

Lesson 10

God's Heart: God Delivers His People

Introduction: God had not forgotten the promise He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob hundreds of years before. Whatever He says, He does! God knows when the time is right to carry out His will. Sometimes He is waiting for the people involved, for their desperation to grow to the point where they know that God is their only hope.

God is always about the relationship! He loves us so much that He wants us to be able to enjoy closeness and communion with Him. Sadly though, humans will only turn to God in trust and dependence when they are desperate.

In this lesson, we will see this with Moses and the nation of Israel.

- **Read Exodus 2:1-10.**

Here we see another account of God divinely intervening and choosing to use whoever He wills to fulfill His eternal plan of redemption. God doesn't just fulfill His plan; He often does it in a way that no one can deny His power and sovereignty.

God actually used Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, who wanted to destroy the Israelites, to be the one to raise, protect, and prepare the one person that God had chosen to one day deliver Israel from their Egyptian bondage! Pharaoh, who wanted to decimate the

Israelites, actually raised and protected the one that was used to set them free.

We won't take the time to read the whole story of Moses, but God had chosen Moses, protected him, placed him, and provided for him. He did this all on His own initiative, without Moses asking or praying for a single thing; but upon seeing his brethren being mistreated by an Egyptian, Moses takes things into his own hands and kills the Egyptian. We saw Adam and Eve, Cain, the people of Babel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and now we see Moses taking things into his own hands.

Moses flees into the wilderness where he lives for forty years and then God speaks to Him from the burning bush.

- **Read Exodus 3:1-6.**

God chose Moses for the same reasons that He chose all those others—because He, in His sovereignty, wisdom, grace, and mercy, chose who He wanted to choose according to His own will and for His glory. In those days, to be barefoot was a sign of humility and submission. Slaves, for example, went barefoot. So, when Moses took off his shoes, he was culturally showing respect to God.

- **Read Exodus 3:7-12.**

After giving Moses a glimpse of His power and holiness, God now communicates His heart for His

people Israel as well as His desire to use Moses in His plan of delivering them. Another thing that we have seen revealed about God over and over is the fact that He is faithfully communicating with man. He communicates and reveals Himself, His heart, desires, and love, as well as His plans for mankind.

Keep in mind that Moses had run away from Egypt for fear that Pharaoh wanted to kill him. Now God was telling him that he wanted to send him back. At this point, with Moses' lack of knowing God, his fear of Pharaoh was greater than his trust in God.

Notice Moses' excuses:

- 1) Exodus 3:11 "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out?"
- 2) Exodus 3:13 "They may say to me, 'What is His name? What shall I say to them?'"
- 3) Exodus 4:1 "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say?"
- 4) Exodus 4:10 "Then Moses said to the Lord, 'Please Lord I have never been eloquent, I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.'"
- 5) Exodus 4:13 "Please Lord send someone else."

Notice God's responses:

- 1) Exodus 3:12 "I will be with you"
- 2) Exodus 3:14 "I am who I am has sent me to you"
- 3) Exodus 4:2-9 God shows His power through the snake and leprosy
- 4) Exodus 4:11 "Who has made your mouth"
- 5) Exodus 4:14-17 God gives Aaron as his voice or mouthpiece

We can see a bit of a progression here with Moses and God. Keep in mind that God was asking Moses to do something that was going to require a lot of faith and trust in God. But Moses didn't know God that well at this point. So, God progressively begins to reveal Himself to Moses.

- First, He reveals His existence through the burning bush.
- Then, He reveals Who He is to Moses. He confirms that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God that Moses had undoubtedly heard about before.
- Moses fears that the Israelites will question if it was really God Who sent him, and so God reveals to Moses His name, the "I AM."
- Then, Moses fears that Israel just flat won't believe him. So, God gives him some miraculous signs to perform as proof that this is from God.
- Then, Moses focuses on himself and the fact that he is not very articulate, implying that there is nothing about him that anyone would want to follow. So, God brings along Moses' brother Aaron, who is articulate, to accompany him.
- And lastly, through his father-in-law Jethro, God gives Moses the assurance that the people who were seeking to kill him have all died.

Finally, Moses is willing to go, but notice that his confidence (at this point) was more in the fact that

God had provided the “right circumstances” for Moses than it was him being confident in God Himself. And God was all right with that. God also knew that it wasn’t going to remain this way, for over time, Moses was going to see God reveal Himself over and over on behalf of Israel. Moses’ knowledge of God, and therefore trust in Him, would grow expediently because God was revealing Himself to Moses.

Discussion: What took place for Moses to go from running and hiding in the wilderness after killing the two Egyptians to being able to be used by God to lead the Egyptians out of slavery?

- **Read Exodus 6:1-8.**

Notice how God reassures His plan, heart, and love to Moses.

Now let’s move onto the plagues.

- **Read Exodus 5:2, 6:7, 7:3, 5, 17, 8:10, 22, 9:14, 16 and 10:2.**

Discussion: What was the main purpose of the plagues?

Because Pharaoh refused to release the Israelites, the Lord began to show His great power by sending a series of plagues on the Egyptians. Due to time, we are not going to read the whole story, but they are:

- 1) Turned the Nile River into blood
- 2) Frogs
- 3) Gnats
- 4) Flies
- 5) Caused the Egyptian horses, cattle, sheep, camels, and donkeys to become sick.
- 6) All the Egyptians had boils
- 7) Hailstorm
- 8) Locusts
- 9) Darkness
- 10) Death of the first-born son

These plagues were selected by God as miraculous signs. He intended to prove to the king and his servants that He, Jehovah, was the Lord in the land and ruled over the powers of nature with unrestricted freedom and omnipotence. For this reason, God not only caused them to burst suddenly upon the land according to His word but then as suddenly to disappear according to His omnipotence will. He caused them to be produced by Moses and Aaron and disappear again at their work and prayer. He did this so that Pharaoh might learn that these men were appointed by Him as His messengers and were empowered by Him with divine power for the accomplishment of His will.

- **Read Exodus 7:14-23.**

Look at the intentionality of God with the first plague. Pharaoh went out in the morning to the Nile, not merely to take a little morning walk or to bathe in the river, but without doubt to present his daily worship to the Nile, which was honored by the Egyptians as their supreme deity. At that very moment, the will of God with regard to Israel was declared to him. He rejected the message and immediately the Nile River was turned into blood, revealing to him that the God of the Hebrews was the true God and He possess the power to turn this highest object of their worship into blood.

The significance of the second plague of the frogs is the fact that these too originated in and came up from the Nile River, which again was the Egyptians highest deity.

- **Read Exodus 11:1-7.**

God told Moses how the Israelites should prepare for the final plague. God was building a testimony. He was revealing Himself to the Israelites in a strong and mighty way. First, He hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he wouldn't let the Israelites go, which gave God more opportunity to reveal Himself and His might to the Egyptians and to the Israelites. Now, in verse 3, it is said that God had given the Israelites favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they would give them all that they asked for in order to get rid of them. Truly God is the Lord God Almighty, the Great I

AM. He predestined His eternal plan of redemption before time began, and He's been fulfilling it and carrying it out ever since. He has the power, the authority, and the "right" to use people in His plan how He wants, where He wants, and for His glory. He is sovereign.

- **Read Exodus 12:1-13, 21-40.**

The Old Testament is full of physical pictures or foreshadowing of Christ and His finished work. You'll be hard-pressed to find one clearer and more referenced than the Passover. Everything about this whole event points to Christ.

- 1) The Israelites were slaves in Egypt. All of mankind is born enslaved to sin.
- 2) The Israelites could not deliver themselves from slavery. All of mankind is without hope of ever delivering themselves from their sinfulness.
- 3) Had God not initiated and divinely intervened for the Israelites, they would have been made extinct. Had God not divinely intervened in all of our lives, we would all be destined for an eternity in hell.
- 4) God provided a deliverer and a way of deliverance for the Israelites from slavery. God provided a Deliverer and a way of deliverance for us from our sinfulness.

- 5) The Israelite's deliverance was accessed by faith. Our deliverance from sin is accessed simply by faith.
- 6) One lamb was sacrificed per household. One Lamb (the Lamb of God) was sacrificed for the whole world.
- 7) The Israelites' lamb had to be a firstborn male and had to be perfect in terms of its health. Our Lamb was the One and only beloved Son of God and was "spiritually perfect," i.e., Jesus didn't have a flesh.
- 8) None of the bones of their lambs were to be broken. When Jesus died for our sin, the tradition was to break the leg bones to speed up the dying process, but Jesus' bones were not broken.
- 9) The Israelites' lambs had to be killed in such a way as to have their blood run out and painted above their doorways. When Jesus was crucified, He was beaten and bled—a crown of thorns was pounded onto His head and He bled, nails were driven through His hands and feet and He bled, and a spear pierced His side and He bled.
- 10) The Israelites in every household had to have faith in the lamb's blood in order for their firstborn to be spared. So, we too, must place our faith in the blood of Christ as that which cleanses us from sin and allows us to receive eternal life.
- 11) When the "angel of death" saw the blood on the doorway, all the firstborn of that household were spared or saved. So, too, it's

the blood of Christ that has cleansed us of all our sin thereby allowing us to receive eternal salvation and full acceptance from God.

God did exactly what He promised He would do. That night, every firstborn in Egypt died among their children and their livestock and all were spared among the Israelites. The Israelites believed God, chose acceptable sacrifices, killed them, and placed the blood around their doors as God had commanded. The angel passed over their households just like He promised. This was the “final blow” in terms of the Pharaoh continuing to defy God. He and the rest of his people were brought to the point of begging the Israelites to leave, even loading them up with gold and silver and whatever they wanted, just so they would leave.

- **Read Exodus 14:10-18, 24-25, 30-31.**

God comforts and reassures the Israelites in the middle of their unbelief and complaining. He brought the Israelites to this place because He planned to demonstrate again to them that He is the Almighty sovereign God. For Israel to experience close intimate communion with God, they had to know Him. In order to know Him, He had to reveal Himself to them. Dilemmas such as these really revealed the greatness of God in their lives. God was wanting to bring them into a close intimate relationship of intimacy and dependency on Him.

God works consistently to fulfill His purposes.

- 1) Only God could provide the way for Adam and Eve to be accepted by Him after they had sinned.
 - 2) Only God could provide the way for Abel to be accepted by God.
 - 3) Only God could save Noah and his family from the flood.
 - 4) Only God could save Isaac when he was tied to the altar and his father had the knife raised above him.
 - 5) Only God could provide the way to save the firstborn children of the Israelites from death.
 - 6) Only God could provide a way for the Israelites to be delivered from slavery in Egypt. And in this instance, only God could provide the way for the Israelites to escape from the Egyptians at the Red Sea.
- **Read Exodus 15:1-6.** This chapter records Israel praising God for all He had done.
 - **Read Exodus 15:22-25, 16:1-3, 17:3-6.**

Discussion: Why was God allowing the Israelites to go through these trials?

In the wilderness, Israel was faced with many, many hardships and difficulties. Each of them could have been viewed as opportunities to see the strong and mighty hand of God at work in their lives. From God's standpoint, He lovingly and graciously sought to watch over and care for Israel, like the parents of a newborn baby. All He wanted from them was trust and dependence. He wanted them to recognize His great love and care for them through all the gracious and mighty things that He did on their behalves. He wanted them to respond to that love in close, intimate, communion and dependence.

Instead, as we continually see, each new trial in the lives of Israel was met with an attitude that was as if God had not yet done a single thing for them. They perpetually lost sight of God and His greatness for them and would often accuse Him of not doing what was best for them.

Fun facts according to the Quartermaster General of the Army:

They had to be fed, and the feeding two or three million people requires a lot of food.

- 1) It is calculated that Moses would have needed 1,500 tons of food each day to feed the Israelites. To bring that much food each day, two freight trains, each a mile long, would be required.
- 2) They were out in a desert. So, they would have to have firewood to use in cooking the food. This would take 4,000 tons of wood and few more freight trains, each a mile long, just for one day.

- 3) They needed water. If they only had enough to drink, cook, and wash a few dishes, it would take eleven million gallons each day. Equal to a freight train with tank cars, three miles long, just to bring water.
- 4) They were in transit for forty years.
- 5) God did this to prove Himself to the Israelites.

And God does the same thing in our own lives, putting us into impossible situations so that we will respond to God's love with a close, intimate, communion and dependence upon Him.

- **Read Exodus 19:1-6.**

Discussion: What is significant about verse four?

God had gone to great lengths to prove His trustworthiness. He reminds them of His gracious and divine intervention. God Himself describes His delivering of Israel from slavery; "you saw what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself." Notice He says, "I brought you to myself." There would have been no greater way for God to show Israel how important and significant they were to Him than to say, "I brought you to Myself." I wanted you for Myself! I want a relationship with you.

This is the same thing that God has done with us.

- **Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-18.**
- **Read Exodus 19:7-8. What is the people's response?**

Remember Chapter 16 verse 4. God told them to only take enough manna for one day. We all know the outcome. Before offering Israel this covenantal relationship with Himself in Chapter 19, God first “tested” them by telling them NOT to do one little thing. God was requiring this of them to teach them that they could trust Him for each day’s provision. The test wasn’t for God to find out anything; He is all-knowing. It was for Israel’s benefit to show them that they were incapable of following even the simplest and easiest command.

Discussion: What is significant about the difference between verse four and five?

So, now here in Chapter 19, when God offered this law-based covenant with them, they should have fallen on their faces before God and said, “No, we want You to keep fighting for us! We want You to keep carrying us on eagle’s wings. We want our relationship with You to be based on your grace and mercy, not on or obedience! We have grumbled and doubted you at every trial and we couldn’t even follow the simplest of commands to not gather more than one day’s worth of manna. We are incapable of obeying You.”

Instead, they made one of the most presumptuous vows that any human could ever make. “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.” Not, “we will TRY to

do, or we will ENDEAVOR to do.” This at least would have communicated a level of distrust in themselves. But, no, they took the absolute ground: “WE WILL DO.”

- **Read verse 9.**

As soon as Moses officially relayed the people’s response to God, look at the immediate result in verse 9. Wow, what a change! The One Who just stated that He had borne them on eagle’s wings and had brought them unto Himself, now envelops Himself in a thick cloud and threatens the people with death if they come near the mountains.

The sweet accents of grace and mercy are exchanged for the thundering and lightning of the fiery mount. Israel had said, “WE WILL DO,” and now therefore they must be put at a distance in order that it may be fully seen what they are able to do.

Discussion:

1. Why did God ask this question and do this? Did God give them the law to keep? **To show the Israelites their need for God and to draw them into intimate relationship, fellowship, and dependency on Him.**
2. What are the self-imposed laws that we might have in our own minds and be living under?

God wants us to be living in and rejoicing in grace and His finished work through Christ.

To go deeper into this topic, read through Lessons 20-23 in the full Knowing God curriculum.