

# My Favorite Thing About EXODUS

Exodus 3:7-8

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My favorite thing about Exodus is a theme = "I AM who I AM". The entire book is about what God does on behalf of His people. Even though the people, both Egyptians and Israelites, were proud, pig-headed, fickle and faint hearted, He was not constrained by their expectations or skepticism. He rescued and sustained His people and He did it in a way only HE CAN.

The children of Jacob were enslaved in Egypt and they must have wondered if God had completely forgotten about them. Moses had been a good option --- 40 years ago, but he had committed murder and was hiding in the desert of Midian herding sheep .... A long way from the Nile.

The time had come and God showed up and He did so in a way that only He could – in a bush that was on fire but that did not burn. Not only that, He called a man that everyone had written off – the very old (80) former prince and murdering fugitive, Moses.

After much resistance, Moses agreed to go back to Egypt and be the conduit through which God would work. But from the very beginning things did not go well. Pharaoh denied Moses' request and he was the laughing stock of both Egyptian and Israelite.

Moses wanted instant success. He assumed that because God had commissioned him, he could walk into the throne room and Pharaoh would immediately submit, but that's not what happened, so Moses went to God, "Why did You send me here? I have gone before Pharaoh in Your name, but he just laughed at me and placed a heavier burden on the people AND YOU HAVEN'T DELIVERED THE PEOPLE"

God, not put off by Moses' frustration and accusation responded, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he shall let them go, and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land. I am the LORD... I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. <sup>6</sup> "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. <sup>7</sup> 'Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup> 'And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.'" {Exodus 6:1-8} And that is exactly what Yahweh – the "I AM" did.

**10 plagues** – Pharaoh put up a fierce fight and refused to back down – a finite man went to war against infinite God. He believed the gods of Egypt could stand up to anything the "insignificant" God of an enslaved people could throw at him.

The Ten Plagues		
Plague	Reference	Egyptian Deity
1. Blood	7:14-25	<i>Khnum</i> – guardian of the Nile <i>Hapi</i> – Spirit of the Nile <i>Osiris</i> – Nile is his blood
2. Frogs	8:1-15	<i>Hekhet/Heqt</i> – goddess with frog head, goddess of resurrection/fruitfulness
3. Lice	8:16-19	<i>Kheprer</i> – god of flies and the flying scarab (large beetle)
4. Fleas/insects	8:20-32	<i>Kheprer</i> – god of flies and the flying scarab (large beetle)
5. Pestilence on Livestock	9:1-7	<i>Hathor</i> – mother goddess (cow) <i>Apis</i> – bull of the god <i>Ptah</i> , fertility symbol <i>Mneuis</i> – holy bull from Heliopolis <i>Khnum</i> – ram headed god
6. Boils	9:8-12	<i>Sekhmet</i> – goddess with lion head, goddess of plagues, but could also heal <i>Imhotep</i> – physician god
7. Hail	9:13-35	<i>Nut</i> – sky goddess <i>Isis</i> – goddess of life <i>Seth</i> – storm god associated with strange and frightening events
8. Locust	10:1-20	<i>Senehem</i> – protector god against plagues <i>Serapia</i> – protector god against locust
9. Darkness	10:21-23	<i>Amon, Amon-Ra, Ra (Re), Aton, Horus</i> – different solar/celestial deities – king of gods
10. Death of Firstborn	11:4-7, 12:29-30	<i>Osiris</i> – god of life; Pharaoh himself <i>Bes</i> – protector god of the family

He was wrong. At any point Pharaoh could have chosen humility and released Israel. Several times he came close, but his pride and arrogance and stubbornness would not allow it and it wasn't until his country was destroyed and his first born was dead that he relented.... But only for a moment.

**Crossing the Red Sea** – Hemmed in by mountains and sea and angry Egyptians, Israel was in trouble:

- **Exodus 14:10-12** - ... they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. <sup>11</sup> Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? <sup>12</sup> "Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

*"Why", you might ask, "would God lead Israel to a place from which they could not escape?"* Because it was not about what the people could do or what Moses could do – it's about what **GOD WILL DO** and He was leading them through the educational process of learning to trust and depend on HIM – *Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent."* {Exodus 14:13-30}:

- The Cloud moved as a barrier between Israel and the Egyptians. Pillar of fire for Israel / pillar of darkness for Egyptians.
- Moses stretched out his rod over the sea and a strong east wind blew all night causing the water to divide - drying out the land and the Israelites walked on the dry land with a wall of water on either side of them. It was Moses' rod, but it was God's power.
- Disrupted the Egyptian army as they pursued Israel into the sea – confusion and mechanical failures.
- Moses stretched out his rod again and waters return to their place – destroying entire Egyptian army. It was Moses' rod, but it was God's power.

**Exodus 14:31 - And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.**

On the edge of the Red Sea, Israel worshipped and acknowledged their warrior God but about a minute later they forgot.

Let's think about this for a minute. God had singlehandedly dismantled Egypt's pantheon of gods and had just crushed the entire Egyptian army. He had proven His ability and desire to take care of His people, but did they trust Him as they made their way into the desert?

**The Water at Marah** – "Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. <sup>23</sup> And when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter .... **So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"** {Exodus 15:22-24}

**NO. THEY. DO. NOT!!!** This was **NOT** what they expected, but there was nothing they could do about it – nothing Moses could do about it.... Despite everything God had done so far on their behalf, the people were still of the mindset that He needed to prove Himself. They did not trust Him. They refused to depend on Him.

- **Exodus 15:25** - Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.

Yay! Yippee! God came through again!

**Mana** – After traveling for about 6 weeks, Israel was beginning to run out of food. Once again, they were in a dilemma that was beyond their ability to solve – **BUT**, they didn't trust. They didn't believe. They didn't depend. They complained. More than that, they wanted to go back to Egypt. Instead of learning to depend on God, they wanted to **GO BACK** to the land of their slavery! {see Exodus 16:2-3}

Once again God did that thing that only He could --- He provided food 6 days a week and for the next 40 years.

**Water... again** – Israel had now been on the road for many months. God had proven faithful at every turn, but had they started to depend on Him yet.... Even a little bit?

- **Exodus 17:1-6** - Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" <sup>3</sup> But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" <sup>4</sup> So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Once again, it was Moses' rod, but God's power.

God continued to do what only He could do - providing food, water and protection to 2 million people in one of the harshest environments on earth.

It was so important that the people remember the mighty acts of God on their behalf that in Moses' final speech, he said:

- **Deuteronomy 4:5-9** - See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>6</sup> Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." <sup>7</sup> What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? <sup>8</sup> And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? <sup>9</sup> Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. **Teach them to your children and to their children after them.** {Also see Nehemiah 9:9-23}

Why did God do all these things?

To make the clear point that He was not like any of the gods of Egypt or the idols His people would always be drawn to.

- **Deuteronomy 3:24** - O Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?
- **Isaiah 46:9** - Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.

To establish His trustworthiness and faithfulness.

- **Exodus 34:6** - And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...."
- **Deuteronomy 32:4** - He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.
- **Psalm 111:7-10** - The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. <sup>8</sup> They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness. <sup>9</sup> He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever-- holy and awesome is his name. <sup>10</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

To teach dependence on Him.

- **Deuteronomy 20:1** - When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, **do not be afraid of them**; for the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.
- **2 Kings 6:15-17** - Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" <sup>16</sup> So he answered, "**Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.**" <sup>17</sup> Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.
- **2 Chronicles 32:7-8** - **Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed** because of the king of Assyria, nor because of all the multitude which is with him; **for the one with us is greater than the one with him.** <sup>8</sup> "With him is *only* an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

The **"I AM"** of Exodus wants to be your **"I AM"** too, if you'll let Him. Lay hold of the One with unlimited power and depend on Him because He **IS** faithful and trustworthy:

- **Psalm 20:7** - Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
- **Isaiah 40:28-31** - Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. <sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary, and to *him who* lacks might He increases power. <sup>30</sup> Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, <sup>31</sup> Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up *with* wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.
- **Isaiah 41:10** - So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
- **Isaiah 55:10-11** - As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, <sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
- **Habakkuk 3:17-19** - Though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, *though* the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, <sup>18</sup> yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup> The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' *feet*, and makes me walk on my high places.