



DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

REVELATION 18:4

DECEMBER 2016

Another Exodus?

In the final book of the Bible, The Revelation—amidst all the symbols and visions—there is a scene where the world system is described as Babylon.

The word of God to his people in that situation is: *"Come out of her, my people"* (Revelation 18:4). Could that apply to God's people now?

The story of the great exodus from Egypt is a major theme in biblical history. It pictures the deliverance of God's chosen people from the oppression of Egypt. But the story begins much earlier. In fact, it begins with the wonderful story of Joseph, who has become a universal model for behavior in the midst of tough circumstances. But there is more to the story that affects a true understanding of how cultures develop and decline. The descendants of Abraham were in the midst of a famine and looking for relief. They decided to go down to Egypt, which had an abundant supply of grain due to

the wisdom of Joseph, who had miraculously been promoted to manage the economy of Egypt even though he was a foreign slave. The intriguing story of Joseph and his brothers is spellbinding as it eventually leads to all the family moving to Egypt. There, they are taken care of—for almost 400 years. Eventually the government of Egypt became so oppressive that life was unbearable and the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob cried out for deliverance. God heard their cry and led them out in order to be a light to all nations.

Is it time for another exodus? Is God setting the stage to deliver his people from another government gone bad? Several Hollywood types have threatened to leave the country if Donald

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Trump wins the election. Some conservatives have said the same if Hillary wins. Neither will happen, but perhaps there is a remnant that will come out without physically leaving.

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First, let's examine what led to the state of degradation that warrants a cry for deliverance. **The bottom line is that those responsible for the narrative that creates and sustains culture have neglected to keep it central.** We know that cultures are built around a narrative that tells who we are, how we got here, what is wrong and how to fix it. All moral decisions and ultimately all social structures adhere to this narrative. If our culture is to be rescued it must restore its narrative. Our narrative has been reinterpreted and altered. Much of the frustration among the masses is because they want the culture back, but they don't recognize that the narrative has changed. At one time it was a story about the creator and his creation in which humans were given the privilege of managing the earth according to his principles of order. In that story the

creator-God was also a redeeming God who did what was necessary to resolve the conflicts of human failure. This narrative has been replaced by one in which mankind has become the final authority by means of random chance. The ramifications are staggering. When there is no authority above human intellect, the governmental structures that humans create define reality and determine individual rights. All other social structures such as family, church, and business are regulated by a central governing agency that rules by threat. In this scenario such things as religious liberty, God-ordained rights, and private property are sharply limited if not eliminated.

If the future includes another great exodus, what would such an exodus look like? Let me summarize what I expect based on the pattern in biblical history and the nature of the gospel narrative. (1) It will begin with a people tired of an oppressive culture. (2) They will have to have an overriding story that defines them and gives them hope. (3) They will have to believe in that story so much that they are willing to die for it. (4) They will have to coalesce around the essential tenets of the story and live in an interdependent community where the ramifications of their narrative can be practiced. (5) This culture within the national culture will be criticized, marginalized, and sometimes criminalized. They will need

each other for survival. (6) The story will have to have preeminence. It will be prized, preached, and practiced until it serves as the basis for all moral decisions and social structures.

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When will this exodus take place? Not as long as people are willing to tolerate the loss of freedom as a trade-off for what the government provides in comfort and convenience. We should not be mistaken. Once government begins to encroach, it doesn't stop until it rules without question. For now, the people of God have adopted so much of the alternative narrative that many don't even know what the original is. Many are willing to tie their hopes to political figures that promise to either fix the broken system or destroy it altogether. Those who have tried to mix the American dream with the beatific vision of Christ will be vulnerable to various false cults that always arise when people are dissatisfied. The dream of financial and physical success is not the prosperity that the New Covenant provides. That is selling the gospel message way too short. Those who have tied their own

security and significance to the hybrid church/corporation will fight for its survival. The day will reveal how much is compromised in order to keep the status quo. When the fire of persecution gets hot, the dross will be burned away, and true faith will be revealed.

But there is great hope. God is already raising up spokesmen for the original story. Beams from heaven are highlighting the gospel narrative. The light of God's favor is upon the message that Jesus is Lord. And those who have heard in the depths of their hearts the joyful sound of God's redemption in Christ are tired of the moralism that had demanded center stage for too long. They want more than spectator church. They long for community where faith is lived out in the environs of broken but confident believers. The seed of God's word has taken root in them, and they earnestly desire the pure spiritual milk of that word. They have put up with nice motivational talks, but they are tired of being anemic and spiritually weak. They are ready to demand the bold proclamation of the mighty works of God accomplished through Jesus the Son.

Will the coming exodus result in the preservation of this country? It is the only hope. If we continue to insist upon or permit a society that excludes God as creator and sustainer, we pull the curtain

down on this experiment of a democratic republic. Destruction is a matter of time, not probability. A government “of the people” cannot function when controlled by the spirit that works in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:1–2). The influence of the salt and light of the gospel is essential for any such government to properly function.

When we acknowledge God as the source and sovereign Lord of life, **we begin to think sanely again.**

What would happen if miraculously a large remnant returned to the original narrative revealed in the gospel? When we acknowledge God as the source and sovereign Lord of life, we begin to think sanely again. We then see that God created mankind with a special dignity with unalienable rights that must not be oppressed by any manmade structure. We submit to our assignment of managing creation under his guidance and authority. We define work, worship, recreation, and procreation in light of the truth of his word as interpreted by the gospel. Virtues like responsibility, accountability, and integrity become more valued than bank accounts and titles. When we acknowledge that the proper fear of God is the beginning of

wisdom, our approach to education changes. We again value service, and those in both church and government are primarily servants rather than superiors. Life instead of death begins to flow through the people, and creativity thrives. Inventions provide solutions to problems we thought could never be fixed with current sources. In short, we reflect the kingdom of God on earth. It will be effective because more people will be truly helped than the previous ineffective structures have offered. The effect will work like leaven through the loaf, and salt and light always have an effect on society.

It is the best we can hope for. There is no promise in scripture that God will save America. There is great promise that God is exalting his Son, and those who join him will not be ashamed.

If we are tired enough of the oppression, let's cry out to God. He is already saying, “*Come out of her, my people.*”



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