

The life of Moses

MOSES AND THE PLAGUES

Exodus 7: 1 - 7

Chapter 6

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“And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.”
(Exodus 7: 1 – 7)

As a result of our study of the life of Moses I hope that you have gained a better understand of how God works in the lives of His children. There are many lessons that we can apply to our lives today. Our goal, as we study the Bible, should be to gain a greater understanding of who God is and how He works in the lives of people today. In this lesson

we will be studying the sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Exodus. God has given the command to Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell them to let the people of Israel go free. Moses, in obedience to the Lord went to Pharaoh and did as the Lord had said. Pharaoh scorned Moses and treated him as an insurrectionist. He felt that Moses was going to lead the Hebrews in a rebellion against his throne. To combat this Pharaoh makes the work of the people harder. This makes it impossible for them to rebel and discredits Moses in the eyes of the people. Things are now worse than ever for the people of God. *“And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.”* (vs. 6-9) Moses complained to God that Pharaoh had been cruel to the people. He asked why did God send him to do this job. He even accused God of not keeping His promise to the people. God answered Moses by explaining to him just who God is. *“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD.”* (Exodus 6:2) God is saying that, “I am Jehovah.” Every time the Lord commands Moses to speak He identifies himself in this way. He is saying, “I am the promise keeping God. I am the deliverer. I will keep my promise. His objective was not just to deliver His people. It was to reveal Himself to the world. He wanted all to know of His power, greatness and love. He would keep His promise in His way and in His time. When He kept His promise and accomplished His will in His people’s lives He would also accomplish other great things in the world that would gain glory to Himself

and point other people to Him as well. Maybe today you are being impatient with God and do not understand what God is doing in your life. You feel that that He should have done things differently. Remember, that His name is Jehovah. He keeps His promises. He is working in several areas of your life at the same time and is accomplishing more things than we can understand right now. That was the situation with the people of Israel and it is true of our lives today. What God expects of us today is the same as he expected of Moses and the people of Israel in that day. He expected Moses to be obedient and faithful. Today He expects us to be obedient and faithful as we trust Him even though we can not see what He is doing. God has never lied or broken a promise. His timing is not our timing and his ways are not our way. We are to remain obedient and faithful and leave the results to Him. When we reach this point in our spiritual lives we will find a great peace in our hearts and lives.

In Exodus chapter 7:5-6 it says, *“And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they.”*

We saw in chapter six and verse nine that Moses had gone to the people of Israel and had tried to give them God’s message of encouragement but they would not hear it. They were in great anguish of spirit because of the cruel bondage of the Egyptians. They were under a great deal of stress. Moses did not understand just what God was doing.

As we think about this today we ask, “Just why did God allow things to get so hard for His people?” I believe that He was breaking the hold that Egypt had on these people. They had lived there for generations. They had been slaves in Egypt for over four hundred years. They did not like it but it was all they knew. They were in some ways comfortable with this. They knew just what to expect. They were comfortable with the familiar. Now God is sending them into the unknown. They would rather stay with the familiar, even though it was slavery. Often God has to break the hold that this world has on us as well. We wonder why things are so hard. The world holds on to our flesh and our minds and God wants us to turn loose of it and cling the more to Him. When we resist the workings of God in our lives, we go through much heartache as He deals with us. We come to realize that the world has nothing for us but bondage. God gives true freedom. He must break the hold that the world has on us and that we have on the world.

God tells Moses to go to Pharaoh in chapter six verse eleven and in verses twenty-eight thru thirty. To this Moses answers that even his own people would not listen to him. Moses felt like a failure and wanted to quit. Then *“The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I am the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?”* God’s response to this was, *“See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I*

command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.” God was going to demonstrate His power to Pharaoh through Moses. It was a good thing that Moses was not powerful. It would not be through Moses’ power that God would deliver His people. God was showing how mighty He was. Notice please verse five of chapter seven. *“And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”* God is going to give testimony to the world of who He is through the lives of Moses and the Children of Israel. God often reveals Himself to the rest of the world around you by how He brings you through various trials. God becomes real to the others around you through you. I am thinking of a lady missionary that I knew who went through such trials that the people of her church became discouraged through her trials. Yet, God restored them because of her reaction in the circumstances. I am thinking if a wife who was stricken with cancer yet had a vibrant testimony through the doctors and nurses who cared for her while she was undergoing chemotherapy. God seeks to reveal Himself to others through you. Are you willing to be obedient to the hand of God so that others may come to know Him?

After Moses heard these encouraging words from the Lord he obeyed and went to Pharaoh. Chapter seven verses six and seven tells us this. *“And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. And Moses was*

fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.” (57:6-7) As we observe Moses over the next few chapters and for the rest of his life, it is amazing to see the transformation that takes place in his character. From this point on he seems much more confident and bold for the Lord. I believe that the secret of this transformation is obedience. Moses’ growth and boldness began with obedience. In chapter seven we see God demonstrate His presence and blessing with the staff and serpent. He shows His superiority when his staff serpent devours the serpents of the magicians. Moses knew then that God would bring them out of Egypt. There would be other trials and times of doubt but from this point on Moses was a much bolder witness for the Lord. We will find our boldness for the Lord in our obedience to the Lord. As we see God provide peace and grace in times of stress we grow in faith and learn that we can trust Him even further. He shows us how His peace and grace are far better than anything that the world can offer.

Now as we begin to consider the actions of Moses we must go to the middle of chapter seven of Exodus. This is where Aaron and Moses are challenging Pharaoh. God is beginning to deal with Pharaoh by using the plagues that he sent upon Egypt. We will not have time in these studies to go into great detail about the plagues but there are several things that I would like for us to see in these verses. From Exodus seven verse nineteen through chapter eight verse thirty-two we read of the first four plagues. We see first, the river of water turning

to blood, then the plague of lice, the plague of frogs and then the plague of flies. In all of this I am still impressed by the obedience of Moses and Aaron. *“And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.”* (7:19-20) Again in chapter eight and verse six we see Aaron acting in obedience to the Lord’s command. Had Moses and Aaron not been bold in this the testimony of God would have been lost. God was revealing Himself to them through the bravery and boldness of His servants. What could God accomplish through you and me if we were just a little bolder there at the work place or in the neighborhood? Are we just too timid to give that word of witness? Many times God can and will do wonderful things for us if we will just exhibit a little courage for Him. I am reminded of the three Hebrew Children who were about to be thrown into the flames by Nebuchadnezzar. Their response to the king was, *“we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But*

if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (Daniel 3:12b) They knew that God could deliver them from the flames but that He might intend for them to be a witness for Him in death by fire. Their attitude was that the outcome did not matter to them. They would leave that to the hand of God. Their resolve was to serve God faithfully. I ask again, what could we accomplish for the Lord where we are if we would exhibit this kind of boldness for the Savior? God revealed Himself to Nebuchadnezzar through these three and He revealed Himself to Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron.

In the plague of the frogs we see just how foolish people can be when confronted with God's claim over them. God through Moses brought a swarm of frogs to plague Pharaoh and Egypt. When confronted by these frogs Pharaoh calls Moses and tells him to remove them from the land and he would let the people go. Moses asks him when shall he ask God to remove the frogs. I believe that he was really asking when the people could go free. Pharaoh's response has been hard to understand. When confronted by a land full of frogs he asks that they be removed "tomorrow." He would rather spend another night with the frogs than submit to the will of God in His life. Moses used this as an opportunity to witness to Pharaoh about the presence of God. Moses said, *"To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God."* He was saying, "Pharaoh, I will ask God to

remove the frogs and when they are gone you will see the hand of the true God of Heaven at work in your presence. Moses wanted Pharaoh to know that he was not just some magician who was causing these things to happen but that he was the ambassador of God and that God was real and active in the lives of His people. Is that our goal? Do we want to have answers to our prayers so that our lives will be easier or so that people will know that God is active in the lives of His people? Our goal should be to live our lives so that the people around us will know more about who God is and that He is working in their lives to help them to know better.

Unfortunately, even after this demonstration of God's power and reality Pharaoh still did not relent and let the people go. God caused the dust of the land to become lice. The magicians of Pharaoh tried and failed to reproduce this miracle. They tried to show that Moses was a fake and not the servant of God. This miracle of the lice they could not reproduce. This is where they became convinced that Moses was in fact, from God. Their testimony to Pharaoh in verse nineteen was that, "*This is the finger of God*" Yet, Pharaoh still did not let the people go. In future lessons we will look more closely at how God revealed Himself to Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. Before we end this lesson, however, I would like for us to understand that God really was accomplishing His purpose in the lives of the people of that day. In the book of Numbers chapter fourteen the Lord is telling Moses that the people are sinful and should be removed from the

scene. To this Moses answered back to God that the Egyptians, *“have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.”* God says further in verse twenty one, *“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.”*

It is such a privilege that God has given to mankind to let us have the honor of being in His service and being a testimony of His grace in this world today. Moses was specially used of God in His day to reveal God’s presence and grace. Moses was successful because He was obedient and faithful to the call and the will of God in his life. If we compare Moses at the end of Exodus chapter eight to the Moses at the end of chapter six we can see a remarkable change in the life of this man of God. At the end of chapter six he is defeated, timid and distressed. At the end of chapter eight he is strong, brave and bold enough to be giving a warning to the king of Egypt to obey the God of Heaven. What brought this change in the servant of God? Obedience and faithfulness is what brought the change. Maybe you are a pastor and are reading this and you are about to give up because of the opposition you are facing. To you God is saying, *“Be faithful and obedient and let God give you the boldness that you need. He can and will work through you even in the most difficult circumstances. Perhaps there is a defeated child of God reading this lesson. Just remember God rewards obedience and is able to give even you the*

boldness to be used of God. Remain faithful to His cause. I wonder if perhaps there is a person who is reading to whom the Lord has been revealing Himself through the testimony of another believer. Have you truly trusted the Lord Jesus as your Savior? Do not be like Pharaoh and put it off one more day. Confess your sin to Him and receive the salvation that God is offering you.

To aid our learning:

1. Was Moses wrong to argue with God about how his first interview with Pharaoh went? Have you ever argued with God?
2. What two things does God expect of us today?
3. What kind of a hold does the world have on you? How is God breaking that hold?
4. What could a person learn about God as they observe your life?
5. Can you remember a time when you wish that you had exhibited more boldness for the Lord?
6. How is the Moses at the end of chapter 8 different from the Moses we read about at the end of chapter six?
7. How is Numbers 14:21 important to the story of the Exodus?