

EXODUS 7-15

The Story of Redemption

Thoughts and Comments

"Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today...The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

Exodus 14:13-14

favorite verse



EXODUS 7-11

Plagues

Learning about the plagues as a kid seemed a little silly-- picturing frogs jumping everywhere and locusts. It also seemed arbitrary-- why would God choose those things to plague the Egyptians with.

I was an adult when I learned of their significance. Each plague signified a different Egyptian god:

Nile to blood: Hapi and Isis, god and goddess of the Nile; Khnum, guardian of the Nile

Frogs: Heqet, goddess of birth with a frog head

Gnats: Set, god of the desert storms

Flies: Re, sun god

Death of livestock: Hathor, goddess with a cow head, Apis, bull god, symbol of fertility

Boils: Sekhmet, goddess with power over disease, Sunu, pestilence god

Hail: Nut, sky goddess, Osiris, god of crops

Locusts: Nut and Osiris

Darkness: Re, sun god, Hathor, sky goddess

Death of firstborn: Min, god of reproduction, Pharaoh's son considered a god

(cont'd)

The significance would not have been lost on the Egyptians as they were used to praying and sacrificing to those gods regularly, relying on them for their health, wealth, and prosperity.

And God chose to plague them with ten things to show his power over their 'gods.'

In **Exodus 12:12** God says "on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord."

Numbers 33:3-4 says "One the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians... On their gods the Lord executed judgements."

Another thing I realized reading this passage this time around was how many days passed from the start of the plagues to the end of the plagues.

We don't know for sure, but it was likely around 40 days. After the Israelites were told of their impending freedom, I bet that was a long stretch of waiting and trusting for them!



EXODUS 7-11

Hard Heart

This concept of Pharaoh 'hardening his heart' and then God 'hardening his heart' (this phrase is mentioned 20 times in Exodus) is a confusing concept for us to grasp. Especially in terms of its relationship to free will and God's sovereignty. Some may ask- If God hardened Pharaoh's heart then is Pharaoh not responsible for refusing to let the Israelites go? How is that fair?

The relationship between moral responsibility and God's sovereignty is one of those mysteries we don't know this side of heaven. But we can see that the Bible... (cont'd)

... clearly teaches both that we are responsible for our own sin and that God is sovereign over all.

Exodus 9:34 and **10:16** show that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was a sin against the Lord.

Yet we know that God's hand was on this from the beginning.

Exodus 4:21 shows that God told Moses he was going to harden Pharaoh's heart.

Exodus 9:16 says "For this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."

God designed it this way to show his power and glory. By hardening Pharaoh's heart, he then rained down ten plagues. If Pharaoh released the Israelites right away, this awesome show of power would not have happened.

Romans 9, a chapter devoted to God's sovereign choice refers back to this scenario as well. 'Is God unjust?' Paul says emphatically, 'By no means!'

This encounter between Pharaoh and God does not necessarily speak to Pharaoh's eternal salvation but rather demonstrates God's power, even over the human heart to accomplish his purposes. His hardened heart may have been for a limited time, not his entire life. Though it is clear that Pharaoh already thought himself a god and acted unjustly before God sent Moses to him.

There is more to say on the relationship between free will, sovereignty, and election, but no space to do so here. Maybe once we get to Romans 9!

EXODUS 14

Red Sea Crossing

I went to find a map of the Israelites route from Egypt and realized there are several theories about this. You may find it interesting to investigate. Based on my short research, this map is the theory that makes the most sense to me.

What is the picture of these events in your head? Did reading this again shift some of your vision? It did for me! I think the movie Prince of Egypt has caused me to miss some things. (*cont'd*)



So let's try to visualize this situation. The Israelites are escaping centuries of slavery. Crossing wilderness and mountains on foot. Exodus says there were 600,000 men which is estimated to be about 2.5-3 million total people.

Ramses has changed his mind basically immediately and is chasing them with a few hundred thousands soldiers.

God instructs Moses to "turn back" **(14:2)** and make camp by the sea. Where they will appear to Pharaoh as if they are trapped. No wonder the Israelites cry to Moses that he's brought them to their death.

But I love Moses' faith when he says- "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today... The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." And he said this before God told him the plan!

Then God puts a pillar of cloud between the Egyptians and the Israelites to protect his people while they make their journey across the Red Sea. Moses stretches out his hand and the Lord uses a strong wind to divide the waters. I don't know how long it took for that to happen, but this whole crossing took the entire night.

In the morning, while the Egyptians were in the sea bed pursuing the Israelites, God created confusion and panic among them, making their chariots heavy and ultimately crashing the water down on them, destroying them.

And Israel sees it all and is like- 'Yeah. God is pretty powerful and Moses is an okay guy. Let's do this thing.'

Here is a picture of the mountains around the Sinai peninsula. The true location of the biblical Mount Sinai is also a controversy or I'd put a picture of that.

But the terrain I picture in my head of what they traveled is like the Sahara but their 'wilderness' was a lot more diverse.





EXODUS 7

Coming Out of Retirement

We all picture Moses as an old man when he leads the Israelites out of Egypt. But let's think about this. Moses was 80 years old and his brother, Aaron, was 83! They were no spring chickens.

Moses is most known for these events. He had already lived 8 decades before God came to him to use him in a pretty big way.

This is a good reminder for us that age is no hindrance to being used for God's glory. Aging does not decrease our ability to bring God glory.

Some Questions

1. When Pharaoh's magicians were trying to imitate each plague that Moses and Aaron (God) did, was it easy to tell apart what they were doing from what God did? So this was Satan working through these sorcerers?
2. When they told Pharaoh they just wanted to go sacrifice and feast to God, were they deceiving Pharaoh so they could trick him and escape? Or were they originally planning to return? If it was deceit was it okay for them to do that?
3. Exodus 15:25-26 says that God tested them, telling them if they kept all his statues "I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians..." But we know that they didn't always obey. Did God end up putting diseases on them? What was this test about?

Looking Ahead

I'M TAKING MORE TIME ON SOME OF THESE EVENTS AS WE CONTINUE THROUGH. NEXT EDITION WILL FOCUS A LOT ON THEIR WILDERNESS JOURNEY AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. BUT WE WILL KEEP TREKKING THROUGH EXODUS AND GET INTO LEVITICUS.

[NOTE: IF YOU'RE BEHIND AND FEELING OVERWHELMED, FEEL FREE TO SKIP THE CHAPTERS YOU MISSED AND MOVE AHEAD TO STAY ON TRACK!]

Next up... Exodus 37.

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