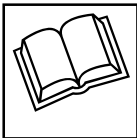


famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God Who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come" (vv. 5-10).

The occurrences of earthquakes in Italy remind us of that time when Rome shall suddenly disappear into the abyss. Then those words in Psalm 59 will be fulfilled: "Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God [elohim] ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth" (v. 13). Our hope is to be among these elohim.

Perhaps these things will be among those that are to the forefront of our minds when next we meet to remember the Lord Jesus, he who suffered such anguish of spirit for our sakes and yet believed with all his heart that his heavenly Father would deliver him. "He That spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:32, 35,38,39).



Exposition

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The Exodus

A commentary on Exodus 1-15

E. Moses and Pharaoh: first encounters—Exodus 5-6 (Part 4)

Mark Vincent

The format of the commentary

The narrative has been broken down into several **major sections**, of a chapter or two each; some of these will be covered in one month, others will take longer. An **Introduction** is provided for each of these major sections, which sets out the major events and themes dealt with in those chapters.

Each major section is broken into **sub-sections** or **episodes** (these are typically between five and twenty verses each). For each the **AV text** is followed by a **Comment**, which draws out the major lessons and items of interest from the text. The AV text also contains **Footnotes**, in which additional 'one-off' points are made for those wanting to work through Exodus more slowly.

Introduction

EXODUS 7 begins a new section of the Exodus narrative with the plague accounts. This article concludes chapters 1-6, bringing us to the very edge of God's strategy of deliverance in chapter 7, in which God is about to act in a major and decisive way through miracle and sign.

The two sections to be considered this month are framed by further doubt on Moses' part. In verse 12 and verse 30 Moses complains about his inability as a speaker in phrases which are very similar: "how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?"; "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?".

The two expressions may refer to the same conversation. The dialogue is split by the in-

sersion of the genealogy of Moses and Aaron. This slows the narrative right down to pave

the way for the beginning of the new section in chapter 7.

The people doubt and God reassures

- 6:9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit,¹ and for cruel bondage.
- 6:10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
- 6:11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.
- 6:12 And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised² lips?
- 6:13 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Comment

So there is yet more toing and froing between God, Moses, and the people. The people had worked themselves (quite literally) into such a state of panic and preoccupation that they could scarcely hear Moses' words of reassurance, let alone hearken to them. Who are we to blame them for this in their circumstances? Most disciples have lost concentration on the promises of God at far slighter burdens than these. Who has not been overtaken by a particular incident in life to such an extent that he cannot hear God speaking and cannot see another perspective on the issue in hand? But God does not test us beyond our ability to withstand; very shortly all God will require of them is that they sit on the sidelines and look and learn as the plagues unfold and Egypt is brought to nothing.

God quickly commands Moses to speak to Pharaoh once more, but alas, Moses seems to have little more faith at his disposal than his brethren at this point. Again he returns to the inadequacies to which he had already pointed in

chapters 3 and 4, and again his reasoning is entirely logical from a human point of view. The point is that, in asking for our faith, God asks for more than a 'human point of view'. He asks us to transcend our own categories and assumptions, and to rely instead on Him.

So it is that finally, in 6:13, God gives Moses and Aaron "a charge" (the word is the regular Hebrew word for a 'command') to bring out the children of Israel. There is a formality about this that was not present earlier in chapters 5 and 6. Again God has to draw the line, just as He had done when angered in 4:14, to make clear to Moses that his commission is non-negotiable. God no longer simply speaks to Moses and tells him to go; He now commands. By the use of this term God emphasises a new level of determination in His commitment to bring Israel out of Egypt.

It is not recorded that Moses went to Pharaoh at this point in the text. Instead the record continues with some genealogical information. Nevertheless, it is significant that the word 'command' occurs again at 7:2. These probably refer to the same incident, just as it has already been suggested that verse 12 overlaps with verse 30. Thus there is a hiatus in the narrative during which the genealogical information is given. It seems that the two passages 6:10-13 and 6:28-7:7 probably refer to the same basic conversation between Moses and the Lord. What we are dealing with in 6:10-7:7 is a transitional passage (enclosing the genealogy), which takes us from chapters 1-6, about Moses' preparation and first encounter with Pharaoh, to chapters 7 onwards, which deal with the plague cycle. The break between chapter 6 and chapter 7 is thus not discrete, although it serves a useful purpose in being convenient to remember and helping us divide up our study. It is the charge or command of 6:13 and 7:2 that precipitates the account of the plagues.

Genealogical information

6:14 These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben.

6:15 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon.

- 6:16 And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years.
- 6:17 The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families.
- 6:18 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron,³ and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years.
- 6:19 And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi according to their generations.
- 6:20 And Amram took him Jochebed⁴ his father's sister⁵ to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.
- 6:21 And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.
- 6:22 And the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri.
- 6:23 And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.
- 6:24 And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these are the families of the Korhites.
- 6:25 And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these are the heads⁶ of the fathers of the Levites according to their families.
- 6:26 These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.⁷
- 6:27 These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.
- 6:28 And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt,
- 6:29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee.

6:30 And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

Comment

Although it appears at the start that we are going to have a full list of all the "heads of their fathers' houses", in fact we only get as far as Reuben, Simeon and Levi. Moses and Aaron are of course Levites, and since its purpose is to chart their ancestry and heritage, the genealogy breaks off at this point and does not continue. Whereas we have one verse of genealogical information for Reuben and Simeon respectively, ten verses are devoted to the tribe of Levi. The genealogy is precisely traced to Moses and Aaron, and their identity as real characters tied into a particular genealogical tree is thrice emphasised:

- These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said . . . (v. 26)
- These are they which spake to Pharaoh . . . (v. 27)
- These are that Moses and Aaron (v. 27).

There can be no mistaking the purpose of the genealogy. One or two of its details have intrigued readers through the ages. One such detail is the three ages that are given:

- Levi lived 137 years
- Kohath (Levi's son) lived 133 years
- Amram (Kohath's son) lived 137 years.

It is tempting from this to add the ages up to obtain a continuous period from the patriarchs to Moses. But it is not possible to do this from the evidence of this chapter alone, since we are not told to what extent their lives overlapped, and neither are we told if certain generations have been missed out, as is sometimes the case in Biblical genealogies.* It is not necessarily the purpose to provide exhaustive chronological information and to enable us to construct a time period for the Exodus from this passage. Instead, the genealogy serves to trace the line of Moses and Aaron, and in passing to note the ages of (some of?) their important ancestors.

The record includes a number of characters who are notable in later accounts, this no doubt being the reason for their inclusion. Korah is here, along with Aaron's two wicked sons Nadab and Abihu. By contrast, so is Aaron's righteous grandson Phinehas.

It is worth making a brief comment on verse 26, in which God says: "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt *according to their armies*". The word 'armies' here is the word

* But compare correspondence in October's *Testimony*, pp. 395, 397, and earlier correspondence cited there. I shall return to chronology, God willing, in the commentary on Exodus 12.

'hosts', the very word found in the expression 'LORD of hosts'. It is not necessary (or desirable) to understand the expression as meaning military hosts or armies, although it may carry that connotation by virtue of context. One can have hosts of all sorts of things: stars, angels, men, children of Israel. What is interesting about this passage is that Israel should be described by the use of this term. The people of Israel are hosts. Thus, when we come across the designation 'LORD of hosts', one of its dimensions must be that He is the Lord of Israel—they are His hosts, as indeed are all humans who serve Him, including ourselves. He is our Lord, and we in turn make up one tiny though precious constituent of those vast hosts.

This series will now take a short break until June, God willing.

1. **v. 9 anguish of spirit.** The use of a similar expression elsewhere (Prov. 14:29; cf. Mic. 2:7; Job 21:4) suggests the possibility that it might refer to *impatience* on Israel's part rather than distress or despair. Anguish of *soul* rather than *spirit* is spoken of in Numbers 21:4; the two expressions presumably have similar meanings.
2. **v. 12 uncircumcised lips.** This rather strange

idiom is used only here and 6:30, although uncircumcised hearts are referred to in Leviticus 26:41, Jeremiah 9:26 and Ezekiel 44:7,9, and uncircumcised ears in Jeremiah 6:10.

3. **v. 18 Hebron.** Hebron is the only descendant of Kohath for whom no offspring are listed.
4. **v. 20 Jochebed.** Moses' mother is the first person to bear a name which begins with *yo-*, the shortened form of YHWH. The name probably means 'YHWH is [a] glory'.
5. **v. 20 father's sister.** So Amram married his aunt. Such a union would be prohibited by later law (Lev. 18:12); it is interesting to question whether Amram's action is implicitly criticised by this fact, or whether it may be justified on the basis that the Law was not yet given.
6. **v. 25 these are the heads . . . according to their families.** This concluding expression is slightly different from the ones found in verses 15,19 and 24, since it mentions "the heads of the fathers". This detail deliberately connects it with the expression which opened the genealogy in verse 14: "These be the heads of their fathers' houses". The phrases in verse 14 and verse 25 thus provide a structural bracket around the genealogy.
7. **v. 26 armies.** See the comment on this term; compare also 7:4 for yet another element of the parallel between 6:9-13 and 6:28-7:5.



Principles, Preaching and Problems

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"Be still, and know that I am God"

Trevor Maher

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10)

IF THERE IS one thing that is emphasised in this present age, it is the constant restlessness of people. Transport and travel have greatly improved, and costs have been reduced, enabling people to move around in a way previous generations would never have been able to imagine. The roads of Britain alone have to cope with 27 million private cars, and, in addition to those who travel by car, there are others who travel by coach, train and plane. Even though the terrorism of last September has curbed air

travel to some extent, the fear and uncertainty that such events bring only serve to heighten the restless spirit in men and women.

The desire for change

This restless spirit permeates attitudes and almost every aspect of life. Clothes, furniture, decorations, homes, cars—all manner of possessions are changed at frequent intervals, not because they are worn out or broken or cease to function, but because people want change. They see it as