

God is Always Faithful (Part 2)

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[0:00] I know where I left off last time, but I'm going back up just a little bit.

Under really point number one, God responds to his suffering people. And God does do that, doesn't he?

! He hears us. We cry and he hears us and he responds. We already looked at how the Hebrews cried out to God. We dealt with that last time. And started and really got most of the way through our looking at how God answers.

And his answer is Moses. Moses is the chosen deliverer. And all of this story is really, this portion of Scripture is so familiar to us.

But it's good to, in a systematic way, kind of put it before us and see the hand of God. Sometimes we miss that.

[1:14] We're familiar with a story and so familiar with it, especially the exciting parts of it and the drama of it, that somehow God is obscured behind all of that.

But when you put it all together, and especially when we get into the actual moving of God, His power through deliverance, we go through the plagues, we see God's hand in an amazing, amazing way.

So, Moses. He raises up Moses to be the chosen deliverer. And we looked at this last time. We started with his birth. And I said that his birth reveals the providence of God.

And then we got into the exile. His exile. And we have to try to remember that Scripture tells just a little bit different story than Cecil B. DeMille did in that great movie, The Ten Commandments.

So, stick with Scripture. We do have first it revealing the presumption of Moses. And then it reveals the preparation of God.

[2:22] We covered all this last time, but I won't put all this together. Then we have his call. And his call reveals the person and purpose of God.

The person and purpose of God. The person of God in that God is holy. He's a covenant keeper. He's all seeing and hearing and knowing. And all of these are spelled out for us here in chapter 3 in those verses.

Alright, so we talked about that last time, or at least we ran through that. It also reveals the purpose of God. Now, we're talking about his call. And in the call of Moses, in that very dramatic call, the Bible reveals, God reveals his purpose.

Purpose for this whole thing. And first, of course, God is going to deliver his people. He's going to deliver them out of the land of the Egyptians. That's a quote directly from chapter 3 and verse 8.

That's his first purpose. That's the obvious purpose. God's people are in bondage. They are in slavery. They are under the very severe and ruthless taskmasters.

[3:36] And they cry out to God. And God hears their cry. And so, he provides a deliverer. And it's Moses. And his purpose is, of course, through Moses to deliver them.

There's a second purpose. God will keep his covenant with Abraham and, quote, bring them unto a good land, the place of the Canaanites.

That's also his purpose. See, God's not just simply delivering Israel because they cried out to him. He is doing that. And God's gracious to do that.

Whether they see the larger picture or not. But God is delivering them because there is a larger picture here. And that larger picture is his plan of redemption. That is, of course, packaged all inseparable from the covenant he made with his chosen people.

Starting with Abraham. And the covenant, the promise, way back there in Genesis 17, was to bring them unto a good land, the place of the Canaanites. So, he's not just going to deliver them out of Egypt.

[4:48] And they let them go and live wherever they want to. There's a place he's taking them. And it's the promised land. And the land of the Canaanites. And so, this is his purpose.

And we have Moses' excuses. And these are famous, aren't they? There are five of them, as a matter of fact. Five excuses. Kind of in very quick succession.

And we're not going to read the Scriptures necessarily there tonight. I'm not going to take time to do that. But just kind of distill it down to the essence of each excuse.

And not just the essence of each excuse, but also God's answer. God's response. His excuses, though, of course, reveal the provision of God.

And that's what God does in response to our excuses. Because our excuses are generally, if not always, fueled by or spawned by our thought, our crazy thought, our self-centered thought, that we must do what God tells us to do in our own strength.

[6:03] And we just cannot ever, ever get away from that, it seems. And so, God responds to our excuses by revealing His provision.

And He certainly did that with Moses. Excuse number one, and I don't know if any of you have ever used this one. I'm not qualified. That's basically what Moses is saying there in chapter 3, verse 11.

God, You've called me. You've chosen me to go and be the deliverer of my people, Your people.

But I'm not qualified. And so, what's God's... Or Moses, rather, asked, Who am I?

That's quote what He asked. And that's the same as saying, I'm not the man. I'm not qualified. I'm not the right guy for the job. God's answer, What's important is who I am.

See how it takes the excuse, which is based upon a focus on self, all excuses are, and it takes it and focuses all of it on God.

[7:08] So, it doesn't make any difference who you are, Moses. All that matters is who I am. And I will be with thee. That's what He said in verse 12. Excuse number two, I don't have enough knowledge.

I don't know enough. And so, Moses said, Who are you? And you might be thinking, That doesn't sound like an excuse. But that's his excuse.

First, he said, Who am I? You know, meaning, I'm not qualified for this. And then the second excuse is, I don't have enough knowledge because I don't even know who you are.

At this point, he didn't, really. Didn't know who he was. Didn't know his name. And God's response, I am that I am.

Now, maybe, at first sight, or first thought, you might be thinking, Well, what kind of answer is that?

[8:08] Moses, in effect, said, God, what is your name? I don't know who you are. You've called me to this big task, but I lack some pretty important knowledge.

Chiefly, I don't know who you are. Who are you? And God answers. He says, I am that I am. Now, that may not seem like an answer that would suffice.

But when you understand what it is that God is saying there about himself, then you understand that God is the, not just the all-sufficient one, it's more than that.

He's the self-sufficient one. That is, God is. He was. He is. He is to come.

He is self-existent. He's not dependent upon man. He was not created. He had no beginning. He had no end. He doesn't need anything from any man. He has all strength, absolute knowledge.

[9:08] I am that I am. And that's the name for God. Now, over time, this evolved into a name in the Hebrew that, by the way, is unpronounceable.

Now, we pronounce it. We've kind of made a transliteration of it. But it is written in the Hebrew with four consonants.

Now, that's not unusual for Hebrew because Hebrew is a consonantal language. There aren't any vowels in Hebrew. Now, think about that. And so, in all Hebrews, based upon three, every word in Hebrew is based upon three consonants.

Yahweh, which is the sacred name for God, is four consonants. The tetragrammaton, it's called in the technical term, it's four consonants, no vowels.

And the vowels have to be added. You have to pronounce it. And it's Yahweh. Yahweh, and the word Yahweh, which if we were to pronounce it the way it was spelled, it would be kind of like hayah, hayah, something like that.

[10:22] But the word Yahweh is constructed like the phrase to be. It's very close to the to be verb in the Hebrew.

And so, that's what it means. I just am. I don't have any beginning. You can't define me in that way. I have no end. There's no way to identify me with a beginning or an end.

I am that I am. And this is what God shared the most. Now, how is that an answer to the excuse I don't have enough knowledge? Well, it's simply this.

I am. You don't have to worry about it. You don't have to question. You don't have to have any more information about me.

I am. I always have been. I am. Always will be. And I've called you to do a task. Excuse number three, it won't work. Now, I know you've never used such an excuse.

[11:29] Baptists are notorious for saying pastoring won't work. You know, sometimes we pastors we have these grand ideas come out and some newfangled thing maybe we read in a book somewhere or maybe we heard read in a magazine that such church down here in this city or that city is doing such and such and that's what we're going to do and so, you know, pastors we lay it out or youth ministers will do that too.

you know, and there's kind of this initial response well that sounds very grand but it won't work here. You know, it won't work or maybe closely akin to that would be we ain't never done it that way before.

That's not exactly the same excuse but it's pretty close. In fact, maybe that this excuse it won't work is really at the core of this idea we ain't never done it that way before.

Moses objected he said they will not believe me. So here's God he's sending Moses he said I want you to go to Egypt you're going to deliver my people is what I want you to say to them but Moses says why should they believe me?

they won't. That is it won't work God. I know you've got this plan and you've selected me but I'm here to tell you it won't work at least not with me.

[12:52] God's answer it is me they must believe and that I the Lord God hath appeared unto thee. Verse 5 and also in chapter 4 verses 2 through 9.

Alright, so it's not about Moses not about believing Him and how does that relate by the way to the supreme mandate that every one of us have been given and that is to share the gospel.

Have you ever been reluctant to give a testimony of your faith in Christ or to really just lay out the very plan of salvation from scripture with someone you know have you ever been reluctant to do that or excused yourself from doing it because you believe they won't believe me?

Maybe you're focused on yourself maybe you've not led a stellar life in the past and maybe the people you're sharing the gospel with know you and you're thinking why should they believe me? Moses did not have a great reputation when he went out of Egypt did he? He went out there and killed an Egyptian and buried his body didn't think anybody was looking but they were and so Moses has got to be thinking I don't have such great reputation and so why should they believe me?

[14:11] And God's simple answer is it's not you I want them to believe it's me they must believe and I'm going to be with you and I have appeared unto you excuse number four it's not my gift now obviously as a matter of fact we're going to get into this Sunday night as we continue in Romans chapter 12 obviously God gives to each one within the body of Christ grace gifts gifts of the spirit and there are many listed in scripture and I have an idea whether they're probably more than are even listed and everyone has gifts not everybody has all the gifts and one has one gift another has another and so forth and so God does gift us and we don't have all the gifts and so we can say there are some things that God has not called me to and gifted me to do but when

God calls you to do something you cannot then respond as Moses said well that's just not my thing you're going to have to get somebody else that's not what I like to do you know I don't really like to work in the nursery you know that's not my gift oh boy I don't know why I picked that one because I don't work in the nursery seems I'm usually busy when we need people in the nursery but that's my excuse anyway but a plethora of other things you know that that we might be asked to do you know and we're thinking well you're going to get somebody younger you know I've done my time and now someone else's time to get in there so you know that's just not my thing not the thing I need!

Moses said it's not my gift this is what he said he argued I'm slow of speech that's how Moses articulated it that's just Moses thing you know I don't have a you know I'm just not a great conversationalist or speaker and I've heard that one many times you know and grant you we're not all public speakers and so don't get too focused on Moses particular excuse because we're not all public speakers but if God has called you to something you cannot then respond to him you know

I'm not able to do it I don't I you know I'm slow speech or I don't have that talent or I don't whatever because God knows all about you and so God's response I've made your tongue!

God is saying in effect Moses you have to live by faith you have to live by faith if I've called you I'm not going to lay it all out for you here in the front end you know faith as they've said is like like film it develops better in the dark and sometimes we have to just step out in faith if God's called us to something well okay Lord I don't see how I you just got to take your focus off yourself and trust me I'm the one calling you and I'm the one that's going to enable you to do it and excuse number five I don't want to it's almost as if well here we'll get what Moses said send someone else that's what he said basically it's almost as if Moses run out of excuses I don't have a good only thing

I can say get somebody else would you please just send somebody else and I have really paraphrased God's response and it is Moses that's verse 14 I think God if you could say this in this sense that God had come to the end of his patience with Moses and Moses is not going to be able to dodge this calling he's not going to be able to get out of it and God's callings are not revocable and if he's called you to something he's going to get you there and we need to trust him all right then we have God's wonders and this is where we're going to begin to get into the plagues and we may get into the first few maybe tonight this hour begins in chapter 2 1 through or rather chapter 4 excuse me

[19:11] God's wonders chapter 4 verse 17 through chapter 7 and several points there that we can glean from these verses as kind of we are being led up to Moses actually performing the very or God performing through him the very first of the ten plagues that are going to come there are some precursors to it first God said to Moses thou shalt do wonders this is what he told Moses and literally said you're going to do my wonders well I've got it there don't I then Moses and Aaron you might remember the story that they experienced kind of a shaky start with Pharaoh and with their own people in chapter 4 going on into chapter 5 you remember what happened as a result Moses comes in demanding that Pharaoh release God's people and instead of doing that Pharaoh made their job harder and laid upon them an even bigger task not only were they going to make the bricks for his big city but now they're going to have to go out and get the straw also for the bricks and so added extra work and

Pharaoh says and by the way your quota of bricks is not going to change any so I'm not going to give you any slack that didn't say well with God's people either obviously here's this deliverer and boy you really have been successful Moses thanks a lot then God assured Moses and restated his covenant with the children of Israel and this is always God's method he keeps going back to his promises and reminding us that he is a covenant keeping God and so he restates that kind of laying again the foundation so they'll have the right perspective on what's happening here God summarizes his plan for Egypt that's in chapter 7 1 through 7 I'll read that a little bit later Then Moses performs an introductory miracle before Pharaoh's throne what did he do do you remember threw his rod down God commanded him to do that he had already demonstrated that to Moses before and now here is Pharaoh and he throws his rod down and turns into a snake and you know the Egyptian or the priests the magicians did the same didn't they threw down their rods they turned into snakes and of course a lot of people want to know how did they do that and my answer is really very simple I don't have any idea how they did that I think my idea and you can choose your own idea is that they were magicians alright and they did it through trickery and you'll see them even duplicating the blood of the first plague and you know but very shortly they get into the plagues and they reach a point where they cannot duplicate by trickery the sovereign work of God so I think it's a trick and if you don't like that one then I would suggest another one Satan can also has powers and he at least their powers that God allows him to have and so it can be some demonic work as well the Bible just doesn't tell us but they were able to duplicate that and so that was kind of an initial kind of introductory miracle before

Pharaoh before we get into the actual by the way that's the end of session one but we're not quite finished tonight let me move ahead here real quick the second session God reveals his sovereign power and I mean if you don't get anything out of the next several chapters the plagues if you don't get anything else you certainly get clearly displayed the awesome power of God in the plagues so that's what we're going to be looking at God reveals his sovereign power in these plagues and how does he do it first of all in judgment upon Egypt he displays his awesome power in his judgment upon Egypt now right off I'm introducing a feature a very key feature of the plagues that possibly maybe not you but some might have missed you know we think of the plagues in terms of the end

result that God's people were delivered but the plagues were intended for something else as well that was to judge

Egypt these pagans these unbelievers and ultimately to judge Pharaoh himself and his household because he would elevate himself to the position of God and so it's not just simply to deliver God's people but it's to judge Egypt so the purpose of the plagues is threefold first one which I've just mentioned is to judge Egypt but specifically to judge their gods their false gods and they had many many many that one little graphic is just a small sampling of how many gods they had of course you know they had images and drawings and pictures for all of them and so first of all God's revealing his sovereign power through the plagues the purpose of that was to judge

[25:16] Egypt's false gods and we're going to see that really very clearly God announced chapter 12 verse 12 against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment I am the Lord very clear statement of his purpose to judge the gods of Egypt Moses would later record in numbers 33:4 upon their gods also the Lord executed judgment so it's just really very clear isn't it that's God's purpose second second purpose to reveal Yahweh God as sovereign creator and sustainer now this might be I would venture to guess might be an aspect of the plagues that you may have never heard about there is a scheme a very progressive scheme a very deliberate scheme

God uses in the plagues that not only were used to judge the Egyptian gods but to reveal something about God as the sovereign creator and sustainer of his creation we're going to see that here Pharaoh arrogantly asked who is the Lord that I should obey him alright so God's going to reveal his sovereignty that he's the sovereign creator and sustainer of all life he's going to answer Pharaoh's question in these plagues Moses said to Pharaoh that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God this clear statement of purpose for the plagues not just to deliver God's people but as I've already said to judge Egypt's gods and to reveal that Yahweh is the one true God the only God he's the sovereign creator of all things and sustainer!

of all things so Moses is making that very clear Moses sang this song who is like unto thee O Lord among the gods all the implications mean all the false gods who's like you none that that's that's of course the answer and Jethro exclaimed to Moses in Exodus 18:11 now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods for in the thing therein they dealt proudly that is Egypt dealt proudly he was above them above them again a very clear statement of God's purpose to reveal himself as the one and only sovereign creator of all things and sustainer of all things the one true God the third purpose is to harden Pharaoh's wicked heart and to break his insolent will and that certainly describes

Pharaoh prior to the last plague in fact it really describes him even after he finally allowed God's people to go God said to Moses I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt chapter 7 verse 3 that's his purpose apostle Paul would later write Romans 9:17 for the scripture saith unto Pharaoh even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth that's a clear statement of purpose for the plagues given to us in the new testament by divine revelation all right so these are the three fold purposes here's another one under the third one forgot I had another one God assured Moses Pharaoh will surely thrust you out hence altogether I'm going to accomplish my purpose here all right now we get into the pattern of the plagues! well we might be able to get through the pattern of the plagues involves the five spheres of creation itself there is a very interesting very very very clear link between the plagues and the various aspects of creation they touched very clear link between the plagues and the days of creation it's a clear pattern that correlates remember God is revealing himself as the sovereign creator and it's not a stretch to understand this from the standpoint that all of Egypt's gods were attached in some way to the creation they trusted their gods all the way from the waters of the

[30:35] Nile to the sun that burned in the sky and everything in between they're all attached to water and plant life and animal life and so forth and so God the pattern of the plagues corresponds to the five spheres of creation the gods of Egypt represented an assault upon God's glory as sovereign creator and sustainer of all things how so I mean think about that for just a moment if the gods of Egypt represented an outright assault upon God's glory as sovereign creator and sustainer of all things how so well because they presumed well they were created by the people the people presumed that they did not need the one true God that they were trusting their own man made gods to sustain their life from the water they drank to the air they breathed to the sun that grew their crops and so forth so their gods were an assault an affront to

God's glory as the sovereign creator sustainer of all things for his judgments to fall upon all the gods of Egypt they must touch the water dust of the earth creatures of the dry land vegetation and finally the heavens above those are the five spheres of creation from water all the way to the heavenly bodies and his judgments will touch all of those God sent two plagues for each of the five spheres of creation to act as a witness of sovereignty remember what the Bible says in Deuteronomy 17 6 that two witnesses will legally confirm any claim and God is abiding by his own word and so he is going to send two plagues for each of the five spheres that equals ten and the two kind of serve as witnesses!

Witnesses to his sovereignty and so it's interesting the pattern the! progression of the plagues progression involves complete judgment from the Nile waters all the way to Pharaoh's throne complete judgment God's not going to miss a single base he's going to get them all and again the purpose is to bring judgment upon Egypt specifically upon their gods through the progression of the plagues God demonstrated his sovereign power over all the gods of Egypt from the least of them which would be the waters to the greatest of them the sun and the moon and we'll get to those by and by it's kind of like a crescendo like in a piece of music if you have some musical knowledge a crescendo starts small and gets bigger and that's how you could describe the progression of the plagues start small or the lesser gods all the way to the greatest of gods which would include Pharaoh's household by the way or you could visualize it as an escalator at the mall or some place here's the climactic ascension of the plagues and I'll end with this we can run through these very quickly again I'll have all this displayed for you in the notes that you can have we begin with the waters those are the first the first two plagues deal with the water blood first then the frogs aquatic life frogs then the earth and the dry land next two plagues deal with that lice and flies so those are judgments upon and as we're going to see the gods Egypt was trusting for the earth the gods that Egypt trusted for the water so we're starting with the water we move to the earth these are parallel the creation story creatures on the land that's the third step to plagues that will be used there the rain and boils we'll get to those we'll flesh all of these out as we look at them then we get to vegetation two more plagues hail that just totally destroys their crops and locusts whatever was left the locust got after the hail the locust got it and and then the final one would be the heavens the sun and the moon the least to the greatest and so in that the final two plagues we have the darkness and then the one that broke

Pharaoh's back and of course death of the first born and we're going to see how both of those plagues certainly we can see how darkness would be linked to the heavens blocking out light blocking out the sun but you might have a hard time seeing how death of the first born is related to the heavens we're going to see that and because and the answer there is in who Pharaoh and his wife and specifically their son who their son represents a heavenly body and this is judgment against the gods of these heavenly bodies by the way the gods of the heavens were the Pharaoh and his family and so the judgment is upon them so that's the ascension of the place