Moses Confronts Pharaoh

Exodus 4:18 - 7:13

Bible Memory Verse

Exodus 6:7 NIV

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Bible Story

After the infamous encounter with Yahweh on Mount Horeb, Moses returned to his father-in-law Jethro to secure permission for him to leave for Egypt (remember when Jacob did not secure blessing from Laban, his wife's father, to leave?). After receiving Jethro's blessing, Moses packed up his family and left for Egypt.

The Lord speaks to Moses on the way, saying:

> *"When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But your refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son'" (Exodus 4:21-23).*

This pronouncement from the Lord foreshadows what will happen to Egypt and to its Pharaoh.

Moses and Aaron hook up in the desert at the mountain of God, and Moses fills Aaron in on all that God told him to do. When they arrived in Egypt they brought together all the elders of the Israelites and they told them everything that the Lord had told Moses. The miraculous signs were performed and they believed and worshipped Yahweh as a result.

Moses and Aaron make their debut performance with the King of Egypt—Pharaoh. They relayed the message the Lord gave them to say and Pharaoh balked. He said, "Who is the Lord? I don't know him. I'm not going to let you go. No way!" (Exodus 5:2). Moses and Aaron

repeated their request with the warning that plagues are coming. Pharaoh balked for a second time stating, “You are keeping the people from their work. No.”

Pharaoh was not happy with this distraction of the workers. He thought about what to do to crush this would-be uprising. And he got an idea. The Egyptians used to provide the Israelite slaves with straw to make bricks. There was a quota that the slaves had to meet of the amount of bricks to produce. Well, Pharaoh’s idea was to not provide straw for the slaves anymore, but they still had to meet the daily quota of bricks. This was next to impossible, but this was forced upon the Israelites and they came to loathe Moses and Aaron for they were the cause of this new command from Pharaoh. “May the Lord look upon you and judge you,” they said. “You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” (Exodus 5:21).

At this point Moses was a little confused as well. He asked the Lord why He brought this trouble upon those He wanted to save? The Lord responded with a promise of deliverance. “You will see what I will do to Pharaoh,” He said. “Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of their mighty hand he will drive them out of his country” (Exodus 6:1). Yahweh reminded Moses who He was and the covenant that He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses relayed this message from the Lord to the Israelites, but “they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage” (Exodus 6:9).

Moses was a little discouraged here as well. If the people would not listen to him as the messenger of the Lord, then why would Pharaoh? Moses began to feel what a prophet of the Lord felt like as a spokesman of the Lord (not many listen, but you must speak what the Lord says).

The Lord encouraged Moses. “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet” (Exodus 7:1). I will deliver the people of Israel from this cruel bondage and I will perform miraculous signs for them to remember this and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord. So Moses and Aaron obeyed the Lord and went back to Pharaoh. Moses was 80 years-old at this time and Aaron was 83 years-old.

When the duo went back to Pharaoh, he asked them to perform a sign. This Aaron was allowed to do by God’s power. He threw down the staff and it turned into a snake. Yet, the sorcerers and magicians of Pharaoh did the same thing. But Aaron’s snake swallowed up their snakes. “Yet Pharaoh’s heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said” (Exodus 7:13).

Thus the stage is set for the beginning of the Yahweh sanctioned plagues of Egypt. Those plagues which had not been before or have ever been seen since.

Life Application

As adults we know that this principle tends to be true more than we like it: Things get worse before they get better. When Moses went to Pharaoh to relay the message that he was to let the Israelites go, Pharaoh responded with cruel and harsh treatment of the Israelites. Things got worse for them before they got better. And the Israelites responded with bitterness and resentment and anger toward Moses for their condition. We often respond the same way to the Lord when situations get worse. I wonder if we should trust the Lord—and look at things from His perspective—even when it is tough. We know this to be true, but it is very difficult to live this way in the midst of "worse" circumstances in our lives.

I think the Lord is more interested in how we respond to situations in our life rather than protecting ourselves from bad things that happen. We are always going to experience some tough times, but will our reaction to them be holy and right, or unholy and wicked? Respond well.

Review Questions

1. Who did Moses meet up with before returning to Egypt? Aaron, his brother.
2. What was Pharaoh's response to Moses' request to "let God's people go"? NO WAY!
3. Pharaoh noticed that this Moses stuff was keeping people from their work. What did Pharaoh do to motivate the Israelite slaves? Pharaoh made the Israelites get their own straw in order to make bricks (Egyptians used to do this for them), and they were required to make the same amount of bricks even with more work to do.
4. How did the Israelites react? They were really mad at Moses!
5. When Aaron threw down the staff in front of Pharaoh, what happened to it? It turned into a snake.
6. After Pharaoh's magicians and sorcerers turned their staffs into snakes, what did Aaron's snake do? Ate the other snakes!
7. After this demonstration, did Pharaoh let the Israelites go? Nope.

Coloring Sheet

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