaoh's stated reason was that the presence of so many Jews was a security risk: since the Jews were outsiders, if there were an invasion, they would no doubt ally themselves with the enemy. However, whether Pharaoh realized it or not, the real cause was the conflict announced in 3:15, the enmity between the people of God and the children of Satan, a conflict that still goes on in the world today.

No people in recorded history have suffered as the Hebrew people have suffered, but every nation or ruler that has persecuted the Jews has been punished for it. After all, God's promise to Abraham was, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you" (12:3, NKJV). God kept that promise in the way He dealt with Egypt and Babylon in ancient days and Stalin and Hitler in modern times. God is long-suffering as He sees nations persecute His chosen people, but eventually His hand of judgment falls on the oppressors.

The Egyptian taskmasters "worked them ruthlessly" (Exodus 1:13, NIV), forcing the Jewish slaves to build cities and work in the fields. But the blessing of God caused the Israelites to continue to multiply, and this frightened and enraged their captors even more. Something else had to be done to keep Israel under control.

Step #2 — Killing the Jewish boys at birth (v. 15-21). If this plan had succeeded, Pharaoh would have wiped out the Hebrew people. The future generation of men would be dead and the girls would eventually be married to Egyptian slaves and absorbed into the Egyptian race. But Genesis 3:15 and 12:1-3 said that God would not permit such a thing to happen, and He used two Jewish midwives to outwit Pharaoh.

This is the first instance in Scripture of what today we call "civil disobedience," refusing to obey an evil law because of a higher good. Scriptures like Matthew 20:21-25; Romans 13:1; and 1 Peter 2:11 admonish Christians to obey human authorities; but Romans 13:5 reminds us that our obedience must not violate our conscience. When the laws of God are contrary to the laws of man, then "[w]e ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). You see this exemplified not only in the midwives but also in Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1; 3; 6) and the apostles (Acts 4-5) Exodus 1:15-21; Exodus 1:22

Were the midwives lying to Pharaoh? Probably not. The babies were born before the midwives arrived because Shiphrah and Puah had told their assistants to be late! God blessed the two leading midwives for putting their own lives on the line in order to save the Jewish nation from extinction. However, He honored these two women in a strange way: He gave them children at a time when it was dangerous to have children! Perhaps all their children were daughters, or perhaps God protected their sons as He protected Moses. However, this blessing from God shows how precious children are to the Lord: He wanted to give these two women His very best reward, so He sent them children (Psalms 127:3).

Step #3 — Drowning the male babies (v. 22). When Pharaoh discovered he'd been deceived, he changed his plan and commanded all his people to see to it that the Jewish male babies were drowned in the sacred Nile River. Pharaoh's police couldn't check up on every Jewish midwife, but the Egyptian people could keep their eyes on the Jewish slaves and report when a boy was born. But one boy would be born that Pharaoh couldn't kill.

Edom's princes saw the whole country left desolate, and counted upon its easy conquest; but there was one great difficulty in their way--quite unknown to them--"*The Lord was there*"; and in His presence lay the special security of the chosen land.

Whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of God's people, there is still the same effectual barrier to thwart their design. The saints are God's heritage, and He is in the midst of them, and will protect His own. What comfort this assurance yields us in our troubles and spiritual conflicts! We are constantly opposed, and yet perpetually preserved!

How often Satan shoots his arrows against our *faith*, but our faith defies the power of hell's fiery darts; they are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon its shield, for "the Lord is there." *Our good works* are the subjects of Satan's attacks. A saint never yet had a virtue or a grace which was not the target for hellish bullets: whether it was hope bright and sparkling, or love warm and fervent, or patience all-enduring, or zeal flaming like coals of fire, the old enemy of everything that is good has tried to destroy it.

The only reason why anything virtuous or lovely survives in us is this, "the Lord is there."

If the Lord be with us through life, we need not fear for our dying confidence; for *when we come to die*, we shall find that "the Lord is *there*"; where the billows are most tempestuous, and the water is most chill, we shall feel the bottom, and know that it is good: our feet shall stand upon the Rock of Ages when time is passing away. Beloved, from the first of a Christian's life to the last, the only reason why he does not perish is because "*the Lord is there*." When the God of

everlasting love shall change and leave His elect to perish, then may the Church of God be destroyed; but not till then, because it is written, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, "*The Lord is there.*"

Ezekiel 34:23-31

The Lord had already pronounced judgment on Edom through Isaiah (Isaiah 34; 63:1-6), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 49:7-22), and Ezekiel (25:12-14), but now He did it again and added some details. Mount Seir is another name for Edom, the nation founded by Esau, Jacob's twin brother. "Edom" means "red" and was a nickname given to Esau (Genesis 25:30). Esau was a man of the world who had no spiritual desires and willingly sold his birthright to his brother Jacob. Esau fought with his brother even in their mother's womb (vv. 21-26) and hated his brother because the Lord had chosen Jacob to receive the blessings of the covenant. This hatred was passed on from generation to generation and the Edomites maintained what God called "a perpetual hatred" (v. 5; 25:15; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah).

This hatred was no doubt like some of the "ethnic wars" that the world has seen today.

Once again, the Lord reminded the Edomites of their great sin against their brethren when they assisted the Babylonians in attacking the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem. What their founder Esau vowed to do in his day, they accomplished in their day when they killed their own blood relatives (Gen. 47:41). In Ezekiel 35:6, the word "blood" in the KJV should read "bloodshed." The Edomites pursued the Jews to kill them, so bloodshed would pursue them. The Edomites carried on a perpetual hatred against Israel, so the land of Edom would receive a perpetual desolation. Edom would be no more.

Was this a just judgment? Yes, it was, and the prophet gave the reasons why the destruction of Edom was an act of righteous judgment. For one thing, the descendants of Esau were greedy and wanted to claim the conquered nations of Judah and Samaria for themselves, completely ignoring the will of the Lord. God had given the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, and that meant Jacob and not Esau. During Israel's march to Canaan, they were warned not to meddle with the Edomites because God had assigned their land to them and they would not inherit any land in Canaan (Deuteronomy 2:1-7). But the Edomites wanted to change God's plans and annul God's covenant and take the land for themselves. When the Babylonians invaded Judah in 606 B.C., the Lord was there fulfilling His own purposes (Ezekiel 35:10) and He saw what the Edomites did.

The Lord also saw their anger (v. 11) and promised to repay them in kind, for nations as well as individuals reap what they sow. He heard their blasphemous words against their brothers the Jews, how they rejoiced because the land of Israel was being ravaged and plundered by the Babylonian invaders. But they weren't blaspheming men, they were blaspheming God and boasting in their pride as though they would escape judgment. In their arrogance, Edom rejoiced over the fall of Israel; but one day, the whole earth would rejoice over the fall of Edom!

God's promise to the Jews was that one day they would no longer be a prey to the other nations (34:28), and this chapter explains why: God will deal with their enemies and remove them from the face of the earth. "You will be desolate, O Mount Seir, you and all of Edom" (35:15, NIV).