

344 Another Exodus

In Exodus Chapters 1–15 the Holy Spirit has given us the account of the Exodus of God's people from their bondage in Egypt. For eighty years the Lord carefully prepared and equipped Moses for the great task of leadership which He was going to place upon him, and broke the news to him at the burning bush (Exodus 3.1-10). Moses came up with every excuse he could think of (3.11-4.20), but the Lord's will finally prevailed, with Aaron being appointed Moses' spokesman (4.14-16), and Moses being entrusted with "the rod of God" (4.17,20). After many delays and adventures, culminating in the institution of the Passover, the Exodus took place (Chapters 12-14), and after yet more people-induced delays, the Promised Land was reached at last (Joshua Chapter 3).

Now Britain has been wrestling with its own kind of exodus from the European Union for the last few years – a markedly different scenario from the Biblical Exodus and yet with some similarities. The people of Britain are a far cry from being God's chosen and covenant people (though some popular patriotic songs seem to assume otherwise!), but this country, of all the major nations in the world, is unique in retaining a Constitution overtly based on the principles of the Reformation. For that reason alone we can assume that God does see this nation and its peoples in a different and potentially more favourable light than elsewhere.

But of course the key to that assumption rests on our national obedience to those Reformation principles. We still have a Protestant Coronation Service and monarch, and an Established Protestant Church in England, each of which in its own way should uphold within the nation a proper fear of God and the need for biblically-honouring legislation. Regrettably that godly fear and appropriate legislation are long gone from these shores, with wholly predictable and very obvious consequences. The impasse over "Brexit" seems neatly to express our national confusion and decline.

A widespread view is that in the early 1970s Britain was misled over the true implications of our joining what was then simply the "Common Market". Far from this membership being only to assist our trade, the Common Market has morphed inexorably into the European Union of today, still with grand plans for becoming a global super-state in its own right. As Israel became trapped in Egypt, the "Brexit Leavers" believe that similarly Britain has become trapped in the EU, from which we therefore need to escape.

The main argument for remaining within the EU is economic. This argument receives the most attention in Parliament and the media, but, while obviously important, is surely in the longer term the least weighty of the three arguments before us. For do not the other two arguments, both favouring an exodus from the EU, carry more significance? - to regain our national independence, and to preserve our Protestant heritage in the face of the EU's close identification with Roman Catholicism.

We now have a new Prime Minister who has made a bold, bright start in office, promising that the "exodus" will indeed happen on October 31st 2019. Many cheer, many doubt, and many groan, and we will have to wait and see how matters unfold.

Comparing Pharaoh with the EU is not in our brief this time! – but clearly Boris Johnson is certainly no Moses. In his favour he has become Prime Minister by due and lawful process (in the peaceful and dignified manner under our Constitution for which we can be grateful). He possesses a fine brain and great optimism, both of which he will need in abundance in view of the tasks facing him. His blatant ambition, private life and general character "raise many eyebrows", he being the first Prime Minister likely to install his current girlfriend in 10 Downing Street, while his divorce is yet to be completed. "Great – a sign of modern Britain being at ease with itself!" cry some; others raise a rather different cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have no help but Thee" (eg., Psalms 121.1-2 & 124.8 & 146.3).

Mr Johnson is far from being "a man of God" as that phrase is generally understood. But we know that the Lord in His mercy does at times make use of apparently highly-unsuitable people to carry out His divine purposes: scripturally Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus come to mind for example (eg., II Chronicles 36.11-17, 22-23 & Isaiah 44.28).

The next 90-plus days are crucial, and may well reveal much as to the Lord's attitude to this nation and to its confident new Prime Minister, for whom we are earnestly to pray, along with his Cabinet colleagues, all MPs, and those involved on both sides in any "Brexit" negotiations (eg., Romans 13.1-8 / I Timothy 2.1-6 / I Peter 2.13-17). We pray two simple prayers above all else: that God may indeed have mercy on this sinful nation; and that the "Promised Land" in prospect may include the genuine return of this once-blessed Christian Protestant nation to "the rock from which we were hewn" (Isaiah 51.1).

