

Introduction to 'Experiencing the Big X' *An Historical Novel*

'The Big X'

'The Big X' refers to the large scale actual event that happened through about 80% of the first five books of the bible. The event starts with a man by the name of Joseph being sold into slavery by his eleven brothers. Joseph is brought to Egypt, spent two years in prison then put in charge of the Pharaoh's agricultural and husbandry enterprise.

Joseph's entire family of seventy moves to Egypt and is given a large portion of the most fertile land in the world, a place called 'Goshen' in Upper Egypt or more commonly called 'The Nile Delta'. Immediately following this, people from all over the world moved into the land north of Goshen, and formed a new community which today is called 'Qantir'.

After a period of 230 years and 44 Pharaoh's, our story begins with the planning stages of an enormous exodus for the remnants of Joseph's family, now 3 million souls sold into slavery and laboring for the Egyptian taskmasters. Thus you have 'The Big X' or 'The Big Exodus'..

Joseph's family is referred to as the Hebrews or slaves. Their God is at war with the gods of the Egyptians and because of their belief in these gods; the Egyptians are the only ones who suffer.

Location

The first section of the book, the plagues, takes place mostly in 'The Nile Delta' (see the extras folder). Egypt is in the northeast corner the continent of Africa. Once the exodus of the Hebrew people from Egypt actually takes place, they travel east to the country of Midian where the God of the Hebrews gives them instructions on how to live and be a separate people. Yet as they live this separated lifestyle, they are to be an example to the rest of the world.

Their ultimate goal is to inhabit the land of Kanaan, a land full of milk and honey, given to them by their God. After turning away and complaining several times about their living conditions, their God makes them wonder in the desert for 40 years. Because of their turning away and complaining, only their children end up crossing into their destination.

Characters

The title, 'Experiencing the Big X', refers to how the characters in our story experience living through this exodus and then the ultimate entrance into their promised land.

The main 6 characters are teenagers. If you are an adult, please do not stop reading now, there are more adults in this story than teenagers. I used teenagers as my characters, because they have fresh, *unadulterated* views of life around them. This allows me, the author, to give a perspective that is not usually seen by reading the bible account or hearing someone give their commentary on what happened during the exodus.

To preface why I used each specific character as I did, let me give you more background to our story. As the Hebrew community of Goshen grew north and as the Egyptian/World community of Qantir grew south, eventually, by the beginning of our story, the two of them connected.

Though rarely did an Egyptian go into the Hebrew community of Goshen, The Hebrew slaves were throughout Upper Egypt constantly building the Pharaoh's agricultural and husbandry enterprise. It would not have been uncommon for some Egyptian people who are empathic to the

unjust, inhuman treatment of the Hebrew slaves, to befriend the meek Hebrew people. This is basically what my story is about, empathetic Egyptians who befriend the Hebrew people.

If I were to give a one line explanation of my entire story, it is this: An Egyptian boy and girl who have been friends their whole lives and whose families have always been kind to the slaves, befriend four Hebrew teenagers, one girl and three boys.

Obviously, just these 6 characters, each by themselves, present their own situational problems. But, by putting away the two *completely* different cultural backgrounds, all they know is that they are the same age and they are friends to the end. Adults, in any society and cultural setting, CANNOT do this.

The bible says that when the Hebrews left Egypt, many of the Egyptians left with them. Now, looking at my characters, the rest of this story should be obvious.

With any historical novel, the main outline of the story is history. Usually, some of the characters are actual people who were a part of this history and the others are added in to tell the story. With this actual historical event, I used the opposite approach. My main characters are fictional people interlaced with actual people who were part of the original story.

I stayed true to the character of names also. Egyptians have Egyptian names and the Hebrews have Hebrew names. This one negative concern by pre-readers has been the #1 concern of mine from the beginning. I have made the decision to not compromise this integrity.

The first couple of chapters I used their full names when mentioning who says what. You will find that the characters themselves call each other by nick names or shortened versions of the full names, much in the same way we use these as endearing ways to call each other today. After the first two chapters, once the reader has learned their names, I shortened most of the names in the story to these 'nick' names. I do hope it works for you.

As a special 'extra' page I have given a 'Character Tree' called 'Names' with their ties to at least the main characters, whether they are Hebrew or Egyptian, and the chapter they are originally found in. Hopefully this will help the reader to keep track. Also, a chart map of Egypt and how Goshen, Qantir, upper and Lower Egypt are laid out for our story.

I remember reading 'Lord of the Rings' when I was very young. This book catapulted me into the world of intricate, multi character storylines. I am absolutely fascinated by this writing technique and hope it intrigues you also.

I do understand that not everyone holds to this enchantment, so if you prefer a simpler read, may I offer a suggestion; as you read this long epic novel (I can't believe I'm saying this about something I have personally written), enjoy each couple of chapters as a separate series of books. I did try to write them so they would stand on their own.

Once again, this is an historical novel so please don't try to judge me on whether that did or even could have happened. Just try to look at it as an interesting possibility to what may have taken place during this historical event. I challenge you to let this historical novel and my literary license open up a field of dreams about what probably could have happened.

Enjoy,
Mark