

*“...The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live...” (Ecclesiastes 9:3)*

*Wherewith shall I come before the LORD,  
and bow myself before the high God?  
He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;  
and what doth the LORD require of thee,  
but to do justly, and to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6.<sup>6,8</sup>)*

**Awake and arise: moses, a “woke” man, yahweh, a “woke” god,  
and israel, a nation called to “wokeness”**

**Exodus 2.<sup>11-12</sup>**

## **i** Introduction

---

There is lots of talk of “wokeness.” It’s white America’s new buggy man. Virginia has a new GOP governor in part because of it. Hurray for the slumber of delusion!

Delusion is always preferable to wakefulness in America. Always has been. The nation was founded upon it.

But, once more, that damned thing called the Bible—you know, the book that America “Christians” love so much (and that the founding fathers avoided at all costs)—undermines, contradicts, challenges, resists, and confronts America’s delusions.

“How,” you ask?

In a million ways, big and small. But this post is about only one of them. This one is about a “woke” man by the name of Moses. Yes, that’s right. The greatest of the Hebrew prophets, Moses, was “woke.”

The people who would come to be known as Israel entered Egypt of their own volition in order to escape a famine. According to the text, they ended up staying in Egypt for over 400 years.<sup>1</sup> Initially, they seem to have been welcome. But, as their numbers and influence grew, so too did Egyptian anxiety. So, along came a man speaking hate and delusion.

“The people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we,” the new Pharaoh who knew not Joseph trumpeted. I will not argue with his assertion that the Israelites had grown in numbers and influence. But, really, now, it is highly unlikely that in a short two, three, four, five, or even ten generations there were more Israelites living in Egypt than native born Egyptians. This exaggeration seems akin to the sort of fearmongering we hear on America’s right about the “caravans of invading foreigners” or changes in American demographics. Pharaoh’s populist propaganda was simply an Egyptian variation on modern-day white supremacists’ “replacement theory” with its fear of foreigners who take your jobs, steal your stuff, rape your wives, and eat your children; all while they are high on drugs.

“Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us...”<sup>2</sup>

The Pharaoh who spoke hateful delusion seems little more than a FOX pundit; an ancient manifestation of Tucker Carlson.

But delusion is a powerful tool of the devil. It is working now, and it worked then.

“Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted

---

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 12.<sup>40-41</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 1.<sup>10</sup>. Something almost identical to this sentiment came right out of the mouth of 19<sup>th</sup> century white Americans living in the slave holding south as but one justification for slavery. It seems likely that something very much like it is still kicking around inside the sick heads of too many Americans. It is being openly battered about on the latest human scourge, social media.

them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.”<sup>3</sup>

When oppression failed to slacken the dreaded Israelite population explosion, the Egyptians resorted to infanticide. Today, of course, white folks in America don’t engage in infanticide. Oh, no. Such a nasty, evil practice, infanticide. No, they simply confine the feared other in ghettos, let them drink out of poisoned led pipes, grow up malnourished, attend dramatically inferior schools, suffer the denial of economic benefits that are plentifully bestowed upon the privileged class, and die without healthcare. Then, when the other still seems a threat, they have their slave hunters shoot them in the back. No, in America good white people don’t kill babies. They wait for them to grow up before they kill them. Then, Bam! A bullet to the back, a knee on the throat, two-hundred pounds of white blubber sitting on a chest.

#### **a** “woke” man of privilege

---

Though Hebrew, Moses grew up privileged; grew up in Pharaoh’s house, eating from Pharaoh’s table and enjoying the spoils that came from Israelite oppression. But,

“It came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”<sup>4</sup>

How’s that for being “woke”?

One day Moses was living the privileged life that Israelite oppression made possible, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 1.<sup>11-14</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 2.<sup>11-12</sup>

next, wham-bam, he woke, saw it for what it was, and moved to do something about it.

Of course, those still in the slumber of delusion were not happy. It was bad enough to have rabble rousers among the oppressed. But to have a rabble rouser among the privileged class... that was a blasphemy too far.

“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses.”<sup>5</sup>

How’s that for cancel culture? How’s that for political divide within the family?

Yes, any just and true criticism of the oppressing culture feels like a threat against that very culture’s existence. The “woke” criticism must then be countered with its own violent cancellations.

#### **a** “woke” god

---

But justice and mercy and humility are funny things. They just can’t be canceled. Resisted, yes. Delayed, definitely. But, however hard the oppressor tries, he/she never succeeds in the cancelation of justice, mercy, and humility. We can thank God for such durability.

Moses eludes the death penalty for his treasonous “wokeness” by going into lonely exile. But, in exile, he meets a very, very “woke” God. Refusing delusion, this “woke” God unambiguously declares,

“I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows... Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 2.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 3.<sup>7,9</sup>

How's that for "wokeness"?

Though Moses has nearly as many excuses as there are Arabian nights for why he is not the right man for the job, nevertheless the "woke" God sends the "woke" man to fulfil a "woke" mission. Moses returns to Egypt to speak four words, repeated over and over again, "Let my people go."<sup>7</sup>

But, of course, the culture refuses correction and refuses to repent. We all know the consequences for Pharaoh's hardness of heart and his resistance to "wokeness." He was drowned in a sea of delusion, his slumber becoming permanent.

It took a while, required the outstretched arm of Deity, but Egypt finally let his people go.

the ritual of "woke" remembrance

I have little to say to those who deny the centrality of institutional racism in the past and the present. To fuss with those who ignorantly refuse what is so patently obvious is a waste of words and a waste of time. However, for those who complain about the timing, the appropriateness, the necessity of "wokeness," I will offer a hopeful plea.

We often hear this common refrain from those who refuse or, at least, resist correction today: "But, African Americans aren't slaves anymore. It's time to move on."

There is so much false about this complaint it would require its own, dedicated homily to address all the errors. I am old enough to know and to have witnessed institutional racism that unjustly and wickedly segregated white from black in every facet of life—where one lived, learned, sat, traveled, slept, ate, drank, shit, banked, died, was buried, etc., etc. Even if one is generous and wishes to believe the delusion that institutional racism ended in, say, the

---

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 5:1; 7:16, 8:20; 9:1; 10:3

sixties (which it most certainly did not), then we are still only one lifetime removed from the horrors inflicted on an entire race.

But, in the end, it doesn't matter whether it was yesterday, or the day before that, or the day before that. God requires a people to remember. So, we return to history. We return to that troublesome Bible that so often confronts and resists all our sinful justifications.

Perhaps you don't recall that even now, some *three thousand years later*, Jews still remember the Egyptian oppression under which they lived for four hundred years. Every year, year in and year out for millennia they have remembered. And they remember at God's insistence.

It's called "Passover." Maybe you've heard of it.

This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD *throughout your generations*: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance *for ever*.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, one of the worst things Israel could do is forget. They were repeatedly warned of the danger of forgetting.

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons..."<sup>9</sup>

Are you really going to begrudge African Americans remembering for a few measly decades an oppression that lasted four hundred years and continues today in a new more "civilized" form—an oppression that I, a living being, have witnessed in my own lifetime and about which I will stand as witness at the judgement bar of God?

Come on man! Can't we show even a modicum of honesty and fairness?

---

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 12.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 4.<sup>9</sup>

Israel's "woke" remembrance was not limited to the ritual of Passover, however. And its "woke" remembrance was not only about remembering a distant and dead past. "Woke" remembrance of the past was about the present. Israel was to be a "woke" society, in which every individual remembered the past oppression every day in everything they did and in every interaction they had with everyone else. Indeed, the entire system of Israelite law and ethic and morality was built on the foundation of "woke" remembrance of the past oppression in hopes of avoiding a repeat of the past's oppressions.

"And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; *for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*"<sup>10</sup>

"And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day....*"<sup>11</sup>

"When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

---

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 19.<sup>33-34</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 15.<sup>12-15, 18</sup>

*And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.”<sup>12</sup>*

This “woke” remembrance not only applied to Israelites’ relationship with each other. It also applied to their relationship with God. Even the command to observe a day of rest, the sabbath, was based upon “woke” remembrance.

*“Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.”<sup>13</sup>*

Maintaining a “woke” consciousness would aid Israel in acting morally and ethically. It would keep them acting justly and mercifully, and humbly. It would keep them from engaging in arrogant oppression. It would keep them from turning into Egyptians—slumbering, delusional, and oppressive Egyptians.

Unfortunately, Israel’s ruling elite—and through their forgetful example, the entire populace—did not observe the required “woke” remembrance outside the ritual setting. Upon leaving the temple, they forgot to remember. They imitated Egyptian slumber. The ruling elite governed their own citizens just as the Egyptians had governed. They treated their own citizens as the Egyptians had treated them. The people followed suit.

This forgetfulness was the entire point of the Hebrew prophets’ criticism aimed at Israelite and Jewish society. “You have turned into Egyptians: Oppressive, unjust, hard-hearted,

---

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 19.<sup>19-22</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 5.<sup>12-15</sup>



unrepentant. For that there are consequences.”

We all know the consequences. Israel and then Judah found themselves exiled in a world of deluded and slumberous oppression and violence. A world that knew no justice, knew no mercy, and knew no humility.

This is what happens to individuals and societies that refuse and, worse, resist “woke” remembrance of past and oppressive realities. They repeat them over and over again until, finally, they themselves fall victims to injustice, mercilessness, arrogance, violence, and oppression. For many, this only ends with annihilation.

“Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have decreed in them shall be fulfilled. And verily I say unto you, that they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and rebellious; yea, verily, to seal them up unto the day when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the wicked without measure—unto the day when the Lord shall come to recompense unto every man according to his work, and *measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man.*”<sup>14</sup>

#### Conclusion and benediction

---

It would take many homilies, several books, even, to plum the depths and the Bible’s “wokeness.”

“Wokeness” is not only Biblical.

“Wokeness” is of God.

Moses was a “woke” man.

---

<sup>14</sup> DC 1. 7-10

God is a “woke” God.

Israel was to be a “woke” nation.

The present “wokeness” is of God.

The present “wokeness” will save and redeem.

Continued and stubborn slumber will kill.

Resistance to “wokeness” will kill.

The choice is ours. We are indeed free to choose.

“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great [and woke] Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.”<sup>15</sup>

Choose wisely.

“O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound, which are the chains which bind the children of men, that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe.”<sup>16</sup>

*“The Lord executeth righteousness*

---

<sup>15</sup> 2 Nephi 2.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>16</sup> 2 Nephi 1.<sup>13</sup>

*and judgment for all that are oppressed.  
He made known his ways unto Moses,  
his acts unto the children of Israel.*”<sup>17</sup>

“His word is in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones.”<sup>18</sup>

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

---

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 103.<sup>6-7</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Jeremiah 20.<sup>9</sup>