



bits from bob....

Lights, Camera, Action!

July 27, 2020

Life is difficult! When difficulties come, we Christians are challenged to understand the source of the difficulties and the nature of the difficulties. We live in a fallen world characterized by injustice, a world that is not fair, a world filled with struggles – where do we find orientation? How do we learn to stand upright?

I appreciate the metaphor because I have been struggling with disequilibrium, vertigo, lack of balance. Lack of orientation can be quite disorienting! (I like the approach of one study of the Psalms that identifies psalms of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation.)

Can you imagine the frustration, injustice, questions when the sons of Israel (the family descended from Jacob) had spent over 400 years in Egypt? Generations were born, generations died. What would it be like to live your entire life in the valley? What if you were never able to climb to the mountaintop? What would happen to your faith? I observe, to summarize quickly, that Israel was undoubtedly questioning, doubting, disoriented. To make matters worse – Pharaoh intended to start killing all of the male babies that were born to the Hebrews.

The difficulties that come into the human experience are described in the Bible by two concepts – pressure and testing. The pressures of life are called afflictions or tribulations. The times of testing are called trials and temptations. There is an increasing tendency in modern versions to mix the two ideas, but I find it helpful to distinguish them. Some things that happen are a natural part of living in this world. They are beyond our control – we need comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-11). Other things are described as trials – we need release and escape (1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:2,12). God provides that which we need. In either circumstance, what we most need is to see God more clearly. We endure in hope because we can see something better – the certainty and the conviction.

Israel was granted what they needed. In Exodus 2-6, the descriptions of God's person and presence among his people are verbs. Twenty-five different verbs are used to describe God's action on behalf of his people – some of them are used more than once! God is One who....

hears	remembers his promises	looks	knows
is who He is	sees	descends	frees
removes	sends	is present	manifests himself
visits	works	extends his hand	does his will
appears	inflicts wounds on Egypt	redeems	establishes his will
reaches out	takes his people to himself	swears truthfully	gives what is needed
inserts himself into the human dilemma			