

Fighting Discouragement with Gospel Promises

Exodus 5:1-7:7

Recap

Let me recap where we've been. Moses, the former prince of Egypt, turned humble shepherd, meets the Great I AM in chapter 3. This Holy, Eternal, Self-Sufficient God - the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – commissions Moses to go to Pharaoh and bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. Moses then makes a series of excuses for not following God's plan. Moses asks, *Who am I?* and *What shall I say* and *What if they will not believe me?* After God answers each of these questions magnificently, Moses has two "Oh, my Lord moments." He says, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent" (4:10) and then his final attempt to shirk his assignment is "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else" (4:13).

After God gives Moses his companion, Aaron as he co-speaker, they return to Egypt and speak to the elders, and the elders believe, just as God said they would.

Now in chapters 5-6 they approach Pharaoh to fulfill their mission.

Relevance

What follows us is a very important pattern for all who attempt to obey God. Obedience to God's call doesn't mean everything will be easy. It doesn't mean there won't be hardships, suffering, and points in which you say, "**Why, Lord?**"

Notice after Moses meets with Pharaoh with no success, Moses says, "O Lord, **why** have you done evil to this people? **Why** did you ever send me?" (5:22). Moses follows God, but things seem to get worse!

What does this look like in our lives?

- Let's say you are young **Christian kid** in high school, and you set out follow Jesus. But some of the kids are tempting you to follow their sinful lifestyles. You refuse to engage. As a result, they label you a "holy roller," or a "geek," or just a "weird kid." When you follow God's Word, others mock you. That's a tough place to be.
- You are a **single lady** who desires to be married. You have certain standards based on Scripture for your husband. But others are trying to get you to lower your standards and go out with **Kip who's wealthy. But Kip is an unbeliever and a Yankees fan so you decline.** So, you are trying to follow God's Word, and

desire to marry a believer, yet you are left alone for another year on Valentines Day. That stinks doesn't it? Welcome to Egypt.

- You are **an employee** and you know that someone has broken a company policy, or worse, they've **broken the law**, and you think as a believer you should report it. When you do, you are labeled – you are known as a trouble-maker.
- As a parent, you try to **raise little Johnny** in the instruction of the Lord, but he rebels and turns away from God. You are trying to follow Scripture, but you are left with heartache. That's painful.
- You **adopt kids**, doing what you think you should and then lose your job! What discouragement that creates.
- Or, a story I heard this week. A **young kid was playing baseball** and they thought he broke his arm, only to discover that he had a tumor. This immediately followed the conversion of several of his family members, including his grandpa. So, there was much joy and celebration over their new life, and then cancer. Devastating.
- You follow God's call to **pastor a church**. You preach the Bible, but people protest, label you, and seek to fire you. Or you preach the Bible faithfully, and you don't see great growth. Or, you go to your first church, things go extremely well, and then the most devastating hurricane in the history of the US hits you, and you lose over half of your congregation! That may leave you saying, "Why did you ever send me, Lord?"
- Or, you and your family leave it all for **the mission field**. When you get there, your wife contracts a **rare disease**. Maybe you would wonder, "Why Lord? Didn't you send us here?"

Obedying God isn't a pain free life. It doesn't mean you will be popular. It doesn't mean you will be immune from common problems in a fallen world, like cancer. It doesn't mean you won't encounter serious spiritual warfare. You can expect problems.

So the question is **not** "Will we ever have moments of discouragement?" The question **is**:

"How can I deal with deep discouragement?"

"When I seek to live out God's Word, and things don't work out the way I expected it, where do I go for help, strength, and sanity?"

That's why **chapters 5-6** are so gloriously helpful. This practical, real-life question is answered.

Here's the big Idea:
We fight discouragement with Gospel Promises.

Moses is in the center of God's will. Yet, he encounters serious opposition. So after a period of grief and questioning, God speaks to Moses in **chapter 6** providing him awesome promises.

One key section in this passage, indeed in all of Exodus is **6:6-8**, where God gives Moses a number of "I will promises." These *promises are about God's amazing grace in salvation.*

Gospel for Christians

The gospel is not just for unbelievers. It is for unbelievers, but it also for those who are Christians. Paul wrote **Romans 8**, which is arguably the most powerful chapter in the Bible about God's promises of redemption, in the context of human suffering.

You fight discouragement, despair, and suffering with promises. Paul ends Romans by saying, "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my Gospel" (**16:25**).

God strengthens us by the gospel. You can't go anywhere else to get the type of strength you need.

So let's dive in. Notice "Discouragement" (chapter 5). "Gospel Promises" (6:1-7:7). And "Courageous Obedience in 7:8-13.

1. Discouragement (5:1-22)

A. Moses Speaks to Pharaoh (1-3)

1: Moses and Aaron do as God says. They ask for a "feast in the wilderness." Their initial request is modest, reflecting Near Eastern approach although more was being sought (see NAC). More importantly, they are following God's call in Exodus 3:18.

2: Pharaoh asks the question, "Who is the Lord?" The book of Exodus answers this question! "I Am the Lord" is a major theme in the book. God does what he does so that "they may know that I am Yahweh" (6:7; 7:5).

Pharaoh's question shows not only an acknowledgement problem; it also shows an attitude problem. The next question says: "*that I should obey his voice?*" in other words, he asks, "Who is the Lord that I should take him seriously?" He is about to learn who the Lord is and that he should be listening!

3: Moses and Aaron persist. They say, "God has met with us." They then make their plea asking that they may "make a sacrifice." Again, the language of worship is used. They also add "unless he strike us with pestilence." It seems that they are saying something like if he doesn't let the people go then the consequences would be horrific for both Egypt and Israel. Of course, plagues do fall on Egypt.

Here, Pharaoh receives his warning! He refuses to obey the Lord's word!

Notice the **boldness** of Moses and Aaron. The phrase, "God has met with us," reminds us of Acts.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

Where did this boldness come from? It came from being w Jesus.

*By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he **endured as seeing him who is invisible**.*

Heb. 11:27

- We endure by relying on him who is invisible.
- The early church gathered for prayer and as a result they "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word with all boldness" (**Acts 4:31**).

Unfortunately for Moses, after he speaks boldly and the results are not what he expected, he gets dejected. And the Lord has to keep reminding him of the promises.

B. The King Refuses to Listen (4-9)

4-5: Pharaoh will not listen. Instead, he thinks this whole thing is a distraction. And he is maddened by the whole proposal.

6-8: Pharaoh decides to make things worse for Israel. He now says that they (1) can have no straw (v. 7); (2) must produce the same number of bricks. Pharaoh says you aren't working hard enough, so

let me give you more to do, and maybe you won't have these idealistic dreams of going into the wilderness to worship.

9: He tells the taskmasters and the foremen to make it worse and not to listen to their cries.

C. An Awful Situation: Bricks without Straw (10-14)

Israel was already in bondage. They were slaves. They had built great cities, and worked on agricultural projects. They were oppressed socially, economically and politically. Now it goes from bad to worse. It reminds me of the opening scene in *Les Mis*, where the prisoners are singing in their hardship “Look down, look down, and see the beggars at your feet // Look down and show some mercy if you can.” The people were in need of mercy.

10-13: The slave drivers do as Pharaoh demanded. The people are scattered throughout Egypt to find straw for bricks. Pharaoh says, “You want to go somewhere?” Fine. “Go find straw.” The

Egyptians used bricks for all kinds of things, so the requirement was great. Ancient historical pictures display great brick making in Egypt.

14: Now the foremen (apparently Israelites in *middle-management*) are beaten because the people have not supplied as many bricks as before. Can you imagine this lifestyle? It is super hot. You are out there in temperatures often over 100; with a little apron on; no hat; few water breaks; working in muck all day. Many surely died of exhaustion, dehydration, heat strokes.

- We have a picture of slavery. This is what being enslaved is like. Many today are enslaved physically, being exploited and abused.
- Others are enslaved to Egypt “inside of them” (cf., **Acts 7:39**). Sin has become their master (cf., John 8:34; Rom. 6:16). What everyone needs is a Savior.

D. You Have Made Us Stink (15-21)

15-19: The foremen turn to Pharaoh in protest because they don't understand why they are being beaten! They are caught in the middle. Perhaps they thought the slaves should be beaten instead of them. Pharaoh refuses to listen, and the foremen are in despair.

- You can see why the foremen would go to Pharaoh but it seems like they should have instead turned to God for

deliverance. It was His face they should have been seeking. Not the one who put them in bondage in the first place.

Do you take your problems to God in prayer? Cry out like the psalmist: "Give ear oh Lord to my prayer, listen to my plea for grace, in the day of trouble I call upon you, for you answer me." (Ps 86:6-7).

20-21: Not only do they go to Pharaoh instead of God, they also turn on their leaders. They say, "You **have** made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh." The beat up foremen are looking to blame someone, so why not Moses and Aaron?

This is a common theme throughout the Pentateuch. Israel complains against leadership. Ultimately, the people will do the same **to Jesus**, the greater prophet, and crucify him (see Acts 7).

E. Moses Cries Out (22)

22: Moses now cries out "why?" to God. He says, God I have done as you have said, yet things are actually worse! Why, Oh Lord! Now, Moses is rightly disappointed, but he shouldn't have been shocked for God told him that Pharaoh would not listen (**3:19; 4:21**). Nevertheless, he is discouraged because the situation is just awful.

He is beginning to question **(1)** God's **goodness** ("evil"); **(2)** God's **purpose** ("why did you send me?"); **(3)** God's **actions** ("you have not delivered your people at all").

Moses reminds us of ... us. Moses was an imperfect sinner, like us. He was a man in desperate need of God's mercy and grace, like us. He was at a crisis of belief.

On a positive note, at least **Moses is addressing God**. He is crying out *to God*. It is honest, groaning. Moses is showing us a picture of the prayers in the Psalms, as people **lament**, and cry out. As in Ps. 77, where the Psalmist is questioning God. It is okay to cry out with questions.

Even Jesus on the cross, cries out, "Why have you forsaken me?" (**Matt. 27:46**).

These questions are **not sinful**. They just need to be **humble, honest, and faithful**. Ask God your questions! **Don't ask sinfully or rebelliously?** And remember, God doesn't have to answer our questions (he never answered all of Job's!), but he **does hear them**.

So that's what chapter five is about. Deep discouragement, pain, trouble, questions, harsh slavery, a stinking mess. Moses was following God, but things actually got worse. **How do you fight this discouragement?** You fight it with promises. **That's what chapter six is about.**

2. Gospel Promises (6:1-7:7)

God gives Moses **three awesome reminders**. These truths are timeless. We need to dwell on them daily as well. The third one has five parts.

A. God is in Control (6:1)

1: God assures Moses that there is only one sovereign, and it's not the man with the snake on his head! God never answers the question "why," he simply reminds him that his plan will not be thwarted. He reminds Moses that he is in control.

Many believers believe in God's sovereignty *theologically* but practically they are emotional train wrecks! They haven't worked this truth down deep.

We see here that God is working all things for his people's good. We don't always know **what he** is doing. The Israelites were enslaved for **400 years!** Should Moses think that God should act immediately? God is always **using circumstances** to shape us into his Son's image. God could have sizzled Pharaoh any time. But he has his own ways of doing things in his own time.

“when you don't understand, when you can't see his plan, when you can't trace his hand, trust his heart.”

This story reminds me of my dad. Some of you have heard of his conversion. I prayed and prayed for my dad, who had never confessed Christ. Then at age 59, after a period of reading and searching, my dad stood up in front of his congregation and said, “I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God.” Then I had the privilege of baptizing him. It was one of the greatest moments of my life.

He begins attending small group, going over to the pastors house, reading Christian books. After about 6 months, he said, “I've read the whole Bible.” Really growing.

Then, a few months later, he calls me, with obvious concern in his voice, and says that his factory is closing down. My dad worked in this factory my whole life – 34 years. (He only missed two days of work this whole time). He was devastated. In small town without many good paying jobs, the whole town was devastated. The management decided to move the factory, taking virtually no one with them, despite the fact that the factory large profits. But in this other state, they could make more money.

My dad was concerned not just for himself, he was two years from retiring, but also for everyone else (he just got on Facebook to keep up). He was one of the senior guys in the plant, and many of the workers played ball with me.

When we were visiting during Thanksgiving, he was telling me what he did on that day he received the news. He said, “I went outside, I sat on the porch, and I opened the Bible to Psalms, and I read **Psalm 55:22**: “Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.” He said, “**That verse hit me right between the eyes. I knew it was going to be okay.**

Six months earlier, my dad would have never done this, or said this. God changed his life – **but then he faced a difficulty he hadn’t faced in 33 years!** What truth comforted him? God is in control. He sustains us. And the verse says, “Cast your burden on him.” God reminds Moses that he is in control.

B. God Keeps His Covenant (2-5)

2-5: Notice how God keeps repeating these things. It is that whole idea, “preach the Gospel to yourself everyday.” Once again, God mentions these two great “motives of redemption” – (1) his covenant, (2) his knowledge of the oppressed (see also 2:23-25; 3:6-7).

God says that he will keep his unbreakable promise of salvation. The Psalmist says, “God remembers his covenant forever.” (**105:8**)

Ultimately, God kept his covenant in Jesus. In Christ, we are part of an eternal covenant, established by Christ’s own blood.

Find rest in that in your discouraging times. We have a Savior who died, rose, and ascended to the Father, and now intercedes for us. He is forever faithful to his people.

C. God Saves (6:6-7:7)

Notice these “**I will statements**” in 6:6-8 and 7:3-4 that can be grouped into **five gospel words**, that is, **five words of salvation**. I want to pair these five gospel words with New Testament references.

What I love about Exodus is that you learn these ideas in the NT, but Exodus is *so visual*. We are watching theology.

God is going to do all of this – all he asks his people to do is “know that he is the Lord.” Salvation is all of God.

Word #1: Liberation “I will bring you out from the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them” (6:6a)

This is a picture of salvation. God is going to bring his people out of slavery. He is going to deliver them.

- What they are liberated from: **bondage**.
- Who liberated them: **God**. The promise keeping God.
- Who they were liberated through: **A Mediator** (Moses)
- How they were liberated: **by grace through faith**. They didn’t do a thing to earn it.
- What they were liberated for: **Worship**. When he delivers them, they worship. They celebrate (Exodus 15).

Of course these gospel truths are taught in the NT. In Exodus we see a picture of it. For instance, in the **NT**, Paul says, “Jesus gave himself for our sins **to deliver** us from the present evil age” (**Gal. 1:4**).

- What we are set free from: spiritual slavery (idolatry), our inability to keep the law, ourselves, futility, and death.
- What we are set free by: *grace through faith*
- Who sets us free: *God through a mediator, Jesus Christ*.
- What we’re set free for: a life of worship and witness.

There is an “already not yet” dimension to our salvation. Israel was looking forward to these promises. For us, in one sense they have happened to us already, but we also look forward to the “not yet” when Jesus will set us free *for good and forever* from this age.

Paul said, For I consider the sufferings of this world, not worth comparing next to the glory that is to be revealed to us” (**Rom. 8:18**).

App: God gives us a word that “you will suffer in this life.” “Don’t be surprised when you get cancer.” “Don’t be surprised, when you lose your job.” What God has promised us is resurrection from the dead. We are set free, but we still dwell in this body in a fallen world, and we are awaiting ultimate, *final liberty*.

Word #2: Redemption “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment” (6:6b)

What a gospel word this is! Tim Keller says, “There is no more basic word in the Bible than redemption” (“Getting Out,” Sermon).

With the exception of Jacob’s blessing in Gen. 48:16 this is the first occasion that the Bible uses the language of redemption (Wright, 266). Later it is also used in Exodus 15:13, where they are singing of God’s redemption.

In both cases it is the Hebrew word “gaal.” When a person is the subject of this verb (as God is here) the word is “goel.” God is “redeemer.” The word carries the idea of “purchasing” but **there’s more** to it than that. For “redeem” in Hebrew often communicates that there is a privilege or the duty of a close relative.

The goel was a member of the wider family who acted to protect the family when they were in some particular types of situations. The goel was the **“kinsmen protector”** or **“family champion”** (Wright, 266). These situations included:

- **Murder:** if a member of the family were murdered, the goel would see to it that the guilty person was brought to **justice** (cf., Num 35).
- **Money:** If a kinsmen fell into debt and was forced to sell the land, a better off kinsmen (a kinsmen protector) would take the responsibility to **purchase the land** in order to **keep it in the family**. If the situation was so bad that the debtor had to offer himself and family into bonded labor, the kinsmen protector would act to **rescue them from servitude** (cf., Lev. 25).
- **Male Heirs:** If a man **died without a son** to inherit his name and property, it was the kinsmen’s job to take the deceased man’s widow and seek to raise an heir. **This means you would have a vested interest in who your brother was marrying!** (cf. Deut. 25:5-10; Ruth 3:12-13; 4:1-12). Paul may have had this in mind when he said that a widow is “free to marry whomever she wishes.” (1 Cor 7:39). Perhaps some thought the leverage law still applied.

In this case God is the “goel,” the family protector, the family champion! God is an eligible “Goel!” His going to “gaal” his people – redeem them.

God is coming to the aid of his people.

- His relatives are in **bonded labor**, spiritual slavery, and He is coming to defend, intervene, avenge and rescue them.

- His people are also being abused, and he is coming to **avenge**. He's coming to redeem them with justice. The text says, "I am coming with an outstretched arm, with great acts of judgment."
- He is also coming to ensure that the ultimate family **heir** is carried on! Ultimately, this people will bring forth Messiah.

Bring this to the **NT**. In Galatians Paul puts redemption and the family dimension of salvation (adoption) together (read **Gal. 4:4-7**).

Application: In your discouragement, remember that you have a Redeemer! Jesus, your kinsmen protector, your family champion, has intervened in your misery. He has paid the price to relieve you from your greatest payment, from your desperate situation.

- And he paid it with his own blood, with his own life.
- And now, we will sit at his table. And live in his place forever. Soon, we will now the riches of our redemption. When our Goel, Jesus, comes again in majesty to complete the final act of redemption, all of our problems that we encountered here will seem as nothing.

Word #3: Adoption "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of Egypt" (7)

This verse shows us the familial nature of salvation. It reminds us of the doctrine of "adoption." God is going to take Israel as his people. He has already called them his "son" (4:22). This is a display of God's matchless love. Paul said of God's choice of Israel, "to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises." (**Rom. 9:4**).

In redemption, God has rescued us from a dreadful situation, but there's more! Through adoption, God brings us into his family also. **J.I. Packer** says, "**Adoption is the highest privilege the gospel offers.**" **This is privilege!** "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God; and so we are" (1 Jn 3:1).

My friend Dennis Omondi and his bride live in Kenya. Their adoption story was recently on MSNBC. They told the story of Benjamin. Benjamin was thrown into an 18 feet down into a hole in a Nairobi slum, in what was a public toilet. A passing stranger heard his cry and spent two hours digging down into the muck to rescue him. This person said that they thought the baby would die.

Benjamin was taken in by New Life Home Trust. Benjamin was rescued in his cry, and placed into the family of Dennis and Allison.

What a picture of what God did for Israel. What a picture of what he has done for us! We were in a pit, are now in the arms of the Father. "who redeemed your life from the pit and crowned you with steadfast love and mercy" (Ps 103:4). "He drew me out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog and set my feet upon a rock ... He put a new song in my heart." (Ps 40:2-3).

Meditate on your sonship daily. God has brought you out of a pit and placed you in his eternal family. Bless his holy name.

Word #4: Inheritance "I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac... Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession" (8)

God is promising his people here that they will have a possession. This promise was first mentioned to Abraham (Gen. 12:7). Later in the book of Joshua we see the people entering, conquering, and inhabiting the land.

These people had nothing. They were slaves in Egypt. But God is going to give them an inheritance. He is going to give them the promise land – all by his grace. They didn't earn it.

The NT draws on this idea of inheriting the promise land, to the believers' hope in the new heavens and new earth.

NT: By Jesus' resurrection, we have "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you" (1 **Pet. 1:4**).

Peter says this inheritance is **awesome** (imperishable, undefiled, and unfading) and **assured** (kept in heaven for you).

Jesus told us "the meek will inherit the earth." One reason we should live generously in this life, and not covet, is that our heaven is later. Don't covet because you own the earth.

Application: Meditate on the gospel. Consider the hope of 1 Peter 1. Just **twenty-four hours** before Bonhoeffer was executed, He gathered some prisoners & held a worship service. He chose as one of his texts 1 Pet. 1:3-ff., (Metaxes, *Bonhoeffer*). What an example for all of us for meditating on the gospel in our dark hours.

John Newton said that the way the Christian may endure trials is by considering the doctrine of glorification, which includes inheritance. Newton said the Christian should not complain, murmur, despair, in light of all that is coming! **He said imagine a man who inherited a**

really large estate [say worth millions], and he had to go NY city to get it. As he journeyed there his carriage broke down [Newton's day!], leaving him to walk a mile the rest of the way. He said can you imagine that man saying "My carriage is broken, my carriage is broken" kicking and complaining in disgust when he has only a mile to go to receive a million? Christian, we only have a few miles to go! (Piper, Children, Heirs and Fellow Sufferers).

Summary of 4 Words: Consider this great salvation: Liberation, Redemption, Adoption, and Inheritance. God made all these promises saying, "I will save you." And he has sent his Son to do everything we need to be saved. Paul says, "All the promises of God find their "Yes" in him" (2 Cor. 1:20a).

"Know that I am the Lord" (7). All that is left for Israel to know and trust the Lord as his Savior. Have you done this?

9: Despite these amazing promises, Moses and the people **struggle to believe (6:9-13; 26-30)**. The people of Israel were unmoved. It says it was because of their **"broken spirit"** and **"harsh slavery."** We can sympathize with them.

Ryken says, **"They were so broken that they would not listen to the promise of freedom"** (176).

Commenting on this passage, Spurgeon said, **"some cannot receive Christ because they are so full of anguish, and are so crushed in spirit that they cannot find strength enough of mind to entertain a hope that by any possibility salvation can come to them.... the mere struggle to exist exhausted all their energy, and destroyed all their hope.... I do not wonder that a great many are unable to receive the gospel in this city of ours, because their struggle for existence is awful. I am afraid that it gets more and more intense, though even now it passes all bounds. If any of you can do anything to help the toil-worn workers, I pray you, do it.... And yet, dear friend—if such a one has come in here tonight—I pray you do not throw away the next world because you have so little of this. This is sheer folly. If I have little here, I would make sure of the more hereafter."**
(<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/2026.htm>)

Application: Sometimes people are so wounded it is hard for them to put everything together. It is hard for them to hear. Sometimes people are so mental and emotionally crushed, they can't get it.

We have been applying their situation to victims of **human trafficking**. Many are crushed by physical slavery, so much so that they will have a hard time believing. **We need to deliver them physically and spiritually.**

10-13: God tells Moses to go back to Pharaoh, and Moses' response is one of unbelief and despair. He says, "If Israel won't listen, then Pharaoh won't listen."

The phrase "uncircumcised lips" either means a speech problem or that he thought he was to "unclean to speak."

Moses is like many who are tempted to give up. But once again, God persists. Once again, after this genealogy, there are more gospel promises that fuel him to action.

Genealogy (6:14-25)

At this point, we find ourselves at an excursus. Notice that this is framed in verses 14 and 25 with the phrase "the heads of the fathers' houses."

Genealogies always show us the important of individuals. God knows our names! This particular section is provided to allow the reader **to know who Moses and Aaron are and where they came from.**

It provides us with a list of only three of Jacob's sons: Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. Moses and Aaron are not the sons of the firstborn Reuben, but of the Jacob's third son Levi. Likewise, Moses was not the firstborn son, and yet, God chose him to lead the people out of Egypt, with his older brother Aaron serving as his own prophet. Thus, Moses is chosen in God's grace and election. He is not one of whom deserves the birthright or the blessing, but receives it from God Almighty nonetheless. Remember the tribe of Levi was not given the inheritance but instead were scattered (Gen 49:5-8).

It is through Moses and Aaron that eventually God would call the Levites back to His service as priests and ministers over the people of Israel and the Tabernacle (Num 3:1-10). There was nothing in and of themselves that brought them here except for God's own election and appointment of them. They served and worshiped days and night (1 Chron 9:33), often doing tasks that might see mundane or insignificant at times.

What a word for us who serve in the church, from helping set up to cleaning up to welcoming guests, serving in child care. It all matters! And as the Levites show, it is worship to God!

Word #5: Judgment/Mercy "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart ... I will lay my hand on Egypt... " (7:3-4)

To counter Moses' discouragement, God reminds Moses of who is in control here. **Verses 1-5** are about how God is the only God. And how Moses needs to know this and walk in this truth.

1-7: Moses is fulfilling the role of a mediator. He is God's representative. Pharaoh considered himself to be "god" but here God puts Pharaoh in his place, by saying Moses is "as God to Pharaoh." This doesn't mean that Moses was divine. But he did represent God.

Moses prepares the way for Jesus, who was God, the true Mediator. Jesus is called the "prophet greater than Moses" (Deut. 18:18; Acts 3:22; 7:37). Just as people rejected the prophets in the OT, they would reject Jesus as well.

Aaron is like the "prophet's prophet."

- When Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave us the prophetic ministry of speaking his gospel. We are his ambassadors.

All of this is while Moses is a Senior Citizen, getting free coffee at McDonalds (7).

4-5: "I Will Promise" - **Judgment**: In the middle is the promise that *God will lay his hand on Egypt in judgment*.

Why is he doing this? That they may "know that He is Lord." (5). God's glory will be seen his judgment and in his mercy (Rom 9).

Notice there are two ways to "know the Lord"

1.Experience the Lord's Mercy in Salvation (6:6-8)

2.Experience the Lord's Wrath in Judgment (7:4-5)

Everyone will eventually acknowledge that that He is Lord (cf., Phil. 2:10-11).

God will deal with his enemies either by "drowning them" or redeeming them through the cross.

In **Isaiah 19**, there is a promise that **Egypt** will one day be God's people. But here, they are rejecting God's Word.

This is what we want for God's enemies. We want them to know the real God as Savior. We don't want the attitude of James and John

when the Samaritans refused to believe, or Jonah's attitude toward the Ninevites. We want God's enemies to become God's people.

Now there is a period of time in which God is waiting for those who do not know him. God will have mercy on you.

Trust him as Savior today! Believe in the God who mercifully frees sinners, redeems sinners, adopts sinners, and promises an inheritance to sinners.

The text shows us here that Pharaoh's **heart is hardened**. We see a **tension** on Exodus. On the one hand, **the Lord is sovereign over everything** that is going on here. On the other, Pharaoh is **held responsible for refusing to listen**.

We need to remember that the Bible **warns us about "hardening our hearts" to God's Word**. Psalm 95 uses this phrase to warn Israel in its worship (95:8) and then the book of Hebrews uses Psalm 95 to call the church to continue in the faith (Heb. 3:7-4:13).

Do not harden your heart – hear the Gospel. Believe the Gospel. Trust in Christ.

Acting on the Promises

After preaching the gospel to yourself, then go act. That's the picture in the next scene, which we will look at next week. Moses and Aaron **don't make excuses**. Rather, the text says: **"they did just as the Lord commanded"** (Exodus 7:10).

What a picture for us. Discouraged? Preach this gospel to yourself and go act by faith in our great God.

God is in control

God keeps his covenant

God saves: liberty, redemption, adoption, inheritance, mercy

- Sing the Gospel
- Pray the Gospel
- Meditate on the Gospel
- Hear the Gospel
- Fill your mind with it, work it down deep, and act courageously for the glory of God.