

#14 Va'era Exodus 6:2-9:35

By Moshe Schwab

- * The Holy Spirit works in us and keeps us; cooperate with the Holy Spirit.
- * Allow God's light (understanding) and power to break through and deliver us from the darkness of this world.
- * Come to God's table of light and joy (keep learning and growing spiritually).
- * Stay connected to God and take joy in Him. Resist spiritual attacks. Take time to reflect on what we have.

In this portion, God promises Israel the land of Canaan; God will bring Israel out from Egypt with great judgements. Aharon and Moshe go before Pharaoh and perform many judgement type miracles so that Pharaoh would let Israel go. Aharon's staff turns into a snake and then ten plagues occur; Moshe turns the water of Egypt into blood; then a plague of frogs, then lice, then insects, cover the land each time Pharaoh refused to let Israel go. Cattle died; sores appeared on man and animals; then hail destroyed their crops. After each judgment, Pharaoh would not let Israel go. There are three more plagues in the next portion. In the haftarah for this portion, Ezekiel says that Israel's presence in the land is a witness to the nations of the world.

God is powerful God who wants to deliver His people. He went to great extents to deliver Israel, and God went to great extents, sending the Messiah Yeshua to deliver us from the power of sin and much, much more. The Messiah came so God could work in us through the power of the Holy Spirit to keep us (shamar – guard, keep). We just need to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. Israel trusted in the power of God and we too should trust in God's power. It says in Acts, "But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses;" Acts 1:8 CJB.

It amazes how much trust the early Jewish believers in the Messiah had. Shaul (Paul) and Silas were in jail singing and waiting for the power of God to go to work. They trusted in God. "Around midnight, Sha'ul and Sila were praying and singing hymns to God, while the other prisoners listened attentively. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake which shook the prison to its foundations. All the doors flew open and everyone's chains came loose;" Acts 16:25-26 CJB. They then took the opportunity to tell the prison guard about the Messiah. God freed Shaul and Silas, and freed the prison guard and his family afterwards through the Messiah.

In this portion, Israel was kept under the dark power of Egypt, but God freed them. We also were at one time in darkness, but after we believed in the Messiah, we allowed God's light (understanding) and power to break the darkness off of our lives. "However, now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you do get the benefit—it consists in being made holy, set apart for God, and its end result is eternal life;" Romans 6:22 CJB. Just as Israel was set free from sin to serve God, we are also set free from sin to serve God through the Messiah.

Think about how we become holy. What helps us to be holy?

Through doing God's commandments. James 1:22

Through knowing how to apply God's commandments. Hebrews 5:14

Listening for words from the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:8

Put off your old nature and put on our new godly nature. Ephesians 4:22-23

Put on some of the attributes of God and allow Holy Spirit to work in us. Galatians 5:22-23

By standing firm against unbelief and others things thrown at us by the devil. Ephesians 6:10-18

God led Israel out of Egypt and set them free so they could not only have abundance physically, but spiritually. In our time, it is still true. God wants us to come to His table of light and joy through the Messiah Yeshua and learn and grow up spiritually. "I take your instruction as a permanent heritage,

because it is the joy of my heart. I have resolved to obey your laws forever, at every step;" Psalm 119:111 CJB. Yeshua said, "But he answered, 'The Tanakh says, 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of ADONAI;'" Matthew 4:4 CJB. We need to have food and shelter to live, but we also need the sustenance of God's scriptures and the Holy Spirit.

Israel was tempted over and over in the desert to give place to unbelief and dissatisfaction. We need to resist these attitudes, and stay connected to God and have joy in Him. The Bible says to be satisfied, "Keep your lives free from the love of money; and be satisfied with what you have; for God himself has said, 'I will never fail you or abandon you.' Therefore, we say with confidence, 'ADONAI is my helper; I will not be afraid – what can a human being do to me?'" Hebrews 13:5-6 CJB.

One thing we become aware of as we grow older is the drive that money can have on our lives. We are to be content because God is with us. Statistics have shown that those who have a lot are actually not as happy as those who have little. The drive for riches can consume our time and how we use our lives; this has an effect on all of our life. Money in itself is not evil, but it seems we always want more and we can be tempted to sin to acquire money if we allow that to drive to use us inappropriately.

What drives us, money, power, notoriety, discovery, information, ...?

What kind of TV shows do we like and why? What does that tell us about what we value?

We don't always have everything we want, but we can be at peace and satisfied. "I know what it is to be in want, and I know what it is to have more than enough - in everything and in every way I have learned the secret of being full and being hungry, of having abundance and being in need. I can do all things through him who gives me power. Philippians 4:12-13 CJB

Israel had a lot in Egypt, but not much in the desert. They had to rely on God in the desert. We can choose to rely more on God or to rely on our own abilities. What do you think could work out better? We have great sky scrapers, huge cities, and bright lights in the city. Perhaps we think that is what is important. What is the worth of all the wealth and the things this world without a good life through God? "Trust in ADONAI, and do good; settle in the land, and feed on faithfulness. Then you will delight yourself in ADONAI, and he will give you your heart's desire. Psalm 37:3-4 CJB.

We need to resist unbelief and any spiritual attack which may come at us. Instead of giving place to negative thinking, we should prepare ourselves to fight these attitudes and reflect on what we have through the Messiah. Don't kevetch, don't be a complainer. The negative patterns in your head will only hurt you and take away your peace. Instead set goals for your life and include spiritual goals. "Do everything without kvetching or arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure children of God, without defect in the midst of a twisted and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the sky, as you hold on to the Word of Life;" Philippians 2:14-16 CJB.

Israel is about to be set free so they could serve God and live blessed lives through Him. It wasn't God's intention that they whine and complain their lives away. We will see that their complaints became examples for us not to do the same. God said they would be His treasured people a holy priestly people. "You will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart;" Exodus 19:5-6 CJB. What could be wrong with that. It wasn't long before they began complaining though:

Numbers 11:1-5

"But the people began complaining about their hardships to ADONAI. When ADONAI heard it, his anger flared up, so that fire from ADONAI broke out against them and consumed the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried to Moshe, Moshe prayed to ADONAI, and the fire abated. That

place was called Tav'erah [burning] because ADONAI 's fire broke out against them. Next, the mixed crowd that was with them grew greedy for an easier life; while the people of Isra'el, for their part, also renewed their weeping and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt - it cost us nothing! - and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, the garlic!"

People today are no different than Israel and without God's direction people do terrible things. No wonder the world is such a mess. Don't let the devil work on your heart so that you become worthless spiritually and even worse. Eli's sons were worthless because they were bankrupt spiritually. "Eli's sons were scoundrels who had no regard for ADONAI;" 1 Samuel 2:12 CJB. In the book of Psalms it says, "I have not sat with worthless folks, I won't consort with hypocrites, I hate the company of evildoers, I will not sit with the wicked. Psalm 26:4-5 CJB.

God is good and we need to appreciate all He does for us. In the wilderness, God helped Israel, "Still, you, in your great compassion, did not abandon them in the desert. The column of cloud did not leave them by day; it kept leading them along the way. By night the column of fire kept showing them light and the path to take. You also gave your good Spirit to teach them, did not withhold man from their mouths and provided them water to quench their thirst. Yes, forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing - their clothes did not wear out; their feet did not swell up;" Nehemiah 9:19-21 CJB.

God is still in the business of helping and doing good if we will only accept Him. He gives Holy Spirit to those who believe in the Messiah Yeshua. He can provide for us and help us. He can heal us and His word teaches us to live good and holy lives which is for our own benefit and peace. Philippians 1:6, 9-11 CJB says, "And I am sure of this: that the One who began a good work among you will keep it growing until it is completed on the Day of the Messiah Yeshua.... And this is my prayer: that your love may more and more overflow in fullness of knowledge and depth of discernment, so that you will be able to determine what is best and thus be pure and without blame for the Day of the Messiah, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Yeshua the Messiah - to the glory and praise of God."

God does what is good for us and will keep helping us it says. We can be filled with the attributes of God through our cooperation with Holy Spirit. Our love can overflow, we can grow in knowledge and discernment and do what is best. God wants us to be a pure and holy people who do what is right (righteousness). We can be an example of who God is and give God glory and praise by how we live. His ways produce, goodness, peace, kindness, joy, love and many more good things. What can be wrong with that? Just like Israel was looking forward to being set free, we should look forward to what God can do in our lives each and every day through the Messiah.