

## Through the Bible — Exodus 1-13 — 1/11/2023

### A note about Dates

- There is a debate among modern archaeologists and biblical scholars about when the Exodus occurred. One side of the debate believes that it happened in the 13th century BCE (around 1267 BCE), and the other side believes it happened in the 15th century BCE (around 1446 BCE).
- Throughout this teaching I am going to be using the early, 15th century dates. I do that because after extensive research I think it has the most weight, and I will share some of that evidence as we go.
- However, Biblical scholar and professor Charles Pfeiffer made the observation in 1963 that “the evidence for the historicity of the Exodus account is decisive, but the evidence for the specific date is still inconclusive.” “Exodus,” *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963) 333.
- When it comes down to it, there is still debate about when these events happened, so feel free to do the research and come to your own conclusions.

### Slavery - History and Context

- [TIMELINE] Exodus 1:8 -- Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph
- Joseph likely became the Vizier of Pharaoh during the early 14th Dynasty in Lower Egypt (the Delta region in the North). We don't know a lot about the 14th Dynasty. Most of the information we have is from a very incomplete and broken list of kings created during the time of Rameses 400 years later. The capital of the Delta region was likely Avaris (which would later become Pi-Rameses). The 14th Dynasty existed concurrently with the 13th Dynasty based in Memphis in Upper Egypt (to the South). Some of the contested rulers of the 14th Dynasty are commonly identified by Egyptologists as being of Canaanite (Semitic) descent.
- There is also a lot of overlap and a lack of clarity about how the 14th Dynasty and the Hyksos rule of the 15th Dynasty coincided. For a long time, the Hyksos (which means "rulers of foreign lands") were thought to have invaded and taken over the Delta region of Egypt, but based on more recent evidence, it appears that there was a movement of Semitic people from the Levant who gradually moved into the Delta region and began to exert power during the 13th Dynasty, in the same time as Joseph and his brothers.
- The Hyksos maintained control of Lower Egypt until the reigns of Kamose and his successor Ahmose in the 17th Dynasty.
- Egyptian history shows that Kamose's quest to reunite Upper and Lower Egypt was carried out with partial success. Significant territorial gains were made in subjugating the Hyksos. But it was his successor, Ahmose I, who finally overthrew the Hyksos dynasty around 1550 BCE, uniting all of Egypt under his rule and beginning the opulent New Kingdom period.

- After consolidating control over all Egypt, Pharaoh Ahmose initiated massive nationwide construction projects designed to reinvigorate Egyptian nationalism. At Avaris, he had a new palace constructed—the same location that would later be incorporated into an even larger city known as Pi-Ramesses (Exodus 1:11). These monumental construction efforts were continued by a series of succeeding pharaohs.
- The slavery of the Israelites could have taken place during this time. As the Semitic peoples in the Delta were overthrown they were enslaved and forced to work in the construction projects of Ahmose I and later pharaohs.
- We do have one possible archaeological find from this period that could support the thesis.
  - **[PPT - Berlin Inscription]** The Berlin Inscription might be the earliest reference to Israel in the Archaeological record. The inscription is now housed in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin. According to the Museum's records, the block, most likely part of a statue base, was acquired in 1913 by Ludwig Borchardt from an Egyptian merchant.
  - The inscription is comprised of three name rings superimposed on Western Asiatic prisoners, the rightmost of which is only partly preserved due to substantial damage, probably incurred when the block was removed from its original context. Above the heads of the prisoners is a partial band of hieroglyphs which reads '...one who is falling on his feet...'
  - The first two names are easily read—Ashkelon and Canaan. Two German scholars point out that the names Ashkelon and Canaan largely were written consonantly and thus are closer to Eighteenth Dynasty examples from the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, than to those from the times of Ramesses II and Merenptah.
  - **[Berlin inscription Israel Reconstruction]** The third name in the inscription presents difficulties because the right side of the inscription is broken off. A detailed examination of the relief, however, allowed scholars to reconstruct the name as *Y3-šr-il* ('Ishrael'), a name very close to Biblical *ysr'l* ('Israel'). Egyptian scribes were not consistent in their usage of the hieroglyphs for 'sh' and 's', and quite often interchanged them.
- **[Tomb of Rekhmire]** Another interesting archaeological find is the tomb of Rekhmire, the vizier of Pharaoh Thutmose III, the pharaoh who Moses probably ran away from. Rekhmire is noted for constructing a lavishly decorated tomb for himself containing lively, well preserved scenes of daily life during the Egyptian New Kingdom. Interestingly, one of those scenes includes images of slaves making bricks.

## Slavery

- The rabbis say that the attempts to reduce the Israelite population didn't work because the Israelite women were refused to be defeated.
- In the Talmud (b. Sotah 11b)
  - Rav Avira taught that the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt due to the merit of the righteous women that were in that generation. Each day they would draw pitchers that were half filled with water and half filled with fish. And they

would then place two pots on the fire, one pot of hot water and one pot of fish. And they would then take what they prepared to their husbands, to the field, and would bathe their husbands and anoint them with oil and feed them the fish and have relations with them between the sheepfolds.

- In this way the women of that generation kept the faith alive and helped their husbands endure the backbreaking labor they were forced to do.
- The text says that the Midwives "feared God". What does that mean?
  - When the Bible says someone Feared God, it means that they they had faith that He exists and that He punishes sin and rewards merit.
  - This will come up often!

## Moses' Birth

- Exodus 2:1–2 -- Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and gave birth to a son
- If you were to read this verse on its own you would think that Moses was the firstborn son of Amram and Yochebed. However, his sister Miriam was 7 years old and his brother Aaron was about 3 years old.
- The Midrash gives the following explanation:
  - When Pharaoh ordered the Israelite boys to be cast into the Nile, Amram said: “Shall an Israelite lie with his wife for nothing?” He immediately separated from Yochebed and divorced her. When the Israelites saw this action by Amram, who was the head of the Sanhedrin at the time, they also divorced their wives. Miriam told her father: “Father, your decree is harsher than that of Pharaoh! He only decreed against the males, but you have decreed against both the males and the females. It is doubtful whether the decree of the wicked Pharaoh will come to pass, but you are righteous, and so your decree will be fulfilled.” Amram immediately took back his wife, and following his lead, all the other Israelite men did the same. (Exodus Rabbah 1:13)
- The Egyptian Princess gave the boy the name "Moses" (מֹשֶׁה *Moshe*), “because I drew him out of the water.” This name is pure gold, from a historical-linguistic point of view. It is a word of Egyptian origin, and was a very common royal name-element during this period. Moses’s Egyptian name fits right alongside Egyptian royalty of precisely the same period, like Tuthmose (or Tuthmosis, “born of Tuth”); Ahmose; Amenmose; Ramose; Kamose; Wadjmose (etc, etc).
- Who was the Princess who took him out of the water? We obviously don't know for sure, but it is possible that she was Hatshepsut.
  - Hatshepsut was the daughter and only child of Thutmose I and his primary wife Ahmose. She was born around 1532, so she would have been around 6 years old when Moses was born.
  - I can totally imagine a 6 year old princess being more willing to take in a Hebrew baby than an older princess.
  - Also, Hatshepsut was known for being precocious and strong willed. When her husband died, his first male heir, Thutmose III, a son from another wife, was only

two years old. So, Hatshepsut became regent, and used her connection as the daughter of Thutmose I to declare herself to be Pharaoh. She ruled in that capacity for 21 years, and would have been able to protect her "son" Moses for a long time. However, if the mummy that is currently thought to be hers is actually hers, she apparently died from bone cancer contracted from a skin lotion, so at the end of her life she would have been frail and likely unable to protect Moses from the impact of his murder of the Egyptian guard.

- If Hatshepsut was indeed the princess, she would have had good reason to call her adopted child Moše—for her father's name was Thutmose, her husband's name was Thutmose, her mother's name was Ahmose, and her brother's names were Amenmose and Wadjmose.
- So, Moses was kept with his family under the protection of the Egyptian princess until he was weaned, which was likely not until he was about 3 years old. He would have grown up knowing that he was Hebrew and speaking their language in addition to Egyptian.
- Hebrews 11:24–25 tells us that Moses chose at some point in his early adulthood to live with the Israelites and endure the ill-treatment of slavery -- "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin."
- The Midrash says the same thing.
  - "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up... He went out unto his brethren... And [he] looked on their burdens." What does it mean, "And [he] looked?" For he would look upon their burdens and cry and say, "Woe is me for you; would that I could die for you, for there is no more difficult labor than the labor of brickmaking." And he would use his shoulders to assist each one of them. Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yose the Galilean said: If he saw a large burden on a small person and a small burden on a large person, or a man's burden on a woman and a woman's burden on a man, or an elderly man's burden on a young man and a young man's burden on an elderly man, he would leave aside his rank and go and right their burdens, and act as though he were assisting Pharaoh.
- However, despite his desire to help his people, he was still seen as an outsider. -- Exodus 2:14

## Escape to Midian

- Exodus 2:14-15 -- Then Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the matter has become known!" When Pharaoh heard about this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian.
- The plain meaning of the text is that Moses was afraid of Pharaoh and he fled because of that fear. However, the writer of the book of Hebrews says, "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." (Hebrews 11:27)
- The Midrash and many other stories agree with this traditional interpretation, that Moses did not flee because he was afraid of Pharaoh. So why did he flee?
- Rashi, a respected rabbi in France in the middle ages, says, "According to its midrashic interpretation, however, Moses said, "Surely the matter I was wondering about has been

revealed to me. I wondered why the Israelites are treated as if they were more sinful than all the seventy nations, being subjugated with hard labor as they are. Now the matter has become known to me. Indeed, I see that they deserve it." (Rashi on Exodus 2:14)

- So, according to the book of Hebrews, in keeping with the midrashic interpretation, Moses fled from Egypt, not fearing the king, but fearing God.
  - What does it mean to fear God? To have faith that He exists and that He punishes sin and rewards merit.
- He went to Midian [MAP]
- He met his wife by a well. Any single men in the room? Go find a well.

## Jethro/Midian

- Moses' father-in-law is an enigmatic figure. He is known by a few different names (The Lexham Bible Dictionary):
  - Jethro (Exod 3:1; 4:18; 18:1–2, 5–6, 9–10, 12)
  - Jether (Exod 4:18)
  - Reuel (“God’s friend”; Exod 2:18; Num 10:29)
  - Hobab (Num 10:29; Judg 4:11)
  - priest of Midian (Exod 2:16; 3:1; 18:1)
  - a Midianite (Num 10:29)
  - the Kenite (Judg 1:16; 4:11)
- Despite his name Reuel, he was not a believer in the one true God. He was a pagan priest, who apparently later became a convert (Exodus 18:11-12).
- During his stay in Midian, Moses may have been negatively influenced by his father-in-law, or at least he was struggling with the realization that he could not do anything for his people. He named his sons Gershom ("sojourner") and Eliezer ("God is my helper"), acknowledging God's role in protecting him, but he neglected to circumcise them, thus not acknowledging the covenant with Abraham.
- Moses is later described as the most humble man on the face of the earth. (Numbers 12:3). He did not learn that humility from Pharaoh, he learned it as a shepherd in the desert. He spent 40 years shepherding Jethro's sheep in the wilderness.

## Burning Bush

- Where is Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, also known as Mount Sinai?
- [MAP] There are two theories, but all the best evidence points to this mountain, [Jabal Mousa](#)
- The name Sinai comes from this story of a thorn bush (סִנְיָהּ, *seneh*).
- So, Moses sees the burning bush, he goes to take a look, and God calls to him from the bush.
- The Midrash says that the duplication of Moses' name here, as with the duplication with Abraham, Jacob, and Samuel, signifies love and encouragement.

- Moses answers God in the same way as other followers do in other passages: הִנְנִי, *hinneni*, "Here I am"
- Just like we saw with Abraham and Jacob, the place where God reveals himself is made holy, set apart. Holy ground is unlike other places, and wearing shoes is forbidden. Later, when the temple stood, everyone who entered would take off their shoes, and the priests even served barefoot.
- Note that God identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was not some other god, he was not the god of Jethro, he was the God of Moses' ancestors.
- Moses objected multiple times to God's call.
  - First Objection: Exodus 3:11 -- "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"
    - He had tried that before
    - God says, Okay, I'll go with you.
  - Second Objection: Exodus 3:13 -- "Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"
    - How can I convince the Israelites that I am not just a crazy person?
    - God says, Okay, here is the name you can use to prove you were sent by me. (we'll come back to the name in a minute)
  - Third Objection: Exodus 4:1 -- "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say?"
    - God gives him signs to show them.
  - Fourth Objection: Exodus 4:10 -- "I have never been eloquent... I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."
    - Exodus 4:11–12 -- Who has made the human mouth? ... I Myself will be with your mouth, and instruct you in what you are to say.
    - This seems to be a contradiction. Most of the Torah consists of Moses speaking, and he was definitely able to write well. The Maharal of Prague explained that Moses did not have a speech impediment, and he did not lack eloquence. Instead, he had grasped the truth too clearly and he was unable to communicate it, because spiritual truth can sometimes be difficult to communicate.
  - Fifth Objection: Exodus 4:13 -- Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will
    - He meant, send someone else except me!
    - At first Hashem was angry with Moses, but then He relented and agreed to sent Aaron. (4:14-15).
- Who does this remind you of?
  - Abraham! Just like Abraham negotiated with God about Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses negotiated with God about his mission.
  - For every objection he raised, God capitulated.

## The Name of God

- Okay, let's go back to the second objection.
- Exodus 3:13 -- "Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"
- [PPT] אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, *Ehyeh Asher Eyeh*, "I will be as I will be"
- This phrase indicates the immutable, unchangeable, timeless, and eternal nature of God.
- It is not a proper name, it is a description.
- The LXX and most English Bibles use the Septuagint's translation in the present tense, "I am that I am."
- This description of God means, "I do not change". That's something the Israelites needed to hear.
- [PPT] Exodus 3:15 -- God furthermore said to Moses, "This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: 'HaShem, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is the name for all generations to use to call upon Me.
- [PPT] In this verse, God uses His personal name, Y/H/V/H. This name is called the Tetragrammaton, or The Ineffable Name. Long before the days of Jesus the Jewish people sanctified, set apart, this personal name of God by removing it from common usage. The commandment not to take God's name in vain, which we will learn about next week was interpreted to mean that this name of God is separate, holy, and sacred, and should not be pronounced in casual conversation. In the days of Jesus, only the high priest would pronounce the name of God audibly, and he did that only on Yom Kippur. When he did, the worshipers in the Temple would prostrate themselves on the ground and say, "Blessed is the name of the glory of His kingdom."
- Even today we use circumlocutions, roundabout expressions, instead of using the Tetragrammaton. Your Bible likely has "The LORD" in all-caps or small-caps. In the Jewish community the practice is to say *HaShem* in common speech, and to use *Adonai*, which means "My Lord" in prayer and when reading the scriptures.
- This practice of not saying the name of God was kept by Jesus and by the disciples. They did not say God's name, and even used the common circumlocutions in the text of the Bible, for example "the Kingdom of Heaven" instead of "The Kingdom of God", and "Holy Spirit" instead of "Spirit of God".
- Jesus even instructed us to pray with a circumlocution: "Our Father who is in Heaven, let your name be sanctified."

## The Donkey

- Interesting tidbit: Exodus 4:20 does not say "a donkey", it says "the donkey" -- הַחֲמֹר, *hachamor*.
- There is a midrash in Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 31 that says that that is the same donkey that Abraham saddled to take Isaac to Mount Moriah, and the same one that the Messiah will ride when he returns:

- Zechariah 9:9 -- Behold, your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

## Encounter with the Angel

- Read Exodus 4:24-26
- Moses had excluded his own son Eliezer from the covenant of God with Israel by not obeying the command that he circumcise him.
- Genesis 17:14 -- But as for an uncircumcised male, one who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.
- "'You are a groom of blood"—because of the circumcision" is interpreted by Rashi as, "My bridegroom was on the point of being killed on account of the circumcision."
- After that encounter, Moses and his family met up with Aaron
  - According to Rashi, Moses sent his family back to live with Jethro for their own safety. We see Tziporah return in Exodus 18:2.

## Sidebar: Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?

- Two possibilities: Amenhotep II or Rameses II.
  - Explain the two theories
- **[PPT]** I think it was this guy, Amenhotep II. **[TIMELINE]** He was not the firstborn son of his father (so he would not have died in the 10th plague). Also, his heir, Thutmose IV, was not his firstborn son, as his firstborn died of an unknown cause.
- The timeline works out, too. He became Pharaoh around 1452 BCE, about 6 years before the Exodus, and about 5 years before Moses would have seen the burning bush.
  - Exodus 2:23 -- Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died.
- Amenhotep left several inscriptions touting his athletic skills while he was a leader of the army before his crowning. He claims to have been able to shoot an arrow through a copper target one palm thick, and that he was able to row his ship faster and farther than two hundred members of the navy could row theirs. He was, therefore, both a powerful king and a very self-centered person, just like we see in the Torah.
- Amenhotep II's First Campaign (1449 BCE): Battles in Syria. The king was well known for his physical prowess and is said to have single-handedly killed 7 rebel Princes at Kadesh, which successfully terminated his first Syrian campaign on a victorious note. After the campaign, the king ordered the bodies of the seven princes to be hung upside down on the prow of his ship.
- But didn't Pharaoh die in the Sea of Reeds? Not according to the text of Exodus, only according to Psalm 106:9–11. There is an interesting theory (<https://biblearchaeology.org/research/exodus-from-egypt/2455-amenhotep-ii-as-pharaoh-of-the-exodus>) where Professor William Shea speculates that another pharaoh

took over the reign of Amenhotep II and took on the same name to try to cover up the loss of the pharaoh who died in the Sea of Reeds while chasing a bunch of slaves.

- Amenhotep II's Second "First" Campaign (1445 BCE): A major rebellion in Syria by the vassal states of Naharin. He dispatched his army to the Levant to suppress it. The stele of victory carved after this campaign records no major battles. Was this uprising possibly a result of the Canaanites and others hearing about the decimation in Egypt? Possibly a foray into the Levant to find the escaped slaves?
- Amenhotep II's Third Campaign (1443 BCE): He only went as far as the Sea of Gallilee. He claims to have taken 101,128 slaves, possibly to replenish the workforce left by the Hebrews leaving?
- Thutmose IV was born to Amenhotep II and Tiaa, but was not actually the crown prince and Amenhotep II's chosen successor to the throne. [PPT - Dream Stele] He erected the Dream Stele between the front paws of the Great Sphinx of Giza, in which he tells about how, when he was out hunting he sat down to rest near the Great Sphinx and fell asleep. In his dream the sphinx told him that he would become Pharaoh even though he had not expected to become the ruler. He was not in line for it since he was not the crown prince at the time. In return for this reward he was to clear the sand away from around the sphinx.

## Initial Reactions to the Message

- Israel believed Moses and Aaron(Exodus 4:31)
- Pharaoh did not believe. He just got angry and decided to make the work of the Hebrews even more difficult.
- In doing so, he succeeded in making them lose faith, too.
- Not only did Pharaoh not believe, as a matter of fact, he didn't even know the name of HaShem. He would come to find out about that name, for sure, and he and his descendants.
- The Soleb Inscription [PPT]
  - At the end of the 15th century B.C., the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep III built a temple to honor the god Amun-Ra at Soleb in Nubia (modern-day northern Sudan). Within the temple area are a series of columns on which Amenhotep III listed the territories he claimed to have conquered. Each territory is listed by a relief of a prisoner with their hands tied behind their backs over an oval "name ring" identifying the land of the particular foe. The most interesting from a biblical perspective is a column drum that lists enemies from the "**the land of the Shasu (nomads) of HaShem**" (it uses the Tetragrammaton).
  - Given the other name rings nearby, the context would place this land in the Canaanite region. In addition, the prisoner is clearly portrayed as Semitic, rather than African-looking, as other prisoners in the list are portrayed. Two conclusions are almost universally accepted: this inscription clearly references HaShem in Egyptian hieroglyphics (the oldest such reference outside of the Bible), and that around 1400 B.C.E. Amenhotep III knew about the god HaShem. Moreover, it

would indicate an area in Canaan in the late 1400s B.C.E. inhabited by nomadic or semi-nomadic people who worship the god HaShem.

- After Pharaoh made things worse, Moses complains to HaShem, and Hashem says: **Read Exodus 6:2-5 [PPT]**
  - "but by My name, HaShem, I did not make Myself known to them" -- We know the Patriarchs used the name HaShem. This means that God revealed His name to the Patriarchs, but did not reveal the meaning of His name to them, אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה אֶהְיֶה, *Ehyeh Asher Eyeh*, "I will be as I will be"
  - His name refers to His eternal nature as the Covenant keeping God. Let's use that meaning of his name in this passage.
  - Paraphrase of Exodus 6:2–8 -- God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the *Covenant-keeping God*; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty (*El Shaddai*), but by My name, the *Covenant-keeping God*, I did not make Myself known to them. I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as strangers. Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the *Covenant-keeping God*, and I will bring you out from under the labors of the Egyptians, and I will rescue you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments. Then I will take you as My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the *Covenant-keeping God* your God, who brought you out from under the labors of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession; I am the *Covenant-keeping God*.'" "
- Rashi says that God was about to do a lot of things to make good on the promises He had made to the Patriarchs, and therefore he was about to manifest the meaning of his name, HaShem.

## The Four Cups

- The four cups of wine we drink at Passover memorialize these acts of salvation:
  - Cup 1: I will bring you out from under the labors of the Egyptians
  - Cup 2: I will rescue you from their bondage
  - Cup 3: I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments.
  - Cup 4: Then I will take you as My people, and I will be your God;
- So, the Midrash calls these cups "The Cup of Salvations," *Kos Yeshuot*
- This is the same cups that our Master raised during the last supper and "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1 Corinthians 11:25)
- Exodus 6:9 -- So Moses said this to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage.

- "Despondency" is actually "shortness of breath" or "shortness of spirit" in the Hebrew
- They suffered spiritual and physical exhaustion and lost their strength to hope.

## Prophets

- Now we get down to the meat of the story.
- Exodus 7:1 -- See, I have made you like a God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.
  - HaShem made Moses like a deity in Pharaoh's eyes so that Pharaoh would take him seriously.
- A Biblical prophet did not necessarily predict the future, work miracles, read minds, or tell fortunes. Instead, a biblical prophet spoke on behalf of HaShem. He delivered messages from HaShem.
- Moses heard directly from HaShem, and passed those messages along to Aaron to transmit.

## Pharaoh's Hard Heart

- Biblical Hebrew uses the word "heart" in the same way that we use the word "mind". The heart is the rational seat of the will and decision making, where thought and reasoning occur
- **[PPT]** There are three words used in the Hebrew text about Pharaoh's heart hardening:
  - Pharaoh's heart was strengthened (חֲזַק *chazak*), meaning that his resolve was reinforced. He rationalized his disobedience and reinforced his presuppositions.
  - Pharaoh's heart was weighted (כָּבֵד *kaved*), meaning that he was stubborn and hard to move. He was proud and arrogant-minded, concerned with the weight of his own dignity.
  - Pharaoh's heart was made difficult (קָשָׁה *kashah*), meaning that he was inflexible. He was uncooperative and contradicted God, refusing to listen to reason.
- Pharaoh hardened his own heart seven times before the Torah says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12)
- He hardened his heart during the first 5 plagues, but after that God strengthened his heart. He had a chance through the first 5 plagues, but after that it was necessary for God to show his own strength against the gods of Egypt and against Pharaoh. His reputation, the reputation of His own name that he had revealed to Pharaoh, was now on the line.

## Crocodiles and Magicians

- Interesting point: The Hebrew word for serpent is נָחָשׁ, *nachash*.
- In this story with Pharaoh and the magicians, though, the word used is not *nachash*, it is תַּנִּין, *tanin*, which translates as sea monster or crocodile.
- Maybe Hashem decided to crank things up a bit for Pharaoh?
- Also, the Torah does not name these magicians
- However, the Midrash Rabbah passes down the fictional names of Pharaoh's two chief sorcerers: Yochani and Mamre.
- These names transliterate through Greek into English as Jannes and Jambres.
- These two were mentioned in a plethora of Jewish sources, including the Talmud, the Targums, the apocrypha, and even in the Roman historian Pliny's book Natural History.
- Paul even references them: 2 Timothy 3:6–9
  - For among them are those who slip into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, worthless in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their foolishness will be obvious to all, just as was that also of Jannes and Jambres.

## Plagues

- The plagues were Hashem's way of revealing himself to the world. It was His debutante ball.
- Why did he do it this way?
  - Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD (Ex 7:5)
  - so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. (Ex 8:10)
  - in order that you may know that I, the LORD, am in the midst of the land (Ex 8:22)
  - in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name throughout the earth (Ex 9:16)
  - that you may tell in the presence of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, so that you may know that I am the LORD.” (Ex 10:2)
  - against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD (Ex 12:12)
  - I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD. (Ex 14:4)
- This was such a big deal that the Philistines were still talking about Hashem's destruction of Egypt 200 years later
  - 1 Samuel 4:8 -- Woe to us! Who will save us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness
- The plagues were attacks against the deities of Egypt -- Exodus 12:12 -- "and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments"

- Also, the plagues were meant to exhibit the supernatural power of God. If someone tries to explain them away due to natural causes, remember that these plagues were not normal events.
- [PPT] Let's look at the plagues briefly. You can read the text for more detail
  - Blood
    - Sorcerers were able to replicate this plague
    - *Khnum*, creator of water and life
    - *Ha'pi*, the Nile god
    - *Osiris*, god of the afterlife, whose bloodstream flowed as the Nile
    - Affected everyone, including the Israelites
  - Frogs
    - Sorcerers were able to replicate this plague
    - *Heqit*, the goddess of fruitfulness and childbirth who was symbolized by the frog totem
    - Affected everyone, including the Israelites
  - Gnats
    - Sorcerers could not replicate this plague
    - Exodus 8:19 -- Then the soothsayer priests said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.”
    - Affected everyone, including the Israelites
  - Swarms - עֲרֹב, *arov*
    - Swarms of what?
    - Rabbi Yehudah explains that it was a mixed assortment of wild animals
    - Rabbi Nechemiah, on the other hand, explains *arov* to have been swarms of hornets or mosquitoes.
    - The vast majority of the great commentators concur with Rabbi Yehudah, and explain that the plague of *arov* was a mixture of wild animals
    - Affected the Egyptians only
  - Pestilence
    - *Hathor* and *Apis*, the cow gods
    - Affected the Egyptians only
  - Boils
    - The sorcerers were unable to stand before Moses
    - Affected everyone, including the Israelites
  - Hail
    - *Nut*, the god of the heavens
    - *Set*, the god of wind and storms
    - The Hebrew here says “and the fire traveled earthward;” The rabbis say that this was a reversal of the natural behavior of fire, which strives to flow upwards.
    - Affected only the land of Egypt, not the area of Goshen. Some Egyptians feared God and brought their leftover livestock inside their homes.
  - Locusts
    - *Min*, who protected vegetation and crops

- *Isis*, goddess of life responsible for grain crops
- Affected only the land of Egypt
- Darkness
  - "even a darkness which may be felt." -- Egypt was enveloped in a thick and impenetrable veil of darkness which extinguished all lights kindled. The Egyptians were gripped with fear, and remained glued to their places wherever they stood or sat.
  - *Amun-Ra*, the sun god, and the most powerful of the gods of Egypt
  - Affected only the land of Egypt. In Goshen, where the children of Israel dwelt, there was light.
- Slaying of the Firstborn
  - God killed all first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, down to the first-born of a captive in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle.
  - *Anubis*, the god who ushered souls into the afterlife
  - Affected any house without blood on the doorposts

## Passover

- [PPT] We don't have time to cover the Passover in detail, but come to the Passover seder in April to learn more and to experience the Passover yourself.
- Exodus 12:2 -- This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year for you.
  - This month is called Nissan, also sometimes known as Aviv, the month of Springtime. It generally corresponds to the month of April on the Gregorian calendar.
  - The First day of the month is called Rosh Chodesh, the head of the month, and is considered a special holy day in the Jewish calendar.
- There are three main elements of Passover:

## Pesach:

- This is the Passover lamb. Deuteronomy 16:2-6 forbids offering the pesach sacrifice, or any other sacrifice outside of the Temple in Jerusalem, so there is no way to offer a pesach sacrifice today.
- The Pesach was a sacrifice, but not a sacrifice for sin. I hope we can dig more into the sacrifices in a few weeks when we study Leviticus. For now, it's important to know that not all sacrifices are for atonement for sins.
- The blood of the pesach was not used for atonement, it was used as a sign -- Exodus 12:13 -- "The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live"
- The pesach offering belongs to a category of offerings called peace offerings. Peace offerings are a type of sacrifice that can be eaten by the person offering it. Someone making a peace offering is usually allowed two days to finish eating all of it.

- However, a certain kind of peace offering, called a thanksgiving offering, has to be eaten on the day it was sacrificed. (The Biblical day starts at sundown.) The leftovers have to be burned the next morning.
- The pesach offering had the same restrictions, so it was a thanksgiving offering. It expressed gratitude and thanksgiving to Hashem for the salvation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
- Because the temple no longer stands today, the pesach offering is not offered. Instead, there is a special piece of matzah, unleavened bread, called the afikomen, that is set aside during the meal and is used as a reminder of the pesach lamb.

## Matzah

- Speaking of Matzah...
- Exodus 12:15 -- For seven days you shall eat [**unleavened bread** | *matzot*], but on the first day you shall remove [**leaven** | *se'or*] from your houses; for whoever eats [**what is leavened** | *chametz*] from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.
- "Leaven" as it is used here in the Torah is not the same as we might use it today.
- Leavening in the time of the Bible was done through a process similar to how we now make sourdough. Just allow the flour and water mixture to sit long enough and it will become leavened.
  - **Chametz** refers to products that are made of certain kinds of grains that have come in contact with water and have been allowed to sit without being cooked. It can apply to sandwich bread, and it can apply to spaghetti noodles. The word *chametz* is related to the Hebrew word meaning "to become sour, to ferment". It also means that liquids that come from the mixing of grains and water are considered chametz, including grain alcohol, beer, and vinegar.
  - **Se'or** is the inedible lump of starter that is used to get the sourdough process kickstarted. It does not, however, refer to yeast, like you might use in making bread. Yeast is just a unicellular fungus.
  - **Matzah** is bread that has not been allowed to rise. The flour and water are mixed, and the dough is cooked, all before 18 minutes have passed since the process started. Baking ends the biochemical processes that cause chametz to be created.
- Chametz in the torah symbolizes death and mortality. It's related to decomposition. The apostles say that se'or and chametz represent hypocrisy, boasting, sexual immorality, malice, wickedness, and false teaching.
- HaShem tells the Israelites that they have to rid their houses of chametz.
  - For seven days you shall eat *matzah*, but on the first day you shall remove *se'or* from your houses; for whoever eats *chametz* from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.
- That "cut off" (**כרת**, *karet*) is a big deal. That's excommunication, exclusion from the community, being cut off from God.

## Maror

- Maror is bitter herbs. It symbolizes the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt.
- In many homes, especially in the US, the bitter herb of choice is raw horseradish. Yes, it is strong.
- Today, since we are not in bondage and the Passover is a celebration and reminder of freedom, the bitterness of the horseradish is cut with a sweet mixture called *charoset*, usually made with fruits and nuts.

## The Importance of Passover

- In Exodus 12:14–20, God tells the people of Israel how important Passover is. **[READ IT]**
- Note that Hashem twice tells the Jewish people: "you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance" (verses 14 and 17). That phrase is חֻקַּת עוֹלָם, *chukat olam*, prescribed task that applies forever.
- In Exodus 12:42, he says again, "this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations."
- And in Exodus 12:47, "All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this."
- These obligations to keep the Passover, and to remove the *chametz* from the home, and to only eat *matzah* for seven days still apply to Jewish people today, even Jewish believers.
- We Gentiles are not obligated to keep the Passover, but we are encouraged to do so, as well.
- Passover is important for believers in Yeshua. Jesus used the Passover seder, the meal eaten on Passover, as a teaching aid to help us understand his sacrifice, and it is within the context of Passover that he said, "do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19)
- Paul encouraged the Gentile disciples in Corinth to celebrate the feast of Passover.
  - 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 -- Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven [*se'or*] leavens [*chametz*] the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven [*se'or*] so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened [*matzah*]. For Christ our Passover [*pesach lamb*] also has been sacrificed.  
**Therefore let's celebrate the feast**, not with old leaven [*se'or*], nor with the leaven [*se'or*] of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread [*matzah*] of sincerity and truth.
- Disciples of Jesus should be encouraged to celebrate Passover and to memorialize the Master's sacrifice as part of that celebration.

## Timelines

- **[TIMELINE]** Exodus 12:40–41 -- Now the time that the sons of Israel had lived in Egypt was 430 years. And at the end of 430 years, on this very day, all the multitudes of the LORD departed from the land of Egypt.
- Talk about the timeline and show the 430 years from the time of Abraham's covenant.

## Sanctification of the Firstborn

- In remembrance of how Hashem struck down the firstborn of Egypt, but spared the firstborn of Israel, He declared ownership over the firstborn males of Israel, both people and animals.
- We will look at this more in our study on Numbers 3 and 18.
- An important thing to catch here is that the Torah requires parents to consecrate their firstborn sons to Hashem by giving them to the priesthood. The parent was then given the opportunity to buy their those sons back (redeem him) from the priesthood. But in reality, the opportunity was really a requirement. It was obligatory for the parents to redeem their sons.

## The Way of the Philistines

- Exodus 13:17 -- Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, “The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.”
- **[Red Sea Crossing Map]** Talk about the Way of the Philistines, the battles that were ongoing during the time of Amenhotep II, and the fortresses of Egypt on the northeastern borders.
- We'll come back to the Philistines later, too. These Philistines are not the same Philistines that we see later during the time of the Judges. Those were interlopers.