

Route 66

Exodus: Delivered From Bondage

Part 2 – March 8, 2009



At the end of Genesis, a famine has hit the Promised Land. Joseph is second in command in Egypt and he invites his father, Jacob and his eleven brothers to move their families to the fertile, Egyptian, Land of Goshen. And Pharaoh gives it to them! Jacob is nervous about leaving the Promised Land, until God speaks to him in a vision one night.

Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for **I will make you into a great nation there.** I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. - *Genesis 46:3b-4a*

There's always this promise of a nation. Why? He's got a plan; and He needs far more than a family to pull it off. He made it clear from the first covenant with Abraham.

I will make you into a great nation ... and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.** - *Genesis 12:2-3 NIV*

God is preparing nothing less than the salvation of the world!

The Promised Land (Canaan) was a "land-bridge" between Northern powers and Egypt, and was a frequent battleground. If Jacob's small family had stayed there, they would've been killed off or blended into their Semitic pagan neighbors. But the Egyptians *looked* different, *spoke* a different language, and, "all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians." (*Gen 46:34*) Egypt was an incubator where God could grow His chosen people into a nation while keeping them separate from a pagan world. A couple hundred years pass.

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died ... Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. - *Exodus 1:6-8 NIV condensed*



And he sees their *huge* population as a threat. So, he sets taskmasters over them, and drives them into forced labor. But their numbers continue to grow at an alarming rate. So he moves to plan "B": death squads begin tossing all newborn males into the Nile.

But Moses' mother floats him in a basket towards Pharaoh's daughter, while his sister, Miriam spies. The princess finds him, rescues him, and adopts him. Miriam approaches her and suggests that she hire a Hebrew nursemaid. The princess agrees and Moses' own mother is offered the job! Moses is raised in the palace and given a royal education.

As Moses ages he takes pity on his fellow Hebrews. At age 40, he catches an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, and murders him. Well, Pharaoh finds out, seeks to kill Moses, so Moses flees to Midian and meets and marries Zipporah (aka Zippy), the daughter of a pagan priest. Then he tends sheep for another 40 years.

Moses spent 40 years thinking he was a somebody, 40 years learning he was a nobody, and 40 years discovering what God can do with somebody who's a nobody. - *Dwight Moody, para.*



One day Moses takes his flock up Mount Sinai.

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. - *Exodus 3:2 NIV*

God speaks to a very frightened Moses, and tells him that He wants Moses to deliver His people to the Promised Land. But first, they should come back to Mount Sinai for a face to face. Moses says, "But, who am I?" And God says, "It's not about *you*; it's about who *I AM!*"

Moses says, "But, what if they don't believe me?" And God tells him to throw his staff on the ground. He does, and it becomes a serpent, and Moses runs away from it! Then God tells him to put his hand in his shirt, and when he pulls it out, it's covered in leprosy; he puts it back in and brings it out again, the leprosy is gone. To which Moses says, "But, I'm slow of speech and tongue". And God gets a little mad and says, "Who created the mouth?"

Moses says, "Please send someone else." And God says, "Don't you have a brother? I know *he* can speak well! Go together." So Aaron and Moses go together. But a weird thing happened to Moses on the way to meet Aaron: God decided to kill him!

... on the way, the Lord met Moses and was about to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said. - *Exodus 4:24-25 NIV*

Apparently Zippy (the daughter of a pagan priest) had a problem with circumcision. So to keep peace, Moses hadn't carried out the terms of the *very covenant* he was called to fulfill! That's no small thing. You don't need to be a somebody; but you better be committed. Moses was holding back. He wasn't "sold out" to God, and yet he was expecting God to do all these miraculous things through him.

So Aaron and Moses go to Pharaoh and ask him to let God's people go. But instead, Pharaoh increases their workload. Then come the ten plagues, but with each one Pharaoh's heart grows harder.



When God revealed himself to Moses, Moses' heart softened. But when God revealed himself to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's heart hardened. The same flame that melts the wax will harden the clay. It's the condition of the heart and the will that determine the ultimate effect of God's revealed authority in our lives.

But why *ten* plagues? Why not just one really good one?! God needed to display his power to His people. They were ignorant about God. And they'd been surrounded by Egyptian false gods for 400+ years.



Many theologians believe that each plague was specifically designed to mock a particular Egyptian god, goddess, or pagan power.

The Nile is worshipped as a life-giver; it becomes "blood" and everything in it dies.



They worshipped the sun god, Ra, so darkness envelopes the land. Medical shamans, weather shamans, and agricultural shamans, were powerless against hail, boils, lice, flies, frogs, locust, and death to their livestock.



When God is talking to Moses about His final plague, He says:

I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. -
Exodus 12:12b NIV

At times Pharaoh begs for mercy, confesses his sin, and promises to release them. But when the plague lets up he changes his mind. God finally resorts to the tenth plague: death to the firstborn. Each Hebrew family was instructed to slaughter a lamb at twilight without breaking its bones, to brush some of its blood around their doorway and to stay inside until morning.

... when I see the blood, I will pass over you. - *Exodus 12:13 NIV*

This is the basis for calling Christ "The Lamb of God". He was crucified at twilight, against routine practice His bones were unbroken, and it is only by His blood that we are saved.

For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. - *1 Cor. 5:7 NIV*

At midnight the Lord visited death upon all of Egypt. And even the son of Pharaoh (himself considered a god) died. And Pharaoh relented and released his hold on God's people. And as each family left their house the next day, they passed under the blood into freedom from the bondage of slavery. But old habits die hard. Pharaoh changed his mind yet again and pursued them - along with army - to the Red Sea.

This is *so* like the way of deliverance from sin!



The people are confused and terrified. They cry out to the Lord and lash out at Moses. And Moses tries to calm them down ...

“The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.” - *Exodus 14:14-15 NIV*

If we know we’re headed in the direction God has called us to, then when times get tough, He *expects* us to get off our duff and keep walking in faith in spite of our fears and feelings.

And that’s exactly what they did. And a great wind blew the sea into two miraculous halves. And God’s people passed through. And the Egyptians thought it would work for them too ... but SWOOSH!

As they head to Mount Sinai, God gives them water *miraculously*, quail meat *miraculously*, manna *miraculously*, and even gives them a *miraculous* victory when they’re attacked by the Amalekites.

Moses is reunited with Zippy, their two sons, and Jethro, Moses’ pagan priest of a father-in-law. But, look what Jethro says:

“Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods ...” Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God ... - *Exodus 18:11-12a NIV*



And Jethro gave Moses some great advice about delegating. And three months later 600,000 men plus all the women and children were at the base of Mount Sinai. And God descended on it for all to see, and covered it in smoke and fire.

Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. - *Exodus 19:19b-20a NIV*

And there God gives him the Ten Commandments and the laws of the covenant (which explain how to live out the commandments). Until now, the people have had no moral or social standard to live by. This is God’s expression of His own holy character. And it’ll keep them safe and separate from the surrounding pagan nations.

God tells Moses to make a worship tent (tabernacle), and an ark to hold the Ten Commandments, and garments for the priests, and He institutes a day of rest for His post slave-driven children.



Moses is gone for 40 days. And when he returns the people have already given him up for dead and have created a golden calf to represent the gods who saved them from the Egyptians. This doesn't go over well with God or Moses. These people have a long way to go!

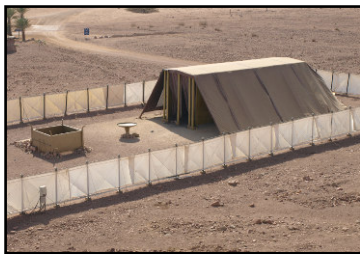
When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. - *Exodus 32:19 NIV*

This was to represent the broken covenant. God demands our wholehearted, undivided worship. Moses destroys the calf and most of those who worshipped it. And God sends a little plague on the people just to say, "Live like an Egyptian, suffer my wrath like an Egyptian." Everyone repents and God calls Moses back up the mountain.

Once up there, God reveals His glory, renews His covenant, and gives Moses a fresh set of tablets. And when Moses comes off the mountain, his face is literally shining from having seen God's glory. So much so that it scares everyone, and he has to cover his head with a veil.

He announces the construction of the tabernacle and the repentant people give *so generously* that Moses has to tell them to stop bringing supplies. They set up the tabernacle just as God has instructed. Aaron and his sons were anointed as priests. And God descended in a cloud and His glory filled the tabernacle.

God is not content being above and beyond His people. His big plan was to dwell with them, among them, and ultimately within them. Until Exodus, this reality had not been portrayed since God walked with Adam in the garden.



His chosen people are learning just who has *chosen* them: an almighty *and* gracious, demanding *and* long-suffering, Holy *and* loving God who longs to dwell in their midst!

So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels. - *Exodus 40:38 NIV*