

The Book of Exodus

The First Appearance Before Pharaoh

Text: Exodus 5:1 – 7:7

Introduction:

1. Upon his return to Egypt, Moses first met with the elders of Israel.
2. When they heard God's message and saw the signs that Moses performed, they believed him and bowed in worship to God.
3. Now, the time had come to deliver God's message to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

I. The Reaction of Pharaoh

(Exodus 5:1 – 6:1)

- A. In obedience to God and on His behalf, Moses told Pharaoh the demands of Jehovah.
 1. Moses stated that these were the words of God, not Moses or Aaron.
 2. He did not ask Pharaoh; rather, he told him that God said, "Let my people go."
 3. If Pharaoh did not obey, he would be rejecting God, not man.
- B. This is the first time that God is called "the LORD God of Israel."
 1. Literally, He is "Jehovah, God of Israel."
 2. He had been the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 3. Now, He is the God of a nation made up of the descendants of Abraham.
 4. This emphasizes their relationship toward God as their Father (4:22).
- C. Again, this request is not a deception on the part of Moses or God; instead, it is meant to emphasize the stubbornness of Pharaoh even toward a reasonable request (8:26).
- D. Pharaoh's reply to Moses sets the stage for all that will follow and gets to the heart of the story.
 1. He asked, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?"
 2. Because he did not know Jehovah, Pharaoh refused do what Moses asked.
 3. However, he should have been willing to allow an answer to the question.
 4. God does not ask for blind belief; instead, He provides evidence on which true faith is to be built.
 5. Had Pharaoh been willing, he could have witnessed the signs that Moses would perform and learned the answer to His question.
 6. But, because of his rebellious heart, he would see this evidence in the form of the Ten Plagues.
- E. Instead of heeding the words of Moses, Pharaoh complained that the Israelites were being kept from working as they should.
- F. So, Pharaoh increased the burden upon the children of Israel.
 1. They would now be forced to gather their own straw for the making of bricks.
 2. But, the amount of brick to be made would remain the same.
 3. When they failed to keep up with this demand, the officers were beaten.
- G. When the Israelites complained to Pharaoh, he said that they were idle, as evidenced by their desire to go off and worship the Lord.
- H. As a result, the children of Israel began to blame Moses and Aaron (thus, God) for their worsened situation.
- I. Moses prayed to the Lord about this and God reassured him of His promise to deliver Israel from Egypt.

The Book of Exodus

- II. The Response of Jehovah (Exodus 6:2-13)
- A. In order to encourage Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites, God restated His promise to them and His charge to Pharaoh.
 - B. First, God reminded them of His name – Jehovah.
 - 1. The name Jehovah focuses on the eternal nature of God – He is self-existing and ever-present; thus, faithful to His word.
 - 2. Here, we learn that this name is associated with God’s covenants with man.
 - 3. The name El Shaddai means, “The Almighty God,” and refers to the eternal strength and power of God.
 - 4. The revelation of the name Jehovah should have been a sign to Moses and Israel of God’s faithfulness and determination to bring them out of Egypt.
 - a. Some wonder why this name is found in the book of Genesis if it was not revealed until God spoke with Moses on Mt. Sinai (3:14).
 - b. Moses wrote the book of Genesis after this name had been revealed, so, it is possible that he used it in an accommodative sense (but, cf. Gen. 15:7; 22:14).
 - c. Likely, the name was known, but the characteristics implied by that name had not been fully revealed.
 - i. Some Jewish teaches believe that *El Shaddai* had to do with God’s working through providence or miracles that did not supersede the laws of nature.
 - ii. But, the name *Jehovah* would be manifest in mighty works done by God in and unto the land of Egypt.
 - d. Those who knew the name Jehovah did not know the full significance of that name
 - e. Now, God has fully explained the name and will soon demonstrate the reality of His faithfulness to His word.
 - C. Next, God reminded them of His covenant – to give them the land of Canaan.
 - D. Then, God reminded them of His compassion – hearing their groaning in bondage.
 - E. Finally, God reminded them of His promise:
 - 1. To bring them out of bondage
 - 2. To bring them out of Egypt
 - 3. To bring judgment upon Egypt
 - 4. To make them His own people and nation
 - 5. To bring them into the land of Canaan
 - F. Moses delivered this message to the Israelites, but, because of their suffering, they refused to listen to or accept his words.
 - G. So, again, God commanded Moses to go before Pharaoh and demand the release of Israel from Egypt.
 - H. Moses replied that if the children of Israel would not listen to him, it was unlikely that Pharaoh would.
 - I. Yet, God’s command stood firm.

The Book of Exodus

III. The Genealogy of Moses and Aaron

(Exodus 6:14-27)

- A. In the midst of this narrative, God pauses to give the family lineage of Moses and Aaron.
 - 1. This grounds Moses and Aaron as historical individuals, not mere myth or legend.
 - 2. It traces their lineage from Abraham, showing their concern for the inheritance of Canaan and the faithfulness of God to His promise.
 - 3. It identifies the men of leadership in Israel – heads of tribes and elders.
 - 4. It gives special emphasis to the tribe of Levi and its important role in the new nation.
- B. Only three sons of Jacob are mentioned in this genealogy.
 - 1. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are mentioned in the order of their births (cf. Gen. 29:32-34; 35:23).
 - 2. Since Moses and Aaron were descendants of Levi, there was no need to carry the list any further.
 - 3. Also, this passage illustrates the mercy and forgiveness of God.
 - a. God had greatly blessed the descendants of these three men.
 - b. Yet, Reuben had been guilty of incest (Gen. 35:22) and Simeon and Levi had been guilty of murder (Gen. 34).
- C. Moses and Aaron were descendants of Amram → Kohath → Levi → Jacob → Isaac → Abraham.
- D. The end of the passage emphasizes that these were the same men through whom God's message of deliverance was spoken to Pharaoh.

IV. The Promise of Judgment

(Exodus 6:28 – 7:7)

- A. The passage relating the genealogy of Moses and Aaron serves as a pause between “Act 1” and “Act 2” of the story of the Exodus.
 - 1. This is similar to how the genealogies appear in the book of Genesis.
 - 2. Though some find them off-putting and a sign of human collaboration, they actually serve as evidence for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
- B. The passage under consideration here serves as a recap of what has happened in the first section of the book.
 - 1. God commanded Moses to speak to Pharaoh, King of Egypt.
 - 2. Moses worried that Pharaoh would not listen.
 - 3. Yet, God assured Moses of victory after he worked many signs in the land.
- C. *{There is a simple yet powerful lesson in this passage about the scriptural definition of a prophet and his relation and responsibility to God (7:1; cf. 4:15-16).}*
- D. The goal of God's actions was to make himself known to the people of both Israel and Egypt.
- E. Moses and Aaron obeyed the commands of the Lord.
- F. One final detail is emphasized: Moses was 80 and Aaron was 83 when they began the process of the Exodus by speaking to Pharaoh.