

CALLING OUT

What new thing did you learn from this week's reading?

What stood out the most to you from the reading?

Take a moment to read & reflect upon favorite passages from this week's part of the story?

THE STORY CONTINUES

EXODUS 1.1-6.12; 11.1-10; 12.31-42; 13.20-14.31



THEMES OF EXODUS

- God keeps the Abrahamic Covenant.
- Women play a key and heroic role.
- God reveals his name.
- God calls a deliverer/kinsman redeemer in Moses.
- God shows His power through 10 “Plagues.”
- God is above all other gods.
- Passover/ Sacrifice/ Blood.
- God Protects His People.
- God frees the Israelites from slavery to be his people.

CREATION ECHOES



Genesis 1:28	Exodus 1:7
Be fruitful [prh] and multiply [rbh], fill [ml'] the land ['rʃ] and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and over birds of the heavens and over every living creature that roams upon the land.	But the children of Israel were fruitful [prh] and they swarmed [ʃrʃ; cf. Gen. 1:20-21; 9:7] and they increased [rbh] and became very, very [m'd; Gen. 1:31] numerous, and the land ['rʃ] was filled [ml'] with them.

Over whom or what were they supposed to rule? (Gen. 1:28; cf. Exod. 1:14)

Pharaoh's Fear

- Problem: The Israelites outnumber us
- Solution: Keep them from multiplying so that they will not fight us and leave
 - Plan A: Harsh labor
 - Plan B: Murderous midwives
 - Plan C: Nile drowning

Whose names do we know in chapter 1? The Hebrew midwives are named, even though Pharaoh is not. The midwives' courage in defying Pharaoh is remembered for all time.

THE WOMEN OF EXODUS

A Tale of Three Daughters

What do you see?

- The daughter of Levi “saw that he was good” (2:2)
- The baby’s sister “stood at a distance to see what would happen to/for him” (2:4)
- The daughter of Pharaoh “saw the basket ... saw the baby ... and felt sorry for him” (2:5-6)

Cf. “God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them” (2:25)

YHWH: “I have indeed seen the misery of my people ... and I am concerned about their suffering” (3:7)

YHWH: “I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them” (3:9)

Delivering the Deliverer

- Shiphrah and Puah (the midwives)
- Moses’ mother
- Moses’ sister-Miriam
- The daughter of Pharaoh
- The maidservants of Pharaoh’s daughter
- Zipporah (chapter 4)

Midwife, mother, sister, daughter, wife—each woman courageously defies Pharaoh, working within her sphere of influence to resist injustice.

Pharaoh had “let the girls live” (*ḥāyah*; 1:16, 22), but women became his greatest threat. Their “liveliness” (*ḥāyeh*) was the reason they kept bearing sons (1:19).

THE NAME OF GOD

- God said to Moses, “I will be whoever I will be (’ehyeh ’ăšer ’ehyeh).”
- And he said, “This is what you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I will be’ (’ehyeh) has sent me to you.”
- And God spoke again to Moses, “This is what you shall say to the Israelites: ‘YHWH (*yahweh*), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob has sent me to you.’ This is my name in perpetuity, and this is how I am to be invoked from generation to generation.”
- Yahweh is the primary name for God used throughout the OT (over 6,800 times).

These three statements create anticipation by gradually unveiling the personal name of God. God will flesh out the meaning of his name by acting on their behalf (see Exod. 34:6-7).

Duvall/ Hays, God’s Relational Presence:

When Moses questions his worthiness for the task, God tells him in 3:12, “I am [or “I will be”] with you” (אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ, *’ehyeh ’immak*), a promise similar to the promises made to the patriarchs in association with the covenant in Genesis. God also promises a sign of this promise of presence: Moses and the people will return and worship God on that very mountain.¹ In 3:13 Moses asks God for a more definitive name than just “the God of your fathers.” Moses is not just curious; to learn someone’s name was to enter into a relationship with that person (Waltke, 359). God answers him by declaring, “I AM WHO I AM [אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה, *’ehyeh ’asher ’ehyeh*]. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM [אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה, *’ehyeh*] has sent me” (3:14). Then God adds, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD [הוָיָה, *Yahweh*], the God of your fathers . . . has sent me to you” (3:15).

There is no complete consensus among scholars on the exact meaning or the implications in meaning of the name Yahweh (“the LORD”) in this passage. Neither is there a consensus on the related understanding of “I AM WHO I AM” and “I AM has sent me.” Yet note that the three declarations “I will be with you” (3:12), “I AM WHO I AM” (3:14a), and “I AM” (3:14b) all have the same imperfect form of the verb “to be” (הָיָה, *hayah*), as illustrated here:

EXODUS 3:12	“I am/will be with you” (אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ)
EXODUS 3:14A	“I AM WHO I AM” (אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה)
EXODUS 3:14B	“I AM” (אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה)

Thus most scholars at least conclude that the divine name Yahweh (הוָיָה, the LORD), given in Exodus 3:15, is also related to the verb *hayah* (הָיָה, to be). Furthermore, due to the clear meaning of presence in Exodus 3:12, quite a large number of scholars maintain that the connotations of *hayah* as reflected in the divine name Yahweh imply that there is a promise or an implication of divine presence associated with the very name of Yahweh.

¹ In Exod 19 the events that take place on “that mountain” in fulfillment of this promise focus on God’s fiery presence on the top of the mountain (which creates a “temple-like” setting).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BURNING BUSH

YHWH's concern for Israel frames the burning bush (2:23-35 and 3:6-10).

- Bush = Israel
- Fire = Oppression in Egypt
- (cf. "iron furnace" in Deut. 4:20; 1 Kgs. 8:51; Jer. 11:3-4)

See Janzen, J. Gerald (2003). "And the Bush Was Not Consumed." *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, 31. 219-25.

Theological Significance of the Burning Bush



Mural by Seraphim O'Keefe for the Burning Bush Chapel of St. John of the Ladder in Greenville, South Carolina

(<https://orthodoxartsjournal.org/new-murals-at-st-john-of-the-ladder-greenville-sc/>). The Virgin Mary holds her hands in a prayer position that makes her like a chalice to receive Christ's flesh and blood. Moses' two encounters with God at Sinai, in which God revealed his name and his commands, frame the icon.

THE “PLAGUES” OR SIGNS

	Plague/ Sign	Passage	Warning	Time	Instruction to Moses	Purpose
	Snake/ Sea Monster	7.8-13				
Cycle 1	Blood	7.14-24	Yes	Morning	Meet & Confront Pharoah	“By this you will know that I am YHWH” (7:17)
	Frogs	8.1-15	Yes	None	Go to Pharoah	“So that you may know there is no one like YHWH” (8:10)
	Gnats	8.16-19	No	None	None	“So that you will know that I, YHWH, am in this land” (8:22)
Cycle 2	Flies	8.20-32	Yes	Morning	Meet & Confront Pharoah	
	Livestock	9.1-7	Yes	None	Go to Pharoah	
	Boils	9.8-12	No	None	None	
Cycle 3	Hail	9.13-35	Yes	In the morning	Meet & Confront Pharoah	“So you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth” (9:14); “So you may know that the earth is YHWH’s” (9:29).
	Locust	10.1-20	Yes	None	Go to Pharoah	“That you may know that I am YHWH” (10:1-2)
	Darkness	10.21-29	No	None	None	
	Firstborn	11.1-10 12.29-30	Yes	None	None	“You will know that YHWH makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel” (11:7)

Chart adapted from Peter Enns, *Exodus: NIV Application Commentary*, pg 208 who credits Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel*, pg 76 as found in Duvall/ Hays, *Living God’s Word*, pg 30. The “Purpose” column is from The Bible Project Study Guide for Exodus. Carmen Imes pulls a similar chart from Kenneth Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, 253.

Plagues as Un-Creation

- Chaos in place of order
- Loss of dominion over creatures
- Boundaries erased between domains
- Creation no longer “good”

MOSES' STAFF



Pharaoh was often depicted with a shepherd's staff and a snake headdress, representing a goddess of lower Egypt. Snakes were associated with royal authority. Moses' staff would confirm his authority to Pharaoh and initiate five plagues, part the Sea of Reeds, bring water from a rock, and decide the battle against Amalek.

Left: King Tutankhamun with rod/staff and flail/whip and snake headdress. The uprearing cobra, ironically the symbol of the solar protection of royalty."

Exo 15.13 "In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling."

The connotations of "shepherding" within the context of Genesis–Exodus should be noted. It is the archetypal profession of the Israelites; it makes them ritually abhorrent to the Egyptians (Gen 43:32; 46:32-34). But "shepherd" in the Hebrew Bible is also an honored metaphorical title for the king (Johnstone, *Exodus*, 70).



"With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm"

- Mighty hand (Exod. 6:1; 13:3, 9, 14,16; 14:31)
- Outstretched arm (Exod. 6:6; Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8; Jer. 32:21)

So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.

Deuteronomy 26:8 NIV

"I will extend my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders..." Ex 3.20

Left: Narmer Palette, detail (2 ft. tall). Pharaoh Narmer, followed by his sandal bearer, smiting the head of a foe. The "mace-pose" was standard for over 3,000 years in Egypt. See <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/ancient-mediterranean-ap/ancient-egypt-ap/a/palette-of-king-narmer>.

PASSOVER

The Literary Function of the Passover

Why interrupt an epic narrative with ritual? Performative ritual allows every generation of Israelites to participate in this foundational event, making it part of their own story. "The historical event is at one and the same time a liturgical event." Fretheim, Terence E. (2010). *Exodus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Westminster John Knox Press.

This event initiates a new calendar (Exod. 12:2). It is a new creation event, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16.

What is the Passover? Has the word "passover" been mistranslated? According to the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, the verb פסח (*pesach*) can mean:

1. Pass over, spare (?)
2. Limp, leap
3. Protect (?)

The third meaning seems most appropriate in these contexts.

- Exodus 12:23: "And YHWH will pass through [unrelated word] to strike the Egyptians and will see the blood upon the lintel and the two door posts and YHWH will פסח the doorway and will not allow the destroyer to enter your house to strike you."
- Isaiah 31:5: "Like swooping birds, thus will YHWH of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver, פסח and rescue."

Who can participate in the Passover? God gives restrictions in Exodus 12:43-49 along covenant lines, not based on ethnicity. Circumcision is the approved sign of covenant membership.

The Firstborn Belong to YHWH

YHWH's claim on the firstborn of Egypt extends to the Israelites as well. Every firstborn belongs to him and must be sacrificed (in the case of animals) or redeemed (in the case of children) for 5 shekels (Num. 18:15).

Wilda Gafney argues that this law includes daughters as well as sons. Although verses 12 and 15 specify only male animals are to be sacrificed or redeemed, the language for humans is arguably generic (*bekhor*, adam, *beney* Israel). See Gafney, Wilda C. (2017). *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. Westminster John Knox Press.

PASSOVER AND JESUS

Isaiah predicted Jesus's sacrifice.

ISAIAH 53:7.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers
he did not open his mouth. '

John the Baptist identified Jesus as a lamb.

JOHN 1:29. The next day John saw Jesus coming
Toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who
takes away the sin of the world!"

Jesus used the Passover meal as a way of
explaining his impending death to his followers.

LUKE 22.7-20. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have
eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Paul argued that Christ made us clean.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7. Clean out the old leaven so that
you may be a new unleavened batch, as indeed you are.
For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.

Peter wrote that Jesus was a better sacrifice.

1 PETER 1:18-19. For you know that you were redeemed
from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors,
not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with
the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished
and spotless lamb.

John repeatedly pointed to Jesus as the lamb.

REVELATION. There are twenty-nine individual references
to Jesus being the Lamb of God throughout the book.

See 5.6-10.

PRACTICE THE STORY

CREATION

COVENANT

CALLING OUT

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How does God's use of women in Exodus enhance the story?

Read Exodus 3 again. What phrases stand out?

What is the significant of us knowing God's name?

What does "I am who I am" teach us?

What does "I will be with you" mean to you?

How does God delivering the Israelites parallel God sending Christ to redeem the world?

In light of your reading this week what does it look like for you to Live God's Word?

How else does this part of the story find its' place in you?

HOMework

Memorize

- Deuteronomy 6.4-5

Biblical Text

- Exodus 19-20
- Deuteronomy 6
- Deuteronomy 28

Read

- Book - Duvall/ Hays - Chapter 4 –
- Article - *Be Holy as I am Holy* by Morna Hooker

Complete

- One Writing Assignment on pg 46.
- Practice telling the story from Creation to Calling Out
- Personal Reflection Questions

Appendix

- Optional Article: *A Manger Not a Pyramid* by Russell Moore.