

The Right Men for the Job

TEXT: Exodus 6:10-7:7

PHBF 11.13.11

Scr. Reading: Ex 6:10-7:7

Getting Out: Exodus, pt 1

DISMISS THE CHILDREN!!!!

Exodus 15:1-8 *Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying, "I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider¹ he has thrown into the sea. ² The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. ³ The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. ⁴ "Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. ⁵ The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. ⁶ Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy. ⁷ In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble. ⁸ At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. ⁹ The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.'*

Our story begins in Egypt... God's people are slaves... God has promised to deliver them... He confronts Pharaoh with His demands. Pharaoh responds: "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD." (5:2)

With those words, the first domino falls. Everything that follows—God's reaction to Moses, the plagues, the Passover—is all triggered by Pharaoh's question. This now becomes the focal point of what God is up to in this story, making sure everyone involved knows that answer:

Exodus 6:7 *I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

Exodus 7:5 *The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.*

Pharaoh demands "Who is the LORD?" And God responds, "I'm glad you asked. Let me show you." Remarkably, He doesn't give the answer to Israel or Pharaoh directly, all by Himself. He uses human instruments to speak, to judge Egypt, and to deliver Israel. This is how God almost

always works—using human instruments to accomplish His divine purposes. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, prophets, priests, kings... Moses and Aaron are His chosen instruments in this story. The question is "Why these two? Are they really the right men for the job?"

Moses is a complex moral character, like us. He's not all good; he's certainly not all bad. But he progresses; he grows. We're not ever told to be like Moses in removing our shoes or to emulate Moses in questioning God. But we can all be like him in his progression, his development. His relationship with God is growing.

PEDIGREE (6:10-30)

What dominates the rest of ch 6 is, of course, a long genealogy. It seems doubly strange to us, first because we don't have much patience for long lists of random names, and second because it interrupts the story just when things are getting good. It's like a commercial break in 24, disrupting the action and jarring our attention away from the narrative to something else for a moment.

The author acknowledges that it's an interruption: notice that the same material frames the genealogy before and after. The Lord tells Moses to go to Pharaoh (vv 11, 29), and Moses complains that he is not a suitable messenger because he has faltering lips (vv 12, 30). These aren't two different occasions; they are two accounts of the same exchange between God and Moses. The framing of the genealogy this way shows that it's here for a purpose – this isn't a mistake. It's the writer's way of telling us, "These names are important. Don't skip the genealogy!" So what is the purpose?

There are several minor points we could draw from this genealogy:

- It explains where Korah based his claim to leadership (cf. Num 16), which later gave rise to his rebellion. He was a cousin of Moses and Aaron and, at least on the basis of family line, had as much claim to leadership as they.
- It broadened the people's sense of identity to be willing to include Gentiles, since Simeon's Canaanite wife is expressly mentioned in v 15. (This is important because Israel was blessed to be a blessing. Even the Exodus itself included a mixed multitude – cf. 12:38. The

people were duty-bound to think beyond their own borders and ethnicity.)

- It draws attention to the importance of godly marriage for priests by highlighting several women in the priestly line (Amram's wife v20, Aaron's wife v 23, Eleazar's wife v 25).
- It shows that there are "no little people" with God. He knows names and uses even the most unremarkable families to do His work.

But the central point is given in vv 26-27:

Exodus 6:26-27 ²⁶ *These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said: "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts." ²⁷ It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel from Egypt, this Moses and this Aaron.*

The point of this genealogy is to give the pedigree of Moses and Aaron. Why? To show that their family background makes them suitable leaders for this mission. Remember, in Israelite society, family connection was centrally important. This makes sense, considering that they owed their existence and sense of distinction to a family-based promise God made to Abraham. If you're not in the family line, you're outside the promise. Family connection is everything!

Specifically, this record of names shows that Moses and Aaron are suitable leaders for this mission. How? It legitimizes Moses' activities as a priest, since he is a member of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of priests. And it highlights Aaron's forebears and descendants, demonstrating that he is from a family of distinction. Aaron is thus a worthy partner for Moses, particularly in his role as Moses' mouthpiece.

APP: How does this apply to you and me?

- Instill our confidence in Moses and Aaron as the right men for this job (the effect of this record on the original readers).
- Remind us of the central importance of our own lineage:

Ephesians 2:12 *Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

Galatians 3:16 *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.*

Romans 4:16-17 ¹⁶ *That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring - not only*

to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations" - in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Galatians 3:26, 28-29 ²⁶ *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

Are you a child of Abraham by faith? If you are, think about what that means. You are a child of the living God, a son or daughter of the heavenly Father. Jesus Christ is your older brother. The church is your home and family. The holy angels are your family servants. Your lineage qualifies you for great things!

IDENTITY (7:1-2)

The Lord gives Moses a new identity, a whole new way of viewing himself: "You are like God to Pharaoh." Earlier (4:16) God had said Moses would be as God to Aaron, i.e., the speaking authority over Aaron. But now God installs Moses as the authority figure over Pharaoh.

It's almost a shocking statement. Literally, God says, "I have made you God to Pharaoh" (no word of comparison – "like God"). Of course, this doesn't mean he becomes divine. It means he functions in the place of God.

It's an especially interesting statement considering how Pharaoh was viewed by his own people. In Egyptian culture, the Pharaoh was viewed as a divine being. But here, Yahweh beats Pharaoh at his own game! The god-evoking man in this story is not the king of Egypt; it's the no account shepherd-turned-leader of the slaves. In subsequent days, Moses will leave Pharaoh with no doubts about the extent of his power. He controls bugs, animals, weather, disease, the water of the Nile, and the tides of the Red Sea. He even possesses the power of life and death. As Yahweh acts through him, he truly becomes God to Pharaoh.

There's an echo in this of Adam's original role, given by God in the Garden of Eden: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

This was humanity's original role in the world: to function as God and represent Him to the rest of creation. When God says, "I have made you like God to Pharaoh," He is echoing the words of creation, installing Moses as a sort of new Adam to function as God in the world. This level of intimacy and close association is what human beings were originally meant to have. Moses doesn't become superhuman in all this; he becomes truly human!

APP: This is what we were made for – it's what our true humanity calls us to. To be human is not to be frail, fallen, or rebellious. These are marks of sin, of humanity in its lesser form. "I'm only human" misses the point of what humanity was meant to be. To be human is to be the pinnacle of God's creation. Human beings have capacity for creativity, love, loyalty, mutual friendship, accomplishment, generosity, joy. The mark of our humanness is not our shortcomings; it's our most inspired, most God-like moments.

APP: This is especially what it means to be a Christian. Christianity is a relationship, not just with God, but a relationship with those who don't know God. You may be the only "God" people ever see. In Christ, you can be a good one! In Christ, you are a true human, recreated in God's image (Eph 4:24). You are the means by which He means to speak to others and recreate them in His image as well (2 Cor 5:20).

Being a witness is more than just being a talking head. God could have spoken to Pharaoh directly, without using Moses at all. Being a witness means being God to the world – coming in real, human flesh just like Jesus in the incarnation. What draws people to the kingdom is the glory of God, seen – not in a sunset – but in a whole life thoroughly recreated in God's image, bearing witness to the world and attracting people to the God it represents.

GLORY (7:3-5)

God reminds Moses that He will harden Pharaoh's heart, multiply signs, and bring out His people. But now He shows Moses His heart, His motivation, His ultimate reason: "The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." God is more interested in bringing this victory than Moses or Israel give Him credit for, for it is His own honor that is being vindicated!

To understand the book of Exodus, we must grasp God's concern for His own glory. The most passionate heart for the glory of God is God's own heart. He wants His name to be known. He wants Pharaoh's question answered – "Who is the Lord?" The first of the 10 Commandments is "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." That commandment sets the standard for all allegiances, all affections, and all priorities, including affections and priorities in the heart of God Himself. God is not an idolater! The most important person in the universe to God is God.

APP: How often do you make the worth and glory of God the ground for your prayers? (cf. Ex 32:11-14 – Moses appeals for forgiveness on the basis of God's reputation with the Egyptians)

OBEDIENCE & BLESSING (7:6-7)

This seems like a significant turning point to me. Twice, we are told that they did exactly what the Lord commanded. Complete obedience. Their contribution was not ability or genius or experience or credentials or vitality. Their success was because they did exactly what the Lord told them to do (cf. v 10).

Verse 7 gives their ages: Moses was 80, Aaron 83. These guys are getting ready to launch into ministry at an age when most people have retired, many have died. Long life in the OT was a sign of God's blessing, so what we have here is an acknowledgement of God's remarkable blessing on their lives.

Why were they useful? Because they were obedient and blessed. The applications to both these final points are obvious, I hope. God is passionate for His own glory, and He wants to use you for that purpose. He has given you a divine lineage. He has called you to be God to the world. He has blessed you abundantly in Christ. Now He has given you a mission: Jesus Christ—To know Him and make Him known for the glory of God and the joy of all peoples. Will you obey?

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