

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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The Yoke of Bondage

Joseph, one of the sons of Jacob, had miraculously assumed a position of significant authority in Egypt prior to the time of a great famine:

- 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.
- 42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;
- 43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt. -Genesis 41

Yahweh (the LORD) had already showed Joseph that there would be seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine. Therefore, Joseph stored food in preparation for the famine (see Genesis 41). Consequently, when the famine came, Jacob (Israel) sought to buy food from Egypt:

- 1 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?
- 2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. -Genesis 42

Finally, Jacob and his family went and lived in Egypt and were spared from starvation. Unfortunately, the famine continued and the money became worthless. Therefore, the people of Egypt sold their land and themselves through Joseph to the Pharaoh:

- 23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, *here is* seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.
- 24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.
- 25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. -Genesis 47

Thus, all of Egypt, including Jacob's family, known as Israel, lived on the land that belonged to the Pharaoh, provided they gave him twenty percent of everything they produced.

After Jacob, and then Joseph and his brothers died, their memory was lost to the king of Egypt:

- 6 And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.
- 7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.
- 8 Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. -Exodus 1

The people of Israel eventually found themselves under severe Egyptian bondage:

- 13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:
- 14 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. -Exodus 1

Israel was finally freed from Egyptian bondage at the Passover. They were saved, by the blood of a slain lamb that they put on their door posts, from the death that came to the Egyptians. After this miracle, they were set free from their captivity (see Exodus 12).

Yahweh cautioned Israel not to let a prophet or a dreamer cause them to return into bondage:

- 1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,
- 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;
- 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
- 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. -Deuteronomy 13

Nevertheless, Israel listened to false prophets and kings and adopted religious practices and customs that were contrary to the Word of God. Consequently, they were taken back into captivity by Assyria and by Babylon (see 1 & 2 Kings). Even after the Jews were freed from their captivity in Babylon, their leaders sought to put them back into bondage. They made new rules and ordinances that were not required by God. Speaking of the religious authorities, the scribes and the Pharisees, Yahshua (Jesus) said:

- 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.
- 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,
- 6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,
- 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.
- 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. -Matthew 23

He said the religious rulers lifted themselves up over the people and bound them with heavy burdens. They added obligations as supposed requirements for salvation that were not of God. Yahshua warned:

- 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.
- 13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. -Matthew 23

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Such religious rulers not only keep themselves out of the kingdom of heaven, but prevent those who follow them from entering in also. They lay aside the true Word of God and invent worthless practices and rituals for worship. They make up their traditions and then teach them as doctrines. Yahshua explained:

- 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.
- 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.
- 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. -Mark 7

Peter warned:

- 1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.
- 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. -2 Peter 2

Concerning these false prophets and teachers, Peter said:

- 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. -2 Peter 2

False teachers can only maintain control over people by preventing them from knowing the truth. We can be set free from the bondage that we find ourselves in by knowing the truth:

- 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;
- 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. -John 8

Yahshua explained, here is truth:

- 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. -John 17

As some religious leaders sought to bind believing Gentiles through rituals and traditions, Paul wrote:

- 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. -Galatians 2

Once we have been set free through the truth, we must:

- 1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. -Galatians 5