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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2222 ~ God's seven Promises.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Have you ever tried to get out of doing something you thought it'd be hard to do? You made excuses but others keep promising to help. Well, Moses was in this position. He tried hard to persuade God to send someone else to do the job of leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Although God became angry with Moses' ongoing reluctance to trust Him, God offered Moses another solution. God agreed to send along a helper to accompany Moses and that helper was none other than his big brother, Aaron, whom he hadn't seen for 40 years.

Moses and Aaron met at Horeb, the Mountain of God, and Moses told Aaron all the things God had told him. They returned to Egypt together and they told the Israelite leaders that God had seen their afflictions. They showed the signs that God had given to Moses and the people believed them and worshipped God.

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A visit by Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh didn't produce any better results for the Israelite people. Pharaoh scorned the God of the Israelites. He thought that any God over such weak and lowly people as the Israelites would be inferior to the powerful gods of Egypt. Why should Pharaoh obey a god who couldn't even deliver his own people from slavery? Pharaoh said that he didn't know this god of the Israelites, but he soon found out! Disregard and contempt for God is behind all the evil that's in the world.

Moses and Aaron were seen as troublemakers who were trying to interfere with the work schedule of Pharaoh's slaves. In response, Pharaoh made the work even harder for the Israelites and their foremen were beaten for not keeping up the number of bricks that were to be made each day. When the foremen realised that it was Moses and Aaron's fault that the things had got worse for them, the Israelites considered the 2 men as their enemies.

If Moses had thought about it, he would have remembered that God had warned him that this would happen. Often, the Lord will delay actioning something until He's sure that we'll recognise that, when His action comes, we'll give praise and thanks for what He's done. If things always go as we expect, we're likely to lose sight of God and stop depending on Him.

When the Bible says that God will keep us, it doesn't mean that He'll always keep us from trouble. But it does mean that He'll keep us while we're surrounded by trouble. Some believers think that we've the right to live easy, tranquil lives and then one day, we'll die easily in our sleep. Everything will be nice and cosy and comfortable. But the Bible doesn't promise this. Jesus said in John, Chapter 16, "In the world you will have tribulation." But He also said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Sometimes God will keep us from a problem and sometimes He'll let us go through the problem but He is with us in it.

Moses went to the Lord in prayer to complain about God's inaction. God gave Moses 7 promises of things that He would do for the Israelites. The promises were:

1. God would bring the people out from under the burdens that they were carrying
2. God would rescue them.
3. God would redeem them.
4. God would take them as His people.
5. God would be their God.
6. God would bring them into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
7. God would give that land to them as a heritage.

Moses relayed these promises from God to the Israelites, but they didn't listen to him now because of their bitter struggle to survive. Then the Lord instructed Moses to see Pharaoh, but Moses told Him that if the Israelites wouldn't believe him, how could Moses expect Pharaoh to believe? Moses was starting to lose his faith too.

Because Moses and Aaron were the ones chosen by God to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, the rest of Exodus, Chapter 6, details their family records. Only the first 3 sons of Jacob are mentioned, as both Moses and Aaron were descendants of Jacob's 3rd son, Levi. Moses didn't have the credentials of a 1st-born son, as he was descended from the 2nd son of Levi. The only qualifications Moses had were those God had given to him; some came from natural gifts while others came from his life experiences. But to this, God added spiritual empowerment that would enable Moses to do God's work. And God will do the same for us too.

God reassured Moses that Moses would speak with God's authority. Moses would tell God's message to Aaron and then he'd speak to Pharaoh. But God also said that He would harden Pharaoh's heart. Interestingly, God didn't harden Pharaoh's heart during the first 5 plagues; it was Pharaoh who hardened his own heart and only after that did God begin to confirm Pharaoh's hardness of heart. Pharaoh wasn't a robot in God's hands. He could have responded in a right way to the wonders or plagues that were done by God's servant Moses.

Many people are troubled by the idea that God would harden anyone's heart. Why would He do that? God doesn't just decide suddenly to harden this person or that one; nor does He do it out of meanness or indifference. Rather, God is like the sun shining on a brick of clay. As the sun shines, the brick gets harder and harder. God didn't harden Pharaoh's heart against his will. If his heart had been more like wax, it would have softened in the sun and not hardened.

We can choose whether our hearts will be like wax or clay. If we harden our heart against God, He may in the end be forced to break them. God told Moses what Pharaoh's responses would be in advance so that Moses wouldn't become discouraged. After 10 wonders or plagues, God would bring His people out of Egypt. And by then, not only the Israelites would know who 'Yahweh' (the great I AM) was, but the Egyptians would also know too.

How was Moses doing as a leader of God's people? We can look at our own church leaders and meditate on what makes them a good Christian leader and maybe a not-so-good one. According to the Scriptures, Moses was a servant of God and although he did lead the Israelites out of Egypt, the word 'leader' isn't used much in the Old Testament. However, in Chapter 18 and on the advice of his father-in-law, Moses chose leaders of the people to be permanent judges over different sized groups. Only the hard cases of disputes were to be brought to Moses, for him to give judgment on. Moses' appointed judges were to be God-fearing men who could be trusted and couldn't be bribed.

The Apostle Paul wrote about the qualifications of church leaders in several of his books to young churches. These qualifications can be summarised as commitment, conviction, competency, character and calling. The 1st questions to be asked about any potential leader are: "Does this person have a clear commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour? Is there evidence that he or she is guided by the Holy Spirit and what they're already doing shows signs of 'good fruit.'?" Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 7: "By their fruit, you will know them." If a person's behaviour doesn't match up with their words, there's a warning that that person may not be suitable at that point in time to be leading a group. Any potential leader needs to demonstrate a personal knowledge of the Lord and obey His precepts, not only in the church and workplace, but also in their family.

A trainee leader needs to have convictions about the Biblical meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection, who God is and His involvement with people throughout history, as well as the nature and purpose of the Church. Furthermore, each Christian leader needs to be undergoing the renewing of their mind and heart so that they demonstrate Christ-like attitudes in every area of their lives. For this reason, Paul warns against being too quick to call recent converts to leadership, as commitment and conviction take time to deepen and mature.

We can ask many questions about the knowledge and experience that a new leader should have, such as:

- How much Bible knowledge does a new leader need to have?
- Do they have good working knowledge of the Scriptures so that they can answer any general questions asked?
- Can they counsel an enquirer about what it means to be a Christian and follow up new converts?
- Does the likely leader show integrity and the love of Jesus in their relationships, including within their marriage and with their children? The Kingdom of God is about right relationships, firstly with God, then with other believers and then to be in good standing in the community.

Are our future leaders in the Church taking on the true likeness and character of Jesus to show humility, self-control, kindness, trustworthiness and a quest for holiness? Is there evidence of dying to the love of money, rejecting manipulation and control of others, as well as not always wanting things one's own way? Are they faithful to their spouse, as listed as being 'the husband of one wife' in 1 Timothy, Chapter 3? This same chapter says that a leader is required to "see that his children obey him with proper respect" but not with a demand for perfection. Even the best parents can have children that choose to disobey them.

Is the promising leader called to a major role in the church? If the ministry position is a paid one, there is a temptation to regard it more as a career move than a calling and use business principles rather than Biblical ones to keep the position going. Thus, many modern pastors minimise their responsibility of preaching God's Word and they focus rather on being the CEO of the church. As such, they prepare and implement growth plans. They view the church as a product to be marketed to the consumer. As in the retail business, you have to give the customers what they're looking for.

Many of these pastor are like the CEOs who have been very successful in building impressive church campuses that cater to thousands of weekly tithe-paying 'customers'. They write 'how-to' books that share their proven principles for building the church. Is this how the Bible says a Christian leader is to grow a church? Rather, church leadership is primarily via influence and God's enabling; the way the church leaders should influence others is by their godly example and their sound teaching of God's word that matches God's Word. Moses passed onto Pharaoh and the Israelites what God had told him to say. And all believers in Christ should be seeking to pass on the truths of Scripture and living them out in their own lives as the Holy Spirit leads and guides. The best leaders, just as Christ did, see themselves as servants to those that they're leading.

In Hebrews, Chapter 13, Verse 7, it says: "Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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