Devotional from Pastor Ho

Mar 12, 2020

Exod 20:2, *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."*

Throughout the OT Bible this is an oft-repeated statement, whether it is from God directly or through His prophets, appearing more than 70 times. This statement defines the existence of Israel as a people of God and declares the mighty work of God in founding this nation. It first appears as the preamble to the Ten Commandments, the constitution of the new nation. More than meets the eyes, it describes the spiritual significance of the Israelites' delivery from the house of slavery: they shall be to God a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:6). In other words, it points to the departure of God's people from sin into holiness.

Amazingly, in the NT, it occurs only twice, one in contrast with the new covenant in Jesus (Heb 8:9) while the other equating it with the salvation in Jesus (Jude 5). What this tells us is that, just as God brought the Israelites out of Egypt in the OT, Jesus is delivering us from sin in the NT. The power of Jesus' deliverance is no less than the power God displayed in bringing Israel out of Egypt. How does this help us face the anxiety over COVID-19?

Before today, corona virus seems so distant; the risk of infection was deemed low, but we were told that "this can change any time." Now it has, with 2 confirmed cases in our backyard. What was earlier only a shadow is now on our doorstep. What do we do? Are there reasons to panic or be anxious? No. Should we be more cautious? Yes.

Nevertheless, Jesus is still our Savior, whether 2000 years ago on the cross, or today in the days of COVID-19. Death is no longer a threat, yet we need to be more dependent on him. In the days ahead, there may be scores of discomforts and inconveniences, but biblically, they are teaching us lessons on humility, rather than that on entitlements. It takes only a tiny virus to remind us how vulnerable we are, and that we need to be "brought out of the land of Egypt" to stand firm against the onslaught of COVID-19, while continuing to love God and one another.

2020 年 3 月 12 日

出埃及记 20:2: 我是耶和华你的神，曾将你从埃及地为奴之家领出来。

在旧约圣经里，这是频繁出现的一句话，无论是直接从神而来，或者经过先知，有70多次。这一句话定了以色列人作为神子民的存在，也宣告了神大能的作为设立这个国家。它第一次出现为新国的立国宪法，就是十诫，的前言。更深一层的，它描述了以色列从为奴之家被拯救的属灵意义：他们要归神作祭司的国度，为圣洁的国民（出 19:6）。换句话说，它所指的就是神的子民离开罪归向圣洁。

妙的是，在新约里，它只出现两次，一方面是与耶稣的新约作对比（来 8:9），另一方面与耶稣里的救恩画等号（犹大 5）。这告诉我们，正如在旧约里神领以色列人出埃及，在新约里，耶稣从罪里拯救我们。耶稣拯救的大能就是神领以色列人出埃及时所显出的能力。这如何能帮我们面对冠毒疫情呢？

今天之前，冠毒似乎很遥远；感染的风险也估计很低，但同时也提醒我们，"这随时都会改变"。现在已经改变了，在我们邻近已有两个案例。之前只是影子的现已在我们门口了。我们该怎么办？有没有理由恐慌或担忧？没有。我们是否应该更谨慎？是的。

即便如此，耶稣仍然是我们的救主，无论是两千年前在十字架上，或者今天在冠毒感染的日子里。死亡不再是威胁，但我们需要更依靠他。在前面的日子里，可能有许多不适与不便，但从圣经的观点来说，这些都是教导我们谦卑的功课，不是资格配得的功课。所需的只是微小的病毒来提醒我们，我们是多么的脆弱，而我们需要"从埃及地为奴之家被领出来"，在面对冠毒攻击时能屹立，并继续爱神爱人。