

Week 3: The Design for Deliverance - Exodus Ch 5:1-7:13

Pre-Work

- When Moses and Aaron ask Pharaoh to let them go into the wilderness to worship Yahweh, Pharaoh responds by burdening the Israelites with far more difficult labor. Pharaoh is acting as an image, not of God, but of the Beast. Please watch the following video from the Bible Project to see one way such evil is depicted in the Bible:

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/chaos-dragon/>

- Please read Exodus chapters 5-7:13 in the translation of your choice. What stands out to you in these chapters? What questions arise in your mind when you read them?

Class Notes

5 And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: ‘Let My people go so that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.’”

- Partial obedience by Moses. Ex 3:18 - “...and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt, and you will say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’”
- Where are the elders of Israel?
- Three day’s journey
- “Let My people go...” this is what another Pharaoh’s daughter already did in 2:8
- “Celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness...sacrifice”
 - A deception or a clue to the reader about the real purpose of the Exodus?
 - Freedom from the serpent, three days, sacrifice = salvation

2 But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go.”

Progression of Pharaoh’s knowledge of Yahweh

1. Who is Yahweh? V2a - I don’t take this “elohim” seriously
2. I do not know Yahweh v2b - I don’t even recognize this name
3. I know I need prayer 8:10
4. “I have sinned this time; the LORD is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones.” Ex 9:27
5. The Egyptians will know Yahweh through the rescue of Israel through the waters 14:18

- First of 10 refusals

³ Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, otherwise He will strike us with plague or with the sword.”

- Appeal to Pharaoh’s empathy (recall Pharaoh’s daughter’s empathy over seeing the babe in the reeds)

⁴ But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you let the people neglect their work? Get *back* to your labors!” ⁵ Again Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are now many, and you would have them cease from their labors!” ⁶ So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters over the people and their foremen, saying, ⁷ “You are no longer to give the people straw to make bricks as previously; have them go and gather straw for themselves. ⁸ But you shall impose on them the quota of bricks which they were making before; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, for that reason they cry out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ ⁹ Let the labor be heavier on the men, and have them work at it so that they will pay no attention to false words.”

- “Brickmaking” - literary allusion to Genesis 11
- Cut straw an important component for brick strength
- Pharaoh’s daughter withdraws Moses from the reeds to rescue him; this Pharaoh withdraws the straw from Israel to oppress them

¹⁰ So the taskmasters of the people and their foremen went out and spoke to the people, saying, “This is what Pharaoh says: ‘I am not going to give you *any* straw. ¹¹ You go, get straw for yourselves wherever you can find *it*; but none of your labor will be reduced.’” ¹² So the people scattered through all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. ¹³ And the taskmasters pressed them, saying, “Complete your work quota, *your* daily amount, just as when you had straw.” ¹⁴ Moreover, the foremen of the sons of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and asked, “Why have you not completed your required task of making bricks either yesterday or today, as before?”

- No cut straw provided - Israelites must scrounge for stubble. “Work extra - there will be no provision” as opposed to Yahweh commanding them to work less and providing manna (Ex 16)
- The Egyptian taskmasters beat the Israelites (sound familiar?)

15 Then the foremen of the sons of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why do you deal this way with your servants? **16** There is no straw given to your servants, yet they keep saying to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are being beaten; but it is the fault of your *own* people.” **17** But he said, “You are lazy, *very* lazy; for that reason you say, ‘Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.’ **18** So go now *and* work; for you will be given no straw, but you must deliver the quota of bricks.” **19** The foremen of the sons of Israel saw that they were in trouble, since they were told, “You must not reduce your daily amount of bricks.”

- The Israelite foremen appeal to Pharaoh directly, who gaslights them

20 When they left Pharaoh’s presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. **21** And they said to them, “May the LORD look upon you and judge *you*, because you have made us repulsive in Pharaoh’s sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us!”

- The Israelites confront Moses and Aaron (set in comparison to how the Israelites confronted Moses 40 years before)

22 Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? **23** Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not rescued Your people at all.

- Instead of fleeing, Moses brings a complaint to Yahweh
 - Why did Yahweh bring harm? (deliverance through suffering)
 - Why did Yahweh send Moses? (we find out in Ch 32)
- What is the Moses writing team trying to say about Moses?

“From a literary point of view, Moses was telling this story on himself...Moses included a detail that shows how he himself was unreasonably impatient for God’s deliverance. The wilderness generation - and all that had succeeded it - had a similar tendency, and what Moses eventually learned, all believers have had to learn for themselves: God’s timing only sometimes coincides with our expectations, and his idea of the hardships we need to go through only sometimes coincides with our idea of how much we can take.”

~Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus, the New American Commentary*

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under

compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land.”

- The first command to Pharaoh to “let my people go” was a test for Pharaoh to obey willingly. Now it will be “under compulsion”

2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD; **3** and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but *by* My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them. **4** I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as strangers.

- Yahweh used frequently in Genesis, including in direct conversation with Abraham
- El Shaddai - mighty - God of the Mountain - is how they thought of Him
- Now, through the salvation ahead, He will “make Himself known” - they will know that Yahweh means more than Covenant making, but also Covenant keeping - it is the name of their deliverance.
- See below:

5 Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. **6** Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the labors of the Egyptians, and I will rescue you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments. **7** Then I will take you as My people, and I will be your God; and **you shall know that I am the LORD** your God, who brought you out from under the labors of the Egyptians. **8** I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you *as* a possession; I am the LORD.” **9** So Moses said this to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of *their* despondency and cruel bondage.

- To know Yahweh is to know that He hears, He is faithful and compassionate (remembers), that He rescues and redeems, that He takes people into His house, and brings them into the place of rest.
- Pharaoh will know Yahweh through his hardened heart; the Israelites will know Yahweh through His loyal love.
- The Israelites would not listen (foreshadowing)

10 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **11** “Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.” **12** But Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, “Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, as I am

unskilled in speech?”¹³ Nevertheless, the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron and gave them a command concerning the sons of Israel and Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

- Moses objects and so Yahweh includes Aaron:
 - Spoke to Moses
 - Moses objects
 - Spoke to Moses and Aaron
- Yahweh accommodates Moses’ doubt

¹⁴ These are the heads of their fathers’ households. The sons of Reuben, Israel’s firstborn: Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. ¹⁵ And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶ And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; and the length of Levi’s life was 137 years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, according to their families. ¹⁸ And the sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and the length of Kohath’s life was 133 years. ¹⁹ And the sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰ Now Amram married his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the length of Amram’s life was 137 years. ²¹ And the sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. ²² And the sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. ²³ Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²⁴ And the sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites. ²⁵ Now Aaron’s son Eleazar married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers’ *households* of the Levites according to their families. ²⁶ It was *the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, “Bring out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their multitudes.” ²⁷ They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the sons of Israel from Egypt; it was *the same* Moses and Aaron.

- One function of this backstory is to clearly associate Moses and Aaron with the people who will not listen to Yahweh. Moses and Aaron are set in comparison to their people, and yet they will still be Yahweh’s delegates in the matter to come.

²⁸ Now it came about on the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹ that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “I am the LORD; say to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you.” ³⁰ But Moses said before the LORD, “Behold, I am unskilled in speech; how then will Pharaoh listen to me?”

- 3rd time Moses objects due to his speech impediment

7 Then the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you *as God* to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. 2 As for you, you shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 When Pharaoh does not listen to you, I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My armies, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I extend My hand over Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.” 6 So Moses and Aaron did *this*; as the LORD commanded them, so they did. 7 And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

- You will be like an *elohim*, Aaron will be like your prophet - delegation/ image of God
- Pharaoh has refused already so Yahweh will bring upon him what he has already decided for himself (hardening of heart); this will provide an opportunity for the signs and wonders.
- Why? So that the nations might know Him (v5)

8 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9 “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Work a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw *it* down before Pharaoh, so *that* it may turn into a serpent.’” 10 So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and so they did, just as the LORD had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it turned into a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called for *the* wise men and *the* sorcerers, and they too, *the* soothsayer priests of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. 12 For each one threw down his staff, and they turned into serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed their staffs. 13 Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

- Serpent - Tannin - Gen 1:21 - sea serpent/dragon/ force of chaos
- Pharaoh derived his power from the “serpent”, but even the forces of chaos are ultimately allowed to exist because of Yahweh
- Good and Evil Not equal/opposite forces...Yahweh made Good, and some of the good went bad

Reflections