

Reformation Fellowship Notes • December 13, 2015
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Handout #10
Exodus 6:1-7:7

I. Introduction

- A. Moses had spoken to Pharaoh and asked him to let the Israelites go.
 - 1. Pharaoh harshly refused.
 - 2. Then Pharaoh made their conditions worse.
 - a) Pharaoh mistakenly thinks he is dealing with a rebellion born of laziness.
 - (1) More about this later
 - b) So he uses overwhelming force to address the “rebellion.”
 - 3. So the Israelite foremen blamed Moses for their suffering.
 - 4. Moses felt horrible; his actions had made matters worse.
 - a) His worst fear had come to pass.
 - 5. So he prayed to God.
 - a) What are you doing? Things have gotten worse, not better.
 - b) Why did you send me? Why am I tied up in this?
 - c) My actions have brought no deliverance, only greater harm.

II. Exodus 6:1

- A. God gives Moses a partial answer to his series of questions.
 - 1. God wants the exodus to happen under certain circumstances.
 - a) He wants Pharaoh to do what he does against his will.
 - (1) God wants the most powerful man in the world, even a god, to do his bidding even though Pharaoh is dead set against it.
 - b) So God is hardening Pharaoh’s opposition.
 - (1) Pharaoh has to be made stupid with stubbornness.
 - (2) So that God can pull out all the stops to free his people.
 - c) God is also getting the Israelites ready to leave.
 - (1) Life has to become unbearable before they will go.
 - (2) They need to be “driven” out.
 - d) God is polarizing both sides.

III. Exodus 6:2-6:9

- A. God gives Moses an overview of what he is doing.
 - 1. God identifies himself as Yahweh.
 - a) This phrase appears 4 times in this section.
 - (1) The phrase forms an inclusio for the speech.
 - b) This is how God had identified himself in the burning bush.
 - (1) He is that same God.
 - c) He is the same God who appeared to the patriarchs.
 - (1) They knew him as “God Almighty.”
 - (a) They did not know him as “Yahweh.”

- (b) They only knew him in part.
- (c) Because God did not fully reveal himself.
- (2) Now the Israelites will know him as YHWH.
 - (a) The God who fulfills his promises

“The people of the Orient used to attribute to each of their gods a variety of names and qualities, and they associated with each designation specific concepts and characteristics. In the Egyptian texts, for example, it is stated that a certain deity is accustomed to do one kind of work under such a name, another kind of word under a different appellation, and a third task under yet another title, and so forth. . . . With the name El Shaddai the Israelites were wont to associate the idea of the Divinity who rules over nature and bestows upon mankind fertility, as we can see from every verse in the Pentateuch, in which this name occurs. . . [Cassuto gives 4 examples]. This enables us to see the text before us clearly: I revealed Myself (God declares) to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in My aspect that finds expression in the name Shaddai, and I made them fruitful and multiplied them and gave them children and children’s children, but by the name YHWH, in my character as expressed by this designation, I was not known to them, that is, it was not given to them to recognize Me as One that fulfils promises, because the assurance with regard to the possession of the Land, which I had given them, I had not yet fulfilled. Although one of the attributes connected with the Tetragrammaton—the attribute of being with His creatures—was fulfilled also in the Patriarchs, yet in the implementation of the meaning of this name—namely, that He is the One who carries out His promises—God was not known to the Fathers of the nation.” (Cassuto pp. 78-79)

- (3) He is the one who made a covenant with them.
 - (a) Covenant is singular.
 - (i) It was one covenant restated to each.
 - (b) God promised to give them the land of Canaan.
 - (i) The place where the patriarchs only sojourned
- 2. God has reason to act.
 - a) God has heard the groaning of the Israelites.
 - (1) Their slavery
 - b) God has remembered his promise.
 - (1) He will fulfill it.
- B. Moses is told to take God’s message to the Israelites.
 - 1. I am Yahweh.
 - 2. Six verbs describe how God will benefit the Israelites:
 - a) Four verbs (plus one):
 - (1) Liberation—I will free you.
 - (a) Literally “bring you out,” but this verb is used to describe liberation.
 - (2) Removal—I will relocate you out of Egypt.
 - (a) God will them out of a hostile and foreign environment.
 - (3) Redemption—I will redeem you.
 - (a) This is the term related to nearest kin (*go’el*) who had a responsibility to save the property rights of a kinsman.
 - (i) Here God is figuratively referred to as the redeemer.

- (ii) Later the messianic expectations are associated with this term *ge'ulah*.
- (b) With a display of power
- (c) With judgment on Egypt
- (4) Alliance—I will take you, and I will be your God.
 - (a) This verb and this whole phrase is associated with marriage.
 - (i) This refers to Sinai, when Israel enters into a special relationship with God which is marriage-like.
 - (ii) By the way, the word covenant, *berit*, is also associated with marriage.
 - (b) I will be your God, and you will be my people.
 - (i) This verb just expands on the fourth verb.
 - (ii) You will know I am Yahweh, your God.
 - (iii) You will know I brought you out of Egypt.
- (5) These four verbs become the grounds for drinking four cups of wine at the Passover Seder. (Sarna, p. 32)
- b) Two more verbs:
 - (1) Wilderness guidance—I will bring.
 - (a) God will lead the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan.
 - (2) Possession—I will give.
 - (a) I will give you Canaan as a possession.
 - (b) As I promised to the patriarchs

3. I am Yahweh (inclusio).

C. Response of the people

1. Moses told to the people what God had said.
2. The Israelites did not listen to him.
3. The Israelites are being treated cruelly and are discouraged.
 - a) The three signs have been forgotten.
 - b) The belief that they had in chapter 4:31 is gone.
4. The Israelites have completely rejected Moses' leadership.

IV. Exodus 6:10-13

A. Moses has a crisis of confidence.

1. God gives Moses an assignment.
 - a) Tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt.
2. Moses does not want to do it.
 - a) Sons of Israel will not listen to me.
 - (1) This is just what Moses feared when God first spoke to him.
 - b) If the Israelites won't listen, it is even less likely that Pharaoh will listen.
 - (1) Because I am not sufficiently well-spoken to convince him.
 - (a) Moses thinks that eloquence is the only chance for success.
 - (i) He thinks that is the key to leadership.
 - (b) God knows that this is not really the problem.

- B. God sent Moses and Aaron in spite of Moses' fears.
 - a) They are to go to the Israelites.
 - b) They are to go to Pharaoh.
 - c) They are to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt.

V. Exodus 6:14-27

- A. At this point, the author gives us the genealogical information we need to place the main characters.
 - 1. It gives two generations of the first two sons of Jacob.
 - a) Levi was the third son.
 - b) This is just placing the tribe of Levi in its genealogical context.
 - 2. It locates Aaron and Moses in the genealogy.
 - a) This is one of the purposes of the genealogy.
 - 3. It is working toward two endpoints:
 - a) Korah and his sons;
 - b) Phineas, grandson of Aaron.
- B. Points of interest regarding the genealogy:
 - 1. It only give the ages of three people.
 - a) All direct ancestors of Aaron and Moses
 - b) I don't know why.
 - 2. It mentions that Shaul was from a Canaanite mother.
 - a) Simeon's line is not as pure as Levi's.
 - b) The families of Israel include a number of people who are not descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - 3. Amram marries his aunt.
 - a) Married his father's sister—Jocabed.
 - b) When the law was given, such a marriage was prohibited.
 - c) Amram and Jocabed had Moses and Aaron.
 - 4. No mention of Moses' children.
 - 5. Aaron married into ancestral line of David.
 - a) Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab.
 - (1) Elisheba's sister was Nashon—an ancestor of King David.
- C. What does this genealogy accomplish?
 - 1. It places Moses and Aaron in genealogical context.
 - a) This is the most important.
 - 2. It identifies the family that would later become the priestly family.
 - a) Aaron and his descendants
 - 3. It locates individuals who later were involved in rebellions.
 - a) Disobedience of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-7)
 - b) Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16:1-40)
 - (1) This was a major challenge to Moses' leadership.

- (a) This reminds the readers that Moses has not seen the last challenge to his authority.
- (b) Read Numbers 16:1-3.
- c) Sin of Peor (Numbers 25:1-18)
 - (1) This was an incident in which Phineas acted heroically to stop wicked behavior by the people of Israel.
 - (a) This reminds the readers that there are bright spots in this story that will pop up.

VI. Exodus 6:28-30

- A. This material is a repetition of 6:10-12.
 - 1. This is a repetition picking up the narrative after the genealogical digression.
 - 2. Earlier Moses was afraid the Israelites would not listen to him; now he is afraid that Pharaoh will not listen to him.
- B. Moses repeats concerns he raised earlier.
 - 1. Moses is unskilled in speech.
 - 2. Pharaoh will not listen.

VII. Exodus 7:1-7

- A. God responds to Moses' concerns.
 - 1. To address Moses' unskilled speech:
 - a) God establishes a chain of command that parallels his relationship to Pharaoh.
 - (1) God's chain of command: God→prophet→people
 - (2) Now the chain of command: Moses→Aaron→Pharaoh
 - (3) But Moses will speak to Aaron all that God tells him.
 - (4) Aaron will speak to Pharaoh like a prophet.
 - (5) This is a restatement of 4:16.
 - 2. To address Pharaoh's not listening:
 - a) God will harden Pharaoh's heart. (He will not listen.)
 - (1) God wants to set the stage for his signs and wonders.
 - (a) First occurrence of "signs and wonders"
 - (2) This will be the context for God to bring his people out of Egypt.
 - (a) Accompanied by great judgments
 - b) In the end, the Egyptians will know that Yahweh did this.
- B. Moses and Aaron did what they were supposed to do.

C. Ages at this time:

- a) Moses 80
- b) Aaron 83

VIII. Conclusion

A. Know your enemy.

- 1. Know your enemy, and know yourself.
 - a) Often repeated maxim
- 2. Pharaoh knew neither.
 - a) He did not even care to learn or understand the Israelites.
 - (1) He assumed that they were just lazy.
 - (a) So he doubled down on them.
 - (2) But they were being led by YHWH, God, to leave Egypt.
 - (a) Resistance was futile.
 - b) This was a blindness Pharaoh was given over to.
 - (1) It set the stage for God's dramatic acts to free his people.

B. Patience as a part of faith

- 1. Notice that there have been many delays in God doing what he said he would do.
 - a) These delays were tortuous for Moses.
 - (1) Caused him doubt God and doubt himself
- 2. But God's purposes are complex and multifaceted.
 - a) And God does not share with us what those are.
 - (1) So from our short-term perspective, life appears chaotic and out of control.
 - (2) But with time, it becomes clear that God is doing exactly what he said he would do.

C. Now God will act overtly in human history.

- 1. This is what the first 6 chapters of Exodus have been building toward.