

THE PENTATEUCH II: EXODUS

WEEK 2

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① THEMES IN PLAY

Themes

Sub-Themes

② HIGH DRAMA OF EARLY EXODUS

Opening Chapters

Moses and Leadership

③ THE PLAGUES

Message to Egypt and the Nations

Apologia

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As the nation grows, they pose a perceived threat to Egypt, which overtly activates the enmity (cf. Gen 3:15):

- God's people multiply (cf. Gen 12:2, 15:5), Pharaoh enslaves
- God's people multiply still more, Pharaoh murders babies.

Pharaoh is a Satanic agent here, not merely in his attempt to make God's people miserable, but by directly attacking the reproductive process, so enmity between the seeds.

Aside: This growing nation gives the reader the sense that they should have their own place! (Cf. Gen 12:7)

I mentioned last time there's a shift from the concept of seed (singular) to nation (seeds). (These aren't at odds since they're both in Abrahamic covenant, but there's a shift in emphasis.)

The nations in play:

- *Israel* God's People to Be Redeemed
- *Egypt* The Guilty Oppressors, Plundered (12:36), Converted (12:39)
- *Other Nations* Hear God of Israel's Acts of Judgment in Egypt (Josh 9:9, 1 Sam 4:8)

A theme that runs throughout the Pentateuch but is especially pronounced in Exodus is *nomenclature*. We read God saying in Exodus 6:2b-3:

I am the LORD; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.

A shallow critique exists where this is taken as contradiction of the innumerable occurrences of LORD in Genesis many of which are on the mouths of the characters (e.g. Genesis 24:7, 26:22, 32:9).

This has to do with what him demonstrating his nature in a far deeper way, not simply the crude matter of knowing the name *qua* name.

What are some thoughts evoked by such a mysterious name as *I am what I am*?

- Self-Existence (Aseity)
- Eternality
- Above and Beyond Everything
- The Ground for Gifts and Giving:

GEN 22:14 The LORD Will Provide (The Ram Provision)

Ex 15:26 The LORD is your healer (Waters of Mara)

Ex 17:15 The LORD is my Banner (Amelekite Battle)

JUDG 6:24 The LORD is peace (Before Gideon's Battles)

PSALM 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd (David's Psalm)

JER 23:6 The LORD is righteousness (Name of David's "Branch")

EZE 48:35 The LORD is present (Ezekiel's Temple)

MATT 1:21 The LORD is salvation (Jesus, name given to Mary)

Pharaoh doesn't know the Name:

Exodus 5:2- 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."

There are some unusual omissions as well:

- Pharaoh is never named (Possible Qualification: concerning 2nd millennial conventions)
- Pharaoh's daughter (Moses' adoptive mother) is never named
- Cf. Shiphrah and Puah (Hebrew midwives)

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By enslaving Israel, Egypt treats them as a possession. God sets the record straight, both verbally and through the signs and wonders, who owns Israel:

3:7 “I have surely seen the affliction of **my people** ...

5:1 “... Let **my people** go ...”

7:16 “... Let **my people** go ...”

8:1 “... Let **my people** go ...”

8:20 “... Let **my people** go ...”

8:21 “... if you do not let **my people** go... ”

8:22 “... where **my people** are living...”

9:1 “... Let **my people** go ...”

9:13 “... Let **my people** go ...”

9:17 “Still you exalt yourself against **my people** by not letting them go.”

10:3 “... Let **my people** go ...”

10:4 “For if you refuse to let **my people** go...”

History plays a significant part in this book (and throughout Scripture.)
Consider the following passages:

2:24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

3:6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

6:8 I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

Throughout the Old Testament there is constant reference to the Exodus—in the hundreds!

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The opening chapters of Exodus are a rollercoaster of drama, including many highs and lows. What are some examples?

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	Fortune		Misfortune
1:6-7	Israel's Multiplication	1:8-11	Israel's Slavery
1:12	Further Multiplication	1:15ff	Infanticide
2:1-9	Moses' Birth, Discovery	2:11-15	Moses' Exile
3:1-10	God Calls Moses	3:11-4:17	Moses Resists
4:29ff	Israel Comforted	5:1-21	Pharaoh Refuses Straw
6:1-8	God Declares He'll Rescue w/Signs	6:9	Israel Does not Believe

God demonstrates that the path to victory is not direct. Like Israel, we must trust his claim to bring us to the promise land even as we face setbacks.

“I have raised you up for this very purpose” (Ex 9:16)

Pharaoh is on a rollercoaster, becoming both more “soft” and more hostile. After each “bid,” he slides into a hardened heart:

- ① At his first encounter, “Who is the LORD?” (5:2)
- ② “Pray to the LORD, I will let you go” (8:8,15)
- ③ “Sacrifice here in Egypt” (8:25,32)
- ④ “I have sinned, I will let you go” (9:27-28, 35)
- ⑤ During Eighth Plague Warning: “Only men can go” (10:11)
- ⑥ “I have sinned, forgive my sin, pray to the LORD” (10:16,20)
- ⑦ “Leave your flocks,” (10:24) devolves into “Get Out of My Sight!” (10:28)
- ⑧ After the 10th Plague: “Leave my people! Take everything, Bless Me” (12:31)

God knows how much pressure to apply. Why draw this out?

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Moses premature attempt to lead Israel at age 40 backfires (2:11; Acts 7:23):

- Felt a sense of calling— *went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors* (2:11)
- Playing Judge A— *he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren . . . he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.* (2:11,12)
- Playing Judge B—‘*Why are you striking your companion?*’ . . . ‘*Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?*’ (2:14)
- Goes from Egyptian Prince to Unknown Shepherd (2:15)
- This lasts for forty more years!

Moses spends *another* forty years in the desert alone! (Ex 7:7)

- We know almost nothing about this time, except that at the end of it God calls him. (Acts 7:30)
- Proverbs 17:3-The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the Lord tests hearts.
- Moses third forty begins when he encounters God at the burning bush.

Concerning leaders, Schaeffer writes:

We should consciously take the lowest place unless the Lord Himself extrudes us into a greater one.

The word extrude is important here. To be extruded is to be forced out under pressure into a desired shape. Picture a huge press jamming soft metal at high pressure through a die, so that the metal comes out in a certain shape. This is the way of the Christian: he should choose the lesser place until God extrudes him into a position of more responsibility and authority. . .

We should seek the lower place because there it is easier to be quiet before the face of the Lord. . .

Quietness and peace before God are more important than any influence a position may seem to give, for we must stay in step with God to have the power of the Holy Spirit. (NLP, 28-9)

Moses is a great example of this. What are some other e.g.s?

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Cf. Exodus 12:12 (NIV) On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.

*	Rod-Snake	Uraea-Key Symbol for Gods
1	Water⇒Blood	Hapi-Spirit of Nile
		Osiris-Nile Was his blood
2	Frogs	Hechet-Frog Goddess
3	Gnats	Geb-Earth God
4	Flies	Uatchit-Fly God
5	Cattle Murrain	Ptah-represented by cows
6	Boils	Imhotep-God of Medicine
7	Hail	Nut-Sky God
8	Locusts	Serapia-Protector from Locusts
9	Darkness	Ra-Sun God
		Khons-Moon God
10	First-Born	Pharoah

“The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord . . .”

8:19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.”

9:20 The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses;

10:7 Pharaoh’s servants said to him “. . . Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?”

11:3 The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the man Moses himself was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.

12:33 The Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in haste, for they said, “We will all be dead.”

We also see that some Egyptians left with Israel!

*Exodus 12:37-38 (NASB) Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. A **mixed multitude also** went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.*

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Many are troubled by the hardening of Pharaoh's heart since his free will seems over ruled. Is this unacceptable?

- ① Pharaoh hardened his heart *six times* before God gave him a nudge and then two more times after. So, God really didn't have much work to do.
- ② The term translated 'harden' (chazaq) primarily means *to strengthen*; this implies that Pharaoh's heart was already set on its course and that God simply gave him the resolve to act
- ③ Stated Purposes:
 - "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 7:3)
 - "But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (Ex 9:16)

This text does not shy away from portraying God as the direct cause of Egyptian suffering.

How can we explain this?

- In a very real way, this is an act of judgment on Pharaoh and the Egyptians for enslaving and killing Hebrew lads.
- God's judgment was actually quite merciful by comparison
- Leaders (here Pharaoh) have serious accountability
- Although we know God likely puts limits on what he does, he is the Creator which grants him considerable latitude vis-a-vis his creation.

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