**Jacob Went Down to Egypt**

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

Many years ago, the Charlie Daniel’s band had a song called *The Devil Went Down to Georgia.* And since the internet loves to make fun of things, when googling the words to this song I noticed a meme that said: “If the devil went down to Georgia, does that mean that Georgia is one level below hell?” Another said: “Satan worshippers crack me up. I mean, would you really worship a deity who lost a fiddle contest to some random hillbilly in Georgia?”

Well, as we return to our study of Acts7, we don’t see the devil go down to Georgia, we see a man named Jacob who went down to Egypt:

**“So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers” (Acts 7:15).**

As you may remember from our previous studies here in Acts 7, a man named Stephen is on trial for his life before the Jewish council of elders for preaching Christ. But rather than defending himself, he’s *continuing* to preach Christ by pointing out that some of the most famous heroes in Israel’s history were *types* of Christ, men whose lives foreshadowed the life of Christ. Stephen has already talked about Abraham and Joseph, and now he talks about Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, and the father of Israel’s twelve tribes. A man whose name God later changed to *Israel.*

And the reason Stephen mentions that Jacob went down to Egypt is because that’s a type of how the Lord went down to Egypt after He was born, back when King Herod was fixing to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem, so he’d be sure to kill the new king of the Jews that he’d heard about from the wise men. If you forgot how that went down, Matthew 2:13 says,

**Matthew 2:13-15: “the angel...appeareth to Joseph…saying…take the young child and his mother, *and flee into Egypt…*for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him…he took the young child and his mother…*and departed into Egypt:* And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken…by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt have I called my son”***

So Jacob going down into Egypt was a type of how *Christ* went down into Egypt.

But the funny thing about the verse that Matthew is quoting there is: it wasn’t a verse about God calling *Christ* out of Egypt. It was a verse about God calling *Israel* out of Egypt!

**“When *Israel* was a child, then I loved him, *and called my son out of Egypt”* (Hosea 11:1).**

You do remember that Israel was God’s son, don’t you? God told Moses,

**“Thus saith the LORD, *Israel is My son,* even My firstborn” (Exodus 4:22).**

So why would Matthew take a verse that was talking about how God took *Israel* out of Egypt and apply it to how God took *Christ* out of Egypt? Well, it’s because Christ was the *true* Israel. Remember what the psalmist prayed in Psalm 80:8,9?

**“Thou hast brought *a vine* out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land”**

The vine tree was one of several trees that were symbolic of Israel. And Psalm 80 says that God brought the vine of Israel out of Egypt when He parted the Red Sea for them, and then drove the Canaanites out and *planted* Israel in the land. But Israel went downhill spiritually from there, as we see when the prophet wrote,

**“*Israel is an empty vine,* he bringeth forth fruit *unto himself…”* (Hosea 10:1).**

As you can imagine, that wasn’t God’s plan at all! He planted Israel in the land hoping they would bring forth fruit *to Him.* but they became an empty vine that brought forth fruit *unto themselves.* So what God needed was a vine that *would* bring forth fruit to Him.

Does that help you understand why the Lord said,

**“*I am the true vine,* and my Father is the husbandman*…I am the vine,* ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, *the same bringeth forth much fruit”* (John 15:1,5).**

God called His son *Israel* out of Egypt and planted them in the promised land, but they didn’t bring forth fruit to Him. So God brought forth *another* son out of Egypt, a son named Jesus, and planted *Him* in the land—and He *did* bring forth fruit unto God. A son who called Himself the *true* vine of Israel. A son who said the Jews had to be in Him if *they* wanted to bring forth fruit unto God.

And the reason for that was because the only kind of fruit that God can accept is the *perfect* kind. The kind found *only in Christ—*but the kind that Christ *gave* His disciples at Pentecost, when He filled them with His Spirit and made it so *they could not sin* (I Jo. 3:9; 5:18).

Of course, that only happened after the Lord died and rose again. That’s why in this type of Christ in Jacob, Acts 7:15 says that Jacob went down to Egypt “and died, he, and our fathers.” And then it went on to say of Jacob,

**“And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem” (Acts 7:16).**

So Jacob was only called out of Egypt *after he died.* Just like Israel could only be saved from the “Egypt” of her sins after *Christ* died—as we see in the type of Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel.

But *before* Israel was called out of Egypt, God made them into a great nation, as we see as Stephen continues his message in Acts 7:17:

**“But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.”**

Now when Jacob went down to Egypt initially, the “nation” of Israel numbered about 70 people (Gen.46:26). And the problem with that is, two hundred years earlier God had promised Abraham, “I will…multiplythee *exceedingly”* (Gen. 17:2). And I don’t know about you, but where I come from, 70 people in 200 years is not exactly a good example of being multiplied exceedingly! But as you can see, God kept His promise once Jacob’s 70 got to Egypt, and we are told they became a mighty nation of about 600,000.

But then something happened, something we read about as we read on. Verse 17 says that God multiplied the Jews in Egypt,

**“Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph” (Acts 7:18).**

The king that Joseph helped save Egypt by telling him to store up food to prepare for the ensuing seven years of famine *died,* and Egypt got a new king. And that caused a problem for the people of Israel, as we see in Exodus 1:8-12:

**“…there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people…the children of Israel are more and mightier than we...let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and…fight against us…*Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens…*But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew...”**

When the new king saw that the Jews outnumbered his people and threatened their safety (or so he supposed), he decided to *enslave* them. He figured making their lives more difficult would cause them to peter out as a people. How’d that work out for him? If you know your Bible you know that it just made God’s people *stronger* and *healthier.*

Now there’s lots of lessons about the value of manual labor and exercise that we could draw from that. Personally, I like to exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I’m doing and ties to put a stop to it. I also hope that a lot of trips to the refrigerator can count as exercise! Hey, I’m in shape. Round is a shape!

But once the new king saw that his plan backfired, he decided to be a little less subtle in his efforts to reduce the number of the people of Israel, as we see when Stephen continues his narrative in Acts 7:19, where he said of this new king,

**“The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.”**

Once Pharaoh saw that his subtle plan of reducing the Jews by enslaving them miscarried, the gloves were off, and we read,

**“Pharaoh charged all his people...*Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river…”* (Exodus 1:22).**

Now in all of that, Pharaoh was a type of the *antichrist.* Antichrist is going to start out subtly, looking like a man of peace. Then after he dies and rises halfway through Israel’s seven-year Tribulation, he is going to start to be a little less subtle, and will begin to persecute and *kill* God’s people outright—as we see pictured in Pharaoh. When he does, God will respond by saying,

**“…*I will give power unto My two witnesses*, and they shall prophesy…” (Revelation 11:3).**

Does that remind you of the two witnesses that God sent Pharaoh, named Moses and Aaron? After that, Pharaoh drowned in a lake—a picture of how Antichrist will someday drown *in a lake of fire.*

But when Pharaoh turned up the heat and started killing baby Hebrew boys, that’s when God sent His people *a savior,* as we see in Psalm 105:23-26:

**“…*Israel also came into Egypt;* and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. *And He increased his people greatly;* and made them stronger than their enemies…*He sent Moses His servant; and Aaron whom He had chosen”***

So now, Stephen is going to begin to tell the story of Moses, who was *another* type of Christ:

**“In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months” (Acts 7:20).**

Moses was born and lived three months with His Hebrew parents—just as the Lord was born and lived three years with *His* Hebrew parents, till Herod heard that the king of the Jews had been born and thought, “Wait a minute! *I’m* the king of the Jews!” and decided to eliminate the competition:

**“Then Herod…*slew all the children that were in Bethlehem*, and in all the coasts thereof, *from two years old and under,* according to the time…he had…inquired of the wise men” (Matthew 2:16).**

Doesn’t that sound a great deal like what happened when Moses was born, and the king was disposing of Hebrew baby boys in the Nile? Do you see the type of Christ in Moses’ birth?

Okay, when Moses was three months old, his mother obeyed the king’s order and cast him into the river. Stephen then goes on to tell us what happened next:

**“And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son” (Acts 7:21).**

Now if you can’t remember how that went down, Moses himself described it when he later wrote of his mother,

**“she took…an ark…and put the child therein; and…laid it…by the river's brink …And the daughter of Pharaoh…saw the ark…And she had compassion on him…Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?...and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, *and he became her son”* (Exodus 2:2-10).**

You may remember that Pharaoh hadn’t said *how* those baby boys had to be case into the river. So Moses’ mom cast him in the Nile in a way that saved his life, and ensured that he would grow up in Pharaoh’s house. In other words, as far as anyone knew, Moses had a mother, but no father. Does that sound like any virgin-born messiah you know of, one that had a mother but no earthly father?

Of course, growing up in Pharaoh’s house had its privileges, as we see as Stephen went on to say of Moses,

**“And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22).**

As the grandson of the pharaoh of Egypt, you can bet that Moses had the best teachers that money could buy. If you’re wondering how that made him a type of Christ, whose parents were poor, look at what the Lord said in Luke 4:23:

**“He said unto them, Ye will surely say unto Me *this proverb,* Physician, heal thyself”**

Now that’s not a quote from the Bible Book of Proverbs, found in the wisdom section of the Old Testament. That’s a proverb from the wisdom of the world. The Lord was also familiar with the wisdom of the world in the area of meteorology, as He proved when He said,

**“When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.* And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering”* (Matthew 16:2,3).**

Now this too is an old proverb that is drawn from the wisdom of the world. I can remember sitting in a restaurant when I was a boy, reading the witty sayings that the restaurant had printed on their paper placemats. One of them was, “Red sky at morning, sailors take warning. Red sky at night, sailor’s delight.” Probably the only reason I remember that over 50 years later is that I thought of it the first time I read Matthew 16:2,3 when I was first saved at age 14.

But that’s worldly wisdom that’s obviously been around since the Lord’s day. And your Savior knew it! He wasn’t just some dumb thump who just fell of the turnip truck, as they say. He was learned in all the wisdom of the world about Him, just like you see typified in Moses.

As you may know, you don’t have to have pricey tutors to learn the wisdom of the world. Abraham Lincoln was self-taught. And if you saw the movie *Good Will Hunting,* actor Matt Damon plays a genius who works as a custodian at an ivy league university. In one scene, he taunts one of the students because he paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to get an education that he could have received free of charge by getting a library card.

But unlike Matt Damon’s character, and unlike our Lord, Moses was taught the wisdom of the world by high-caliber teachers in the house of Pharaoh. And when Stephen added that Moses was “mighty in words and deeds” (v. 22), he must be talking about wisdom that was *separate* from the wisdom of the world that he’d been talking about. He must have been talking about the wisdom *of the Scriptures,* wisdom that the Lord was *also* proficient in, according to how some of His disciples described Him in Luke 24:19:

**“Jesus…was a prophet *mighty in deed and word* *before God*…”**

Doesn’t that sound like what Acts 7:22 said about Moses, that he was “mighty in words and in deeds”? Do you remember what happened with the Lord’s enemies sent some officers to arrest Him? They returned saying, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). And they weren’t talking about his red-sky-at-night kind of wisdom. They were wowed by His knowledge *of God’s Word,* and Moses was a type of Christ in this area as well.

By the way, what do we know about the “mightiness” of Moses’ words? When God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt, he protested,

**“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: *but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue”* (Exodus 4:10).**

Moses said to God, as it were, “I wasn’t eloquent when you found me, and you haven’t *made me* eloquent since you’ve called me to lead Israel.” Yet the Bible describes his words as *mighty.* Is there anything you can learn from that? You don’t have to be an eloquent speaker to be a mighty speaker *if you are speaking the words of God.*

And don’t forget, Stephen has been accused of *blaspheming* Moses. And here he calls him mighty in words and deeds! That reminds me of how we grace believers are often accused of blaspheming Moses too, when we affirm what Paul wrote when he declared “we are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). Yet here we are devoting an entire article him, with yet another one to come!

Well, as we read on, Stephen tells us what happened to Moses when he became an adult:

**“And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel” (Acts 7:23).**

Moses began his ministry to Israel when he was 40 years old. Now if you’re thinking that he wasn’t a type of Christ in this, since the Lord began *His* ministry to Israel when He was 30, consider what we read about this in Hebrews 11:24,27:

**“By faith Moses, *when he was come to years,* refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter…and…forsook Egypt”**

That phrase “come to years” was used in the way that we would say that someone “came of age.” And it’s true that Moses came to years when he was 40, and the Lord came of age when He was 30, but you have to adjust for inflation—or *deflation,* as it were. It took Moses longer to come of age for he lived to be 120, whereas 1500 years later, when the Lord was here, men didn’t live that long, so they came to years younger—at age 30. The type even holds true in this detail if you allow for the differences in the times.

And when Verse 23 says that Moses “visited his brethren in the children of Israel,” it helps to remember that Moses was living in the proverbial ivory tower, with his Grandpa Pharaoh and his mother, Pharaoh’s daughter. So he probably didn’t get out much to mingle among “the great unwashed” found among Egypt’s Jewish slaves.

But at age 40, he decided to visit his brethren to see if he could help them. He might have been the grandson of Pharaoh, but he knew who his brethren in Israel were—just as the Lord knew who *His* brethren were. Hebrews 2:11,16 tells us that,

**“…He is not ashamed *to call them brethren…*the seed of Abraham*”***

Moses could easily have been ashamed to call the Jews his brethren. They were a bunch of slaves! *But he wasn’t.* And the Lord could likewise have easily been ashamed to call the Jews His brethren. He was their Creator, and they were his creation! *But He wasn’t.*

Now when Verse 23 says of Moses that “it came into his heart” to visit his brethren in Israel, that kind of makes it sound like he was just laying back in his recliner when the thought just kind of popped into his head. But Hebrews 11:23,24 paints a different story when it says,

**“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, *refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; *Choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”**

As Pharaoh’s grandson, Moses was poised to be the next king of Egypt, which means he was poised to be *the next king of the world,* for Egypt ruled the world at that time. But he not only chose to leave Pharaoh’s house when he came to years, *he refused to stay.*

And that makes him a type of Christ again, for right after the Lord came of age,

**“…the devil…*sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;* And saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8,9).**

At that moment, the Lord could have become *the net king of the world.* All He would have had to do was choose to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. But He not only chose to decline Satan’s offer, *He refused to accept it,* choosing rather to suffer *the affliction of the cross.* That’s what you’re seeing pictured here in the life of Moses.

So what happened when Moses visited his brethren in Israel? According to Stephen,

**“And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian” (Acts 7:24).**

Now if you have forgotten what that’s all about, in Exodus 2:11,12 we read,

**“…when Moses was grown...he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their bur-dens: *and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew,* one of his brethren. *And…slew the Egyptian.”***

What do you call a man who acts like that? What do you call a man who saves someone’s life? Oh, I don’t know—a *savior* maybe? Moses announced himself to God’s people as their savior by doing what they expected from a savior. He saved one of them from his enemy! And that’s what the lord came to do for His brethren as well, as was said of Him when He was born:

**“…the Lord God of Israel…hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David…*That we should be saved from our enemies*…” (Luke 1:68-71).**

When Moses slew an enemy to save one of his brethren, that’s what the Lord came to do for His brethren in Israel—and what He *will* do at His Second Coming, when He defends them from their enemies by slaying the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon.

As we read on, we find out *why* Moses slew that Egyptian:

**“For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.”**

Now here you may be wondering, “If Moses was a type of Christ in this as well, does that mean that the Lord supposed that His brethren would understand that He came to save them?” And the answer to that question is: yeah, He did! It wasn’t until a year or so passed in His ministry that He finally realized that they *wouldn’t* understand it, as we see when Matthew tells us,

**“*From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples,* how that He must go unto Jerusalem, *and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes,* and be killed, and be raised again the third day”(Matthew 16:21).**

See that word “began” there? That word indicates that *up until that time* the Lord had *not* told His disciples that He would have to “suffer many things” of the leaders in Israel and die at their hands.

You say, “Didn’t He know from the beginning that they would reject and crucify Him?” The answer is: No! He supposed that they would have understood how God would by His hand deliver them, as we see in the type of Moses.

But wouldn’t the prophecies that said He would die have told Him otherwise, prophecies such as we find in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53? No! A careful read of those chapters will show that they never say *who* it was who was dying. So even though the Lord knew the Bible well, He couldn’t have known that those Scriptures were written about Him.

Don’t forget, the Lord wasn’t born omniscient. That is, He wasn’t born knowing the future, just as He wasn’t born knowing how to talk. He had to learn how to talk, and He had to learn the Bible that He Himself wrote through the hands of the Old Testament prophets. That means He had to learn that Isaiah was saying that *He* was the one who would die for Israel’s sins.

Now as a prophet, He became aware that Israel’s leaders were planning to kill Him once they began their sinister plots, for prophets just knew stuff like that. Like when Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira didn’t give all the money they got for their land to the apostles to distribute to the poor in Acts 5.

But once the Lord knew that they’d kill Him and not accept Him, He *stopped* supposing that His brethren would understand how God by His hand would save them, and He began to tell His apostles that His people *wouldn’t* understand it, that they would kill Him instead.

Now as we read on, we see one of the *reasons* Moses’ brethren didn’t understand that He’d come to save them from their enemies:

**“And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?” (Acts 7:26).**

One of the reasons Moses’ brethren didn’t realize that he came to save them from their enemies they were striving with in Egypt is that they were too busy striving with one another! Does that remind you of the Jews in the Lord’s day? They were divided into at least three different factions that we know about, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians. And let me tell you, there was no love lost between them. They were always striving with each other.

Is there anything you can learn from that? I once received an email at *Berean Bible Society* from a lady who said that she stopped hanging around with a certain segment in the grace movement because of all the infighting that goes on within it.

And infighting like that isn’t just a bad testimony that can sour even the most sincere saint. It will also keep you from receiving more truth from God, as the psalmist expressed when he wrote,

**“I understand more than the ancients, *because I keep Thy precepts”* (Psalm 119:100).**

Now you’d think it would have been the other way around. You’d think the psalmist would have written that he kept the commandments of God *because he understood His Word.* Instead, he wrote the very *opposite,* stating that he understood more of God’s Word *because he kept His commandments!* How’s that work?

Well, what the psalmist was trying to say is something that I’ve heard said ever since I was saved at age 14 in 1970. And that is that God won’t give you more light on His Word if you’re not living up to the light that He has *already* given you on His Word. Why should He? What would be the point?

So if you’re ignoring the apostle Paul’s please to live peaceably and charitably and lovingly with other members of the Body of Christ, you’re not just souring the saints and presenting a poor testimony to the lost. You’re also limiting what God can teach you about His Word in addition to what He’s already taught you, and you’ll wind up like the man who Moses prevented from striving with his brother:

**“But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?” (Acts 7:27).**

Hey, doesn’t that sound a lot like what we read of the Lord in John 1:11?

**“…He came unto His own, *and His own received Him not”***

Doesn’t that also sound a lot like the parable the Lord told in Luke 19:11,14?

**“He…spake a parable, because...they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear…his citizens hated him…saying, *We will not have this man to reign over us”***

You see, they thought that the kingdom would appear during the Lord’s *first* visit to them. They needed to understand that He wouldn’t receive His kingdom until He returns the second time. That’s what happened to Moses! We’ve already seen that he came unto his own, and his own received him not on his first visit to them. In our next lesson, we’ll see how they *did* receive him, and how that made him a type of Christ, whom Israel will receive on *His* second visit to them.

That’s the message that Stephen was trying to send to his brethren on the Jewish council who had him on trial for his life. That they might have crucified their Messiah, but they would be given a second chance to receive Him when He returned—a return that would have come in their day had the dispensation of the mystery not interrupted God’s prophetic timetable.

Finally, Stephen reminds us of what was said to Moses by one of the men who was striving

**“Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?” (Acts 7:28).**

In other words, he had done a good deed when he killed the Egyptian to save the life of one of his brethren, but his brethren were calling it a bad deed. Well, isn’t that what they said about the Lord?

**“…there was a man…which had a withered hand. And they watched Him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him…And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? *to save life, or to kill?”* (Mark 3:1-6).**

As you know, the Lord went on to heal that man—and He called it *the saving of a life.* But *they* called it the breaking of the law!

Well, in closing, if you know the story, you know what happened when Moses learned that people knew he’d killed the Egyptian. Stephen was quoting Exodus 2:14-16 here:

**“Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? *And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known*. Now when Pharaoh heard…he sought to slay Moses. *But Moses fled…and dwelt in the land of Midian.”***

Moses then went away *for forty years,* a picture of how the Lord has similarly been gone for many years. But Moses returned, and the Lord will too, as we’ll see pictured in the life of Moses when we resume our study of Acts 7 in our next lesson.