



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Exodus

Lesson 5: Exodus 6:28-7:24

Modern-day Bible study has been made so simple for us in many ways. Primarily, chapter and verse markings make it much easier for everyone to stay together and find texts quickly during group Bible classes, or studies such as this. That being said, it's also very important to remember that the chapter and verse marking were added by men and are not inspired.

At times these breaks are logical, however there are multiple times in Exodus that a chapter break happens just before or just after the text changes topic. Chapter 6:28 and following is an example of one of these occurrences. Logically, it would make sense for the chapter break to end at the end of the genealogy, yet for some reason it was determined to briefly return to the narrative before beginning chapter seven.

Take Action: One of the best gifts I have ever been given came from my older brother. He spent hours and hours going through my favorite version of the New Testament digitally and removing all of the chapter and verse markings, returning the text to its original letter format, way back in the day before technology would do it for you. It is truly amazing how different the text reads when your brain doesn't automatically hiccup at chapter/verse markings. Use a resource such as Blue Letter Bible or Bible Gateway to remove the chapter and verse marking and subheadings and see how different the text flows in your study.

Read Exodus 6:28-30

Here the narrative picks up by reiterating the conversation between God and Moses in 6:10-13. God is trying to get Moses to understand that it isn't about Moses, it's about Yahweh, the Almighty. Moses

capabilities are irrelevant, because the power and authority are coming from God.

Think About It: Moses is having a hard time embracing God's expectation because of his own self-doubt. God has demonstrated, numerous times, that He will give Moses the words and the power, yet Moses continues to struggle because he is focusing on himself. Do we do the same thing? Do we tell God, "I can't do that, I'm not a good speaker." "I can't do that, I'm too introverted to evangelize." "I can't do that, that isn't my talent." "You shouldn't ask me to do that, because Sister Susie is much better at it than I am."

Consider the amazing things God was able to accomplish through Moses when Moses quit making excuses, got out of His own way and began to fully allow God to work through Him. While we may not be doing things like turning water to blood and darkening the sun, when it comes to influencing the people around us and furthering the Kingdom, will God work any less powerfully through us if we let Him?

Take Action: What are some areas in which, perhaps, you have been making excuses to God or focusing on yourself and your own abilities? How can you start to put the emphasis on God and His power and step out of your comfort zone to serve Him?



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Read Exodus 7:1-5

God responds to Moses not with judgment or criticism, but with encouragement and a reminder of who is really in charge of this situation. Moses will be the figurehead, but Aaron is the one who will speak forth (prophecy) God's message. The message has also changed at this point in time. No longer is God requested a short trip for His people to worship, now He is demanding that His people be allowed to leave the land.

He is also preparing Moses for the inevitable rejection that will come from Pharaoh. God lists three specific things for Moses and Aaron, He is going to send Pharaoh: signs, wonders, and then ultimately judgment. We know from God's character that if at any point Pharaoh had submitted himself to the signs and wonders and repented, God would have relented on judgment (think about Jonah and Ninevah). However, Pharaoh's arrogance hardened his heart and prevented Him from seeing what God was adamantly trying to show him.

Think About It: Many of God's prophets, including Moses, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were told from the very beginning that their message would be rejected. Noah preached for over 100 years and did not reach anyone but his immediate family. Did God consider these men to be a success? How would we react if our preacher had this kind of track record? Do we, perhaps, need to reconsider what it means to be "successful" when sharing God's word?

With verse four, it's important to remember Exodus 12:12 that we looked at in a previous lesson, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on *all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment*: I am the Lord." Egypt was one of the most

prominent polytheistic nations in the history of the world. The coming judgment is not just for Pharaoh himself, but as we will see each one of the plagues is specifically targeted towards one of the false gods of the Egyptians. Like a domino effect, one by one the Almighty will topple their false gods before the entire world.

It is also easy to assume that this showdown was for the benefit of the Egyptians, however based on Joshua 24:14 I don't believe that to be the case. Joshua 24:14 states, "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord." The Israelites had been in Egypt for hundreds of years, and during that time they had begun to join the Egyptians in their idolatrous worship. This showdown was not only to demonstrate unequivocally to Pharaoh and the Egyptians who Yahweh is, it was also be a stark reminder to God's own people who they are, and *whose* they are.

Think About It: If God were to directly intervene and topple the false gods of today's world, what might that look like? As His people, His ambassadors, what if anything should we be doing to that end?

Read Exodus 7:6-13

Verse six is the first of three times in this chapter we see the phrase, "they did just as the Lord commanded." This phrase is also found in 7:10 and 7:20. Once again, the power does not lie with Moses or Aaron, but with God. Ultimately, they were totally successful in freeing the Israelites and decimating the Egyptians, but it was only because they did exactly what God told them to do. It was only because they were fully obedient.

It is also amazing the little, casual ways God demonstrates his omniscience. In verse nine the text



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states, “When Pharaoh says to you...” Not only did God know Pharaoh would respond with a hard heart, He knew the exact words Pharaoh would use to try to discredit Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh asked for a sign, and God gave it to him, even though He knew it wouldn’t make any difference. Sometimes people today find themselves in the same boat, for whatever reason they are struggling and ask for a sign. Sometimes out of a sincere heart similar to the father’s cry in Mark 9:24. Sometimes out of a rebellious spirit like Pharaoh, “Oh yeah, then prove it!”

I myself have made the statement at times that I would love for God to speak out of a burning bush and tell me exactly what to do. Yet it’s important to remember that God has given us evidence, He has given us proof. Eye-witness testimony spread far and wide regarding God’s destruction of Egypt. There is not one historical record of anyone at the time saying, “Yeah, that didn’t happen!” John 20:30-31 tells us that John recorded what he did so that we would believe Jesus is the Christ, and have ever lasting life. The New Testament is full of eye witness accounts. Very specific times, names and locations of very obvious miracles such as healing the blind, making the lame walk, or even bringing the dead back to life. Yet not once is there a record of someone who was there saying, “That never happened!” In fact, in the case of Lazarus, the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him because of the fact he was evidence that Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be.

Just like God didn’t condemn Moses, or Gideon, or anyone else who struggled in their faith throughout Scripture, He doesn’t condemn us. He wants us to seek and find Him (Matthew 7:7). If you find yourself in a place of doubt or uncertainty, if you are crying out because you desperately need a sign, remember that He has provided them for you all around. We just need to ensure that, unlike Pharaoh, our hearts are soft enough to see the evidence God has put before us.

Knowing that Pharaoh would demand a sign, God begins with the same sign He had given the Israelite leaders; turning the staff into a serpent. It is fascinating to note that Pharaoh’s magicians were able to do the same thing. How this worked, I have no idea, however even in this God displayed His dominance as Aaron’s staff swallowed the others whole. Yet still we see that Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he would not listen.

Read Exodus 7:14-24

The full-on battle of the gods begins. God gives Moses 4 things to say to Pharaoh:

1. The Lord, the God of the Hebrews sent me to you
2. Saying, “Let my people go, that they may worship Me in the wilderness
3. But so far, you have not obeyed
4. By this you will know that I am the Lord

When I stop and think back, this is the same way my husband and I disciplined our children. When they were in trouble, consistently we would have a very similar conversation:

1. We are your parents, and we will answer to God for your soul and your behavior
2. This was the expectation we set for you
3. You disobeyed in this way
4. Therefore, here is your consequence

God’s pattern of discipline is clear authority, paired with clear expectations and consistent consequences. He didn’t have Moses say, “OK Pharaoh, I’m going to count to three and if you still haven’t listened here’s what’s going to happen!” No, He made His expectations clear. He even made them clear more than once to ensure there was no misunderstanding, but when Pharaoh’s rebellious spirit was clear God immediately took action.



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Moses' first supernatural showdown took place in public on the bank of the Nile. It is likely that, like we have previously seen with his daughter, Pharaoh had a habit of going to the Nile in the morning to bathe. Moses and Aaron meet him there and declare that God is going to turn the Nile into blood.

I think it is important to note that God's first act of national judgment involves blood. His first act of national deliverance also involves the blood, with the blood of the lamb on the doorpost (Exodus 12:7). And of course, the ultimate act of deliverance came when Jesus shed His blood on the cross (Ephesians 1:7).

Genesis 9:4 states that life is in the blood, and Leviticus 17:11 states, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life." From Genesis to Revelation the concept of blood is central to God's plan of redemption. God's word also declares judgment on those who shed innocent blood (Joel 3:19).

Remember in chapter one when the last Pharaoh ordered that the Hebrew baby boys were to not only be killed, but to be murdered by throwing them in the Nile. The Nile, that if you were an Egyptian represented the god Hapi, the father of life. And now, that river is flowing red with blood. The blood of the innocent babies. The lifeblood of your god.

When God decides to make a statement of judgment, He does not whisper. Yes, the water was undrinkable & smelled awful. But it smelled awful because it smelled of death. God's judgment here goes far beyond undrinkable water. He is declaring on a national scale His dominance over Hapi. His dominance over the life that the Nile brings. However perhaps most importantly, He is also declaring that He has not forgotten the innocent blood that has been shed, and He will avenge His people.

Once again in verse 20 Moses and Aaron did exactly as the Lord commanded them, and God immediately executed the judgment He had promised. Verse 22 states that Pharaoh's magicians were also able to do the same by their "magic arts," however clearly whatever they did was not on nearly the same scale. Verse 24 tells us that the Egyptians were having to dig along the Nile for water to drink. If Pharaoh's magicians had been able to repeat the miracle on the same scale, they would have immediately healed the river demonstrating their greater power, yet that is not at all what happened.

Think About It: As we will see going forward, every time God demonstrates His power to Pharaoh, Pharaoh's heart gets harder and harder. We would be amiss if we didn't ask the question, "How is my heart?" We have the same choice that Pharaoh did. Sometimes we respond to God's message with humility, sometimes with arrogance. Is there a part of your heart that has remained hard to God's message? What can you begin doing to chip away at the hard edges and soften yourself towards the Lord's will?
