

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG193 – By His Great Power

Hello, and welcome to the podcast today. We are preparing for the Feast of Passover, which will be coming soon. I want this message to help give you a focus for this Feast of Passover, and an expectation for what God can do in our lives today with the Feast of Passover. Before I get started, I just want to encourage people; I think it is important, if you have never been able to attend a Seder, that you try to find a Seder in your area from a church or from a synagogue that is open to have visitors during this time. It would be very educational, and it would be a great experience for you to have the depth of understanding and impartation that comes from actually being a part of an Orthodox style of Seder.

With that said, and that encouragement for you, I want to jump in to where I feel like the Holy Spirit is speaking, at least to my heart, in preparation for this Feast of Passover. I am titling this, *By His Great Power*. What I want us to get from this time of teaching about the Passover, and the expectation for this year of Passover, is that we really anticipate the power of God moving in our generation. I think that because of the reality that the Israelites lived in leading up to Passover, which really included four hundred years of slavery, there was definitely a challenge for them to have faith in God's ability to move miraculously – which is what the circumstances required in order to deliver them out of their slavery and bring them out of Egypt. So, I want to read some of the verses of Scripture which will give us the background for Israel and their being in Egypt during this time.

I am going to begin with Genesis the forty-sixth chapter, verses 2-4. It says, "God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, 'Jacob, Jacob.' And he said, 'Here I am.'" He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes.'"

The next Scripture I want to read is Genesis 15, starting at verse 12. This comes from the story of Abram in his time with God, and the covenant that was made between God and Abram.

Verses 12-16,

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

In these two Scripture readings, we see something taking place that is preparation for us in the story of Passover and what transpires. In the first reading we see that God is speaking to Jacob and telling him not to be afraid to go down into Egypt, because while he is in Egypt, while Israel is in Egypt, God was going to make of them a great nation. Now, this is something that we have to recognize in this story; because it plays a very important role, in my mind, of what is transpiring when we get to the book of Exodus, and Moses is getting ready to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt by the miraculous power

of God. We see that at that the time when Moses arrived, they had been in Egypt for over four hundred years. Now when God spoke to Abram, He said that they would be oppressed for four hundred years; when you read the Scriptures of Moses delivering them, it says they were in Egypt for four hundred thirty years, to the very day. And so, the Scripture could seem to be a little bit in conflict there, but in my thinking, it is not. When they first went into Egypt, they went into Egypt under Joseph. They were literally seen as the guests of the pharaoh there, and Joseph was ruling over Egypt under Pharaoh. And so, during those thirty years, that we would guess from the Bible, since it is saying four hundred thirty years versus the four hundred years, then we recognize that they were not slaves during that time; but they were oppressed and in slavery for four hundred years.

Imagine yourself being in that place, where you have come down into Egypt, you have been treated wonderfully for thirty years, and Joseph is ruling over all of Egypt and literally becomes the salvation of not only the Egyptians, but also of Israel itself; and then, after that, you go into this time of four hundred years of slavery. Now, during those years, these verses of Scripture had to be passed on to the Israelites, because they had nothing else to go by. There was not a Bible yet that they could read and see what the end of the story was going to be like; they had just the Words that were passed down through the family, that had been spoken to Jacob and that had been spoken to Abraham. In those Words, we know that they were directed to go down into Egypt and that God was going to make a great nation out of them; also, the Word through Abram said that they would be oppressed for four hundred years, so it gives an end date to their oppression. It also said that God would come in judgment of the nation, and that they would go out of Egypt, or the nation that was oppressing them, with many possessions.

So, this concept, these ideas, had to be passed on from generation to generation to generation over four hundred years. Now, if you put yourself in the place of the Israelites, by the time you get to the end of those four hundred years, it is very difficult to have faith any longer. They may have lost count of how many years it was; unless somebody was wise enough to be marking down the years, how did they know where they were in this timeframe? How did they know how much time left they had in the bondage and slavery? And had they even lost the telling of the story through all of these days? It is very important that the story be told. In fact, when we get to present day, where we have the Haggadah in the Seder celebration, it means, "The Telling." So the whole expression of Passover, in the synagogue or in the homes of the Jewish people, is the telling of the story. And you can see why the telling of the story was extremely important, because they had to know that there was so much time they would suffer under slavery; that they would go out with great wealth, many possessions; and that during this time there was a purpose. You say, "Why are we here?" Well, they were there because God was in the process of making them a great nation.

When we go to Deuteronomy the tenth chapter, we see part of this story being told. In verses 20-22 it says, "You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen." Now, this is Moses talking to Israel after they are out of Egypt, and he is reminding them of the great signs and wonders that they saw through the hand of Moses by God. And, he is adding something in verse 22: "Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the heaven." So we see there was a purpose.

Now, if you place yourself in Egypt, at the end of the four hundred years you probably even wondered if there really was a God. God was now a story that had been told; hopefully, they had continued to tell

the story down through those four hundred years. But it was, boy, a long way away, and it was kind of a shadow of reality to them. And yet, we see a purpose in God, that God did not leave them. God brought them down into Egypt as seventy persons; and over this time, He takes those seventy persons and creates of them a great nation, exactly as He had promised Abraham He would do. So, we see something in this story as it unfolds; and these lessons are important for us today. One of the things we realize here is that God Himself was waiting. If the children of Israel thought they were waiting, God was waiting. God was waiting for them to become a great nation. He was not violating time and space by some miracle. He was waiting for these people to multiply and be prepared for the next step, which required Moses coming.

A lot of times we forget about this, that God works within the material world that we live in. We still have people asking a huge question, you know, "Where is God? Why is it taking so long?" As Christians we are believing for the return of Christ as the Messiah, as the King who will reign on the throne of David; and we wonder, "Gee, it has been two thousand years, when is this going to happen?" So we recognize that God is moving within the material world that He has created. And many times – not just in the story of the Passover – that requires God Himself to be waiting for certain things of His moving and His provision, and Him fulfilling His Word, until there is a preparation. There were a lot of things that had to be put in place here. These people had to grow; and I am sure the Presence of God was with them in certain ways, but certainly not in the power and the miracles that they saw when Moses came about. But God was waiting for that time.

He was waiting for the prophecies themselves to be fulfilled, even as He talks to Abraham in the prophecy, as He is saying He is going to judge that nation. He also says, in verse 16 of Genesis 15, "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." So not only was God waiting for Israel to grow from seventy individuals into a great nation, but also for the iniquity of the Amorites, the people who lived in the land that Israel was going to possess; their iniquity had to come to a fullness before God was willing to move in the judgments that He moved in, in order for Israel to possess the land. So we see, not only is Israel waiting – and it is painful, it is excruciating to be waiting for four hundred years. Think of the thousands of people who died during that time of waiting for the completion of what must be done on a natural plane in order for God to begin to move and fulfill His promises. He could not have moved before Israel was a nation, because that was the whole vision; that was the promise to Abraham, that "your descendants will be as the stars of the sky, as the sand of the seashore." So He had to get them to the place where that was fulfilled to Abraham. There were a lot of things; and the reason this is important to me now, as we prepare for Passover, is that I think we live in a day where there is a lot we are waiting for; and we need to see that it is not that God is not moving, it is that it is not really the time for Him to move yet.

We are going to go down now in this chapter and see this, because the children of Israel had a difficult time believing that God could move, because it had been so long since God had moved. I am going to read out of Deuteronomy the fourth chapter, starting with verses 24-26.

"For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today...."

So, where are we? We are at the time that Moses is telling the story to the children of Israel before they go in to possess the land. He gives a complete recount of all that had transpired, what they had gone

through, what they were waiting for, their time in Egypt; and he is recounting also the time after their deliverance, at Mount Sinai, and their time through the wilderness. He is going back through everything that had happened, and he is giving them this warning; and it is a warning they should relate to, because he is talking to them about another length of time that is going to pass: "When you become fathers of children and children's children and have remained long in the land...." So, just as they had experienced in Egypt, that there was a long period of time, seemingly, between the movings of God, the Presence of God, in a real and tangible and powerful way, Moses again is warning them that once they experience this timeframe, don't lose your faith. Don't let yourself become weak in following after the Lord and in pursuing the faithfulness to the covenant and the commandments that He has given to you. So he says, "Look, if you are in the land for a long time and you start to act corruptly...." Why do you act corruptly? Because it is no longer real. I mean, when God is moving in judgements and you are seeing this with your eyes, it is a little bit scary to be violating God, right? And once there is this big timeframe here, you lose kind of the fear of the Lord. And yet, the things that God had done, even for them in the wilderness, was to create in them a fear of the Lord so that they could walk with Him even during times when He did not seem to be as present or moving in power as they had witnessed previously.

In verses 26-34, it goes on to say,

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be few in number among the nations where the Lord drives you. There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice.

"For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"

So we have, again, this idea that God is reminding them through Moses. God wants us to remember. One of the reasons God wants us to remember is so that we in our hearts can stay faithful and prepared. Because, not only did they go into idolatry, but they lost the very faith that they originally had to see God move in signs and wonders as He had moved before them. And that is one of the things that we recognize when we go to Passover; that is why it is the telling of the story, because we are always going back to remind every generation, generation after generation, of God's great power, of His moving in power, of how He comes with an outstretched arm, with a mighty hand, with signs, with wonders, and He fulfills His Word. He is always working within the natural world, which means that there will be seeming delays in God's fulfillment; but we tell the story of the Passover to remind us that it could be tomorrow that God moves.

I want to read verses 34-40 again.

“Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on the earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.

“Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”

So we see that God was trying to prepare them that they not forget who He is, that they not forget His power, that they not forget His ability, that they not forget the commandments, the statutes, all that God had given them, that they not forget these things. Yes, they had not seen them, but their fathers had seen them; and it had been passed down to them from generation to generation, and it is still being passed down. It is being passed down by the Passover. It is being passed down in the Gospels of the New Testament, the things that Christ did, the things that God did in Christ, the story and the reality of the cross and the resurrection. These are things that we must remember today; because maybe it has been a long time since we have seen God really overtly move on the earth or in the heavens through His power, through His determination to fulfill His Word. But He is going to move again, and we must be prepared for it.

Passover is preparing you for tomorrow. It is not just talking to you about a story of yesterday. It is not telling you about the mighty works and the acts of God, and what happened through the verses of Scripture that transpired in Genesis and Exodus, in Deuteronomy. It is trying to keep the faith alive in us for today, for who He is today. There is no other God like Him, and we are never to forget what He has done.

You say, “But I have not seen it.” I know. Maybe you have not seen it. Maybe we are like those Israelites who were living in Egypt after three hundred fifty years, or three hundred seventy-five years, or three hundred ninety years. But come the four hundredth year and God came to move. He sent a man, Moses. And one of the hard things that you see in the story of the Passover is that they could not believe Moses. In fact, they got angry at Moses, and they said, “Let the Lord judge you,” because of what was transpiring. Every time something happened in the beginning of the judgements, it also impacted the children of Israel; and they became very angry at Moses, and they did not believe in Moses, and they did not believe in God. They had not seen this God. He was the God of their fathers. Remember that God, when He came to introduce Himself, in fact, to Moses, said, “I am the God of your fathers. Go tell them the God of your fathers is sending.” Why is He saying that? Because they do not know Him. He has not yet become their God.

He was the God of the fathers. The fathers had met Him, had known Him, had covenants with Him, had visions from Him, had His voice come to them – but not the Israel that was in Egypt after four hundred years. That was not their experience. So, how much like those Israelites are we today? We can say, “We

have heard of the stories, but He is just the God of our fathers.” I think we are living in a generation like that, and it is a scary thing. In this Passover, I hope that we can remind ourselves. Listen, God is always working, and He is preparing the material world for His moving. And maybe that means He has to wait; and He does have to wait. There are things that make Him wait. Moses had to grow up. He had to grow in the presence of the pharaoh. He had to mature; he had to have the experience of going out and becoming a shepherd; he had to be prepared. God had to wait for Moses to be prepared before Moses could meet Moses. So, God is doing many things. He is part of that preparation; but you do not see God moving necessarily by tremendous signs and wonders in Moses’ life when he is very young, in a way that he can relate to. And so, this is one of the things we must remember and take away in our hearts from this podcast: God is always working to prepare the material world for His moving. And that may take time. But He is never not a God of power and might; and He will move in signs and wonders when it comes the time to bring about His fulfillment of the Word in the earth.

We see that with Yeshua. He came with signs and wonders at the time that He matured and it was ready for Him to manifest as the Messiah. So, the last thing I would say is that Passover teaches us that our hearts must always be prepared and anticipating the power of God to move in our midst to fulfill His Word, His covenants, and His promises with Israel and with us as believers in Christ. Amen.

I bless this time of Passover for you and your family. Let it be a time of remembering, a time of expectation in your faith to see God move.

Amen.