

Exodus:

The Redemption of God's People,
a Covenant with God's People,
the Renewal of the Covenant for God's people,
and the Worship Center of God's People.

"Moses spent forty years in pharaoh's court thinking he was somebody; forty years in the desert learning he was nobody; and forty years showing what God can do with somebody who found out he was nobody." D.L. Moody

IV. Comment on the Writing

A. The Redemption of God's People, 1:1-18:27

1. The situation in Egypt, 1:1-22
2. The deliverer of Israel from Egypt, 2:1-4:31
 - a. The birth of the deliverer, 2:1-10
 - b. The flight to Midian, 2:11-25
 - c. The Return of Moses from Egypt, 3:1-4:31
 - d. The Struggle of Moses with Pharaoh in Egypt, 5:1-13:16
 - 1) The preface to the struggle with Amenhotep II, 5:1-6:27
 - a) The confrontation with pharaoh, 5:1-5
 - b) The increase of hardship on the Jews, 5:6-19
 - c) The response of the Jews to the increased hardship, 5:20-21
 - d) The cry of Moses to the Lord, 5:22-23
 - e) The promise of the Lord, 6:1-8

God's response is the second time He revealed Himself as "LORD (JEHOVAH, 3:14)" (the promise-keeper, the relational God [v. 1-3]). Abraham knew God as El Shaddai, but Moses as Jehovah. God speaks to Moses reminding him that the one speaking is the great God of the covenant, one who intimately is involved with His people, though Moses has questioned that.

Notice the preponderance of "I's" in our paragraph.

"... you will see what I will do to pharaoh [the plagues]..." (v. 1).

"... I am the Lord..." (vv. 2, 4, 7, 9).

"... and I appeared to Abraham..." (v. 3).

"I also established my covenant with them..." (v. 4).

"... I have heard the groanings of the sons of Israel..." (v. 5).

"... and I have remembered my covenant" (v. 5).

"... I will bring you out..." (v. 6).

I will deliver you..." (v. 6).

“... I will also redeem you...” (v. 6).
 “... I will take you for my people...” (v. 7).
 “... I will be your God...” (v. 7).
 “I will bring you to the land...” (v. 8).
 “... and I will give it to you as a possession...” (v. 8).

- f) The failure of Israel to respond properly, 6:9
 Hard circumstances have the tendency of blinding us to the truth.
- g) The command to Moses, 6:10-11
- h) The complaint of Moses, 6:12
 This is Moses’ fourth complaint; if the people won’t obey, neither will pharaoh (an argument from the lesser to the greater) because of ineloquence. This is the second time that Moses uses this excuse; the first was relative to his own people (3:10) and here is to pharaoh.
- (i) The instruction to Moses and Aaron, v. 13
- (j) The genealogy of Moses and Aaron, 6:14-25
 This paragraph begins (v. 13) and ends (v. 27) with similar statements of God’s instruction to Moses and Aaron. It is a literary device, frequently seen in Moses and others in which the repetition of an idea frames a section as a unit. The narrative stops with Moses’ statement of inadequacy (v. 12).

This passage puzzles some readers because it seems to be an unnatural insertion into the narrative. However, the genealogy was placed here to identify Moses and Aaron more precisely because of the prominent position they were assuming as representatives of the people before the Egyptian state. The genealogy of Aaron and Moses appears here to establish their qualifications for leadership; Moses is not inadequate for the divine task. The focus is upon the Jacob-Levi-Kohath-Amram-Aaron-Eleazar-Phinehas line.

The Amram of v. 18 is the same person as the male mentioned in v. 20. It seems that the first Amram represents the family group (Kohath being the clan and [one of three, v. 16] and Levi the tribe). Amram, who married Jochebed, is a member of the Amram family group leading to Moses and Aaron.

Interestingly, Amram married his father’s sister, his aunt, who would have forbidden to do so by later legislation (Lev. 18: 6, 12) or at least it seems so (though she might not be considered a close relative, and law concerns incest). He married before the stipulation was given. Jochebed means “Jehovah is beautiful.” The point is that Moses and Aaron’s were Levitical.

- [1] The genealogy links Moses and Aaron to Jacob, the father of the nation.
- [2] The genealogy ends with Phinehas, Aaron’s grandson linking it into the time of the judges (Judges 20:28) suggesting generations of authority.
- [3] It shows that Aaron is the true successor of Levi in the nation’s highest priestly office.
- [4] It shows how Korah could claim the right of priesthood (Num. 16:1-49).
- [5] It shows that Moses was from Levi suggesting his right to priestly function (i.e., offer sacrifices, enter the Tabernacle) as well as the prophet’s office.

- [6] It reminds the reader that the Israelites were not a pure, exclusive race but had Gentiles in it at times, such as a Canaanite woman (v. 15). This would not be true within the Levitical office; it could only be a pure tribe that the represented God before His people. Further, I take it as a foreshadowing of a time when God would call greater numbers of Gentiles to Himself.

The genealogy is selective. For example, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu are not mentioned, neither is Ithamar who fathered a large lineage. The son of Eleazar, Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, because he is of the high priest's lineage is predominant among the Levites.

i) The reaffirmation, 6:26-27

Verses 26–27, which close this passage, tie this unit with verse 13 and explain why the genealogy is given (v. 26; repeated in v. 27). They were the ones that spoke to Pharaoh.

2) The confrontation with Pharaoh, 6:28-11:10

a) The instruction of the Lord to Moses, 6:28-7:13

(1) The command, 6:28-29

God speaks to Moses renewing his charge and revealing Himself to Moses as He did at the burning bush, the "I am (3:14)." God asked Moses to serve as His spokesman; he was not asked to be clever or eloquent.

(2) The reticence of Moses, 6:30

This is the third time Moses reiterated the same complaint, the lack of oral giftedness.

b) The confrontation with Pharaoh, 6:28-11:10

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(b) The reticence of Moses, 6:30

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(c) The reassurance of the Lord, 7:1-5

God's answer to Moses' reticence is that He will do the work. Moses is only His spokesman. Moses will be to pharaoh as "God," meaning he will stand before him as an authority figure. In Moses' commissioning, he is to speak to pharaoh though pharaoh will not respond favorably because God will harden him with the result that God's power will humble Egypt and deliver His people.

This is the first of the "hardening" statements in the narrative. Sometimes God hardens his heart (five times) and at other times he hardens his own heart (five times). Paul cites this incident in Romans 9:14–18 as an illustration of God's sovereign choosing. There is no conflict here (that is between a voluntary action and a caused act) because choice making is human, but choices to choose are of God. Responsibility is established by willingness to make the choices that we do. Necessity and obligation are not opposites; inability does not cancel responsibility because we make the choices, we all want to make.

(d) The compliance of Moses, 7:6–7

An interesting note in these verses is the age of Moses (eighty) and Aaron (eighty-three); age brings authority and respect (see. Deut.34:7). These men will lead the nation from bondage.

(e) The instructions when encountering Pharaoh, 7:8–13

The initial encounter failed as the Lord predicted. The magicians could turn a staff into a snake as well. The word translated “snake” is different than in 4:3; here it can mean a small reptile. Snakes are carnivorous; it is an unclean animal (7) because it eats flesh with blood. Blood alone belongs to God. Pharaoh missed the point of the rod-to-snake-to-rod miracle, but more lessons will eventuate until he learns a lesson at a very dear cost to himself, his people, and his economy.

(2) The plagues on Egypt, 7:14-11:10

The word translated “plague” means a strike or blow. They are disasters.

The plagues that God sent through Moses to Egypt are ten in number, culminating in the death of all first-borns (7:1-12:36). They are an attack upon the Egyptian deities. Pharaoh, who was revered as god, did not fear the God of Israel, but he was brought to do so (10:7).

The first miracle (snakes) and the initial two plagues (blood and frogs) were duplicated by Egyptian magicians, suggesting that demonic power is real and the doing of a miracle is not a sign that it is necessarily from the Lord. The first miracle (snakes) was done in private, the other public.

After the swarm of flies, locusts, and darkness, Pharaoh made concessions (go within the land, 8:25; men only, 10:11; people only not herds, 10:24). Moses would not compromise.

The initial three plagues (blood, frogs, gnats) were across Egypt, as was the tenth (death), but Goshen was spared six plagues (flies, livestock, boils, hail, locust, and darkness). The devastation was cumulative. The duration of the ten plagues seems to be over a period of six months.

One scholar has argued that these ten plagues have five characteristics: there extreme destructive nature, there precise predictability, there discriminatory nature (not in Goshen), there orderliness in becoming gradually more destructive, and there was a moral purpose in each.

The function of the plagues or “blows” is (1) to judge Egypt for the enslavement of the Israelis, (2) to show both nations that the God of the Hebrews is sovereign, and (3) to cause the Egyptians to release the Hebrews from bondage.

THE PLAGUES

Type of Plague	Warning	Time of Warning	Instruction	Agent	Reference
1 Blood	Yes	In the morning	Stand	Aaron	7:14-25
2 Frogs	Yes	not stated	Go in to Pharaoh	Aaron	8:1-16
3 Gnats	No	not stated	none	Aaron	8:16-19
4 Flies	Yes	In the morning	Present yourself	God	8:20-32
5 Livestock disease	Yes	not stated	Go in to Pharaoh	God	9:1-7
6 Boils	No	not stated	none	Moses	9:8-12
7 Hail	Yes	In the morning	Present yourself	Moses	9:13-35
8 Locusts	Yes	not stated	Go in to Pharaoh	Moses	10:1-20
9 Darkness	No	not stated	none	Moses	10:21-29
10 Death of first-born	Yes	not stated	none	God	11:1-10 12:29-32

(a) Water turned to blood, 7:14-25

The Nile was worshipped as a god because of its life-giving resource. Fish was important for food; the soil was fertile from annual flooding. The point of this plague is to show that God can turn the source of life into the source of death, that the god Khnun, the guardian of the Nile, was inept. The Nile was said to be the blood stream of Osiris, the god of the underworld. The god Hathor protected fish in the Nile, a major source of food. The point of this initial plague emphasized the impotence of these Egyptian deities.

Did the Nile turn to literal blood? Conservative scholars debate this, some suggesting that algae caused it or the water became reddish because of high soil content from flooding. While most would say that the moon will not turn into literal blood in the judgment described in Joel 2:31, the event here would not have the impact if it were a common occurrence. The suddenness of the event and its magnitude is uncommon. God uses natural causes in miracles, but miracles do not coincide with natural phenomena!

The plague lasted seven days (v.25)

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Teaching Points:

1. Sometimes God's work for us comes later in life: Moses was 80. Moses' life divides into three equal parts: 40 years in Egypt, 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd, and 40 years leading God's people in the wilderness (Acts 7:23). Does this not suggest that we are never too old to serve the Lord? What does this tell us about retirement? Maybe your greatest service to God is ahead of you. What are you doing to prepare for that eventuality?
2. It is often the case that things get worse before they get better. Seeking to bring relief Moses became the cause of greater grief. To deal with this fact, we all must take the long view and not judge our God by the immediacy of circumstances. Negative immediate consequences are often stepping-stones to better things. There is an old truism: "No pain, No gain." Can you think of examples of this in your life? God wants us to live our lives that He will deliver us. Are you willing to trust Him when things seem to be going in reverse of your hopes and desires? Have you ever said these words to God? "O Lord why hast thou brought harm to this people? Why didst thou ever send me (5:22)."
3. The way of worldly people is that they frequently use threat and accusation to induce compliance. Fear is a dominant motivation in the secular affairs of men; it is not to be the case with us. Jesus said it this way: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them.... It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve... (Matt. 20:26-28). Pharaoh used his power to threaten, but that is only the way of the world. We believe

the greatest motivating force is love expressed in service to others. Is that true of you? Are you a manipulator or lover?

4. When things do not turn out as planned, it is best to turn to the Lord in prayer. In studying the life of Moses one of the most evident features is his frequent turning to God. He talked with God explaining his deepest feelings as though with a friend; in times of stress, he conversed with God. Is that a pattern in your life? Is your prayer life a conversation with a friend?
5. Moses' error, among his several complaints, is a failure to realize that it is neither our abilities nor inabilities that account for our successes or failures. We must remember that it is the Lord who causes success, not human talent, or giftedness. How many times do we judge the potential of success by a talent inventory! How many times have you done that?
6. Fear of failure is a power force in all our lives and excuses for not obeying God are many. Many times, God responded to Moses, not with a reprimand, but with promises of provision and strength. Have you thought of the many times that you have plead your weaknesses before God when He wants you to rest in His strength? What are some of the areas in your life that you have more fear of failure than you do of trust in God?
7. Think of the privilege that God has progressively revealed to His people. The patriarchs knew God as "El Shaddai," the mighty one. God revealed another side of His character to Moses when He revealed Himself as "Jehovah," the God of covenant faithfulness (6:5). Our God not only cares for us; He possesses the power to express His care at the deepest levels of our experience. When God makes promises to His people His character is the surety that it will be accomplished. Have you experienced that to be true in God's dealings with you? Has He proven mighty to save and worthy of trust?
8. Pharaoh is a sad example of humanity in general. He was granted privileges of life and position, being viewed as some type of a god by his people, but instead of seeing privilege as a gift he understood it as a right to preserve and exploit to his own self-advantage. How many people have you met like that? Do you have some of that type in your family? Sadly, in his arrogant blindness he made that saddest of confessions saying He did not know God other than the god he supposed himself to be.