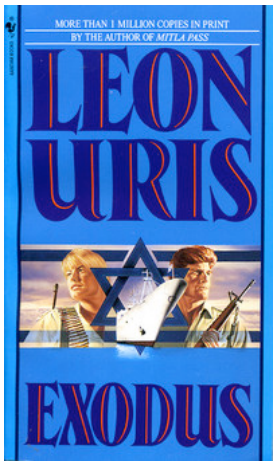
Andreas course-3



'Called to be free'
Who or what will make us free?

Introduction
The author Leon Uris wrote a book about the return of the Jews to Israel after the Second World War, with the title 'Exodus'. After centuries of exile, and after a very dark period of deportations and massacres, which is often indicated as 'the Holocaust', the Jews were able to establish their own free nation. In 1948 the state of Israel was proclaimed. It is still one of the most remarkable political events in the last century, with an enormous amount of consequences for the Palestinians and for the surrounding Arabic nations.

The calling of Moses near mount Sinai
The second book of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) starts with an account of the preparations for the Exodus from Egypt. This country had become a sort of concentration camp for the Jews. The fist chapters describe the circumstances around the birth of Moses. But it is clear that God notices what happens to his people very well. He calls Moses to lead the people into freedom. God appears to him in a burning bush near the mountain Sinai. When you visit the Saint Catharina monastery at the foot of Sinai, you still can admire the remarkable green bramble. The monks say: 'it is the same bush from which God spoke to Moses.'

The calling of Abraham
In the meantime we have made a great jump from Genesis to Exodus. In Genesis we only have read parts of the first 3 chapters. If you read further you discover the story of Noah and the big flood, and the construction of the tower of Babel. But one of the most important stories is the calling of Abraham (who was named Abram to begin with) to leave his home city Ur. Abram migrated to the promised land that was still completely unknown to him. God took Abraham from his old (religious) patterns to be free. At the same time He made a covenant with Abraham, encouraged him and promised him and his offspring great blessings.
By the miracle of the birth of Isaac God indicated that he should bring forth a numerous offspring, more than the 'stars of heaven' and 'the sands at the shore of the sea'. God promised that all people of this earth would be blessed by Abraham and his offspring. Some parts of Genesis 12 and 17 help you to understand more before going to the book of Exodus.

Israel in Egypt
Why did the people of Israel go to Egypt? The son of Isaac, Jacob, had twelve sons. They are the twelve ancestors of the people of Israel. In Genesis 37 the stories about one of the sons, Joseph, start. After a very difficult period (Joseph was sold by his own brothers to Egypt), he got a high position at the Egyptian court. He remained faithful to the God of his fathers. His father and brothers thought finally that he was dead, but due to a big famine the brothers went to Egypt to buy food. There they met Joseph to their dismay. Finally the whole extended family moved

to Egypt to survive the famine. When Joseph died a new ruler appeared in Egypt and a systematic oppression of the Israelites began. That is mentioned in the first chapters of the book Exodus.

The Ten Commandments
The covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their offspring is an important theme of the Old Testament, and it still is for all Christian believers. God renewed his covenant with the whole nation when they arrived at mount Sinai after the Exodus. They received the Ten Commandments in order to know how they should live in freedom and serve God joyfully. The Ten Commandments still are an important rule to serve God and to live together for all people. But what is the problem that humans seem to trespass these rules and give up their freedom, time and again? We will discover this later on.

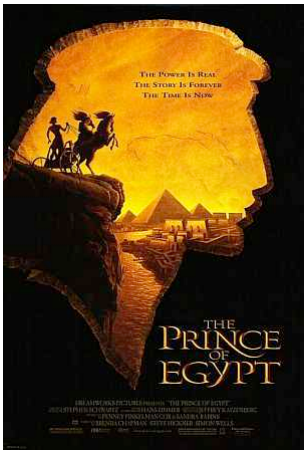
Here you find the passages for the coming 6 days to reflect on.

Day 1: Genesis 12 verse 1 - 5 The Promise

- Seek a good moment/time in order to be able concentrate…
- Read the five verses again. What's there? Put exclamation marks and question marks (because words or text parts strike you or give you questions).
- Questions to help further reflection:
    - The assignment (verse 1): "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." What loss and/or gain do these words implicate for Abram and his family?
    - What is striking in Abram's response? In which respect is Abram an example for you?
- Meditate/reflect on a specific part of Gods blessing to Abram. What strikes you the most?

Day 2: Genesis 17 verse 1 – 8. God establishes his covenant with Abraham.

- Prayer at the beginning Psalm 42:1-2 "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."
- Read this passage carefully.
- Questions:
    - How does God present himself to Abram?
    - God has made a covenant with Abraham. What were the main reasons for God to do this according to the text?
    - What promises are included in the covenant? Where do you experience that God's promises become true in your life?
- If possible: closing prayer, give back in prayer something that you discovered.



Day 3: Exodus 3 verse 1 - 6. *Here I am!*

- If possible: bring to God in prayer what bothers you, what gives you trouble.

- Read and reflect
- Questions:
    - Why do you think God wanted to present himself in this way, in a burning bush?
    - To reflect on: Important is Moses' expression (verse 4) 'Here I am'. It may also include the thought: 'Here I am for You, I am at your disposal. Moses's availability is the key for the liberation of the people of Israel!
- Think and if possible pray. What does God ask from me when it come to availability? If you find it easier, you can even write down your prayer.

Day 4: Exodus 3 verse 7 – 17 *´I AM WHO I AM´*

- Thank God that you may leave the fuss around you for a moment and enter into his presence.
- Read and reflect about this text
- Questions:
    - In what way is God's concern about what is happening in the world visible here?
    - The most central part in this passage is that God reveals himself as 'I am who I am', or 'I shall be who I shall be' In Hebrew: Jahweh. The Jews didn't pronounce this name of God. It was and still is too holy for them. About what does God want to convince Moses by this?
- End in prayer. You may ask if God will show you who he is: incomprehensible and still very near.

Dag 5: Exodus 14 verse 23 - 31 *A narrow escape to freedom*

- Try to realize and bring before God what occupies you.
- Questions for more reflection:
    - It is a dramatic escape. Why was it so difficult for the people of Israel to find freedom?
    - Why did God rescue them in the way He did?
    - How free do you consider yourself? What holds you back from real freedom?
- Close in prayer. Maybe you need to rethink and pray about freedom in your own life. What might hold you captive? Where to find real freedom?

Dag 6: Exodus 20 verse 1 - 17 *The Ten Commandments*

- If possible pray that you might understand and apply God's words
- Questions for more reflection:
    - The Ten Commandments had and have a great influence on societies in the world. Why, do you think?
    - What do you consider the most difficult commandment and why?
    - Are you able to put in practice these commandments?
- The summary if God's commandments is: loving God and loving your neighbour. Pray for God's help to put this in practice in daily life.