

# BASIC TRAINING: THE SOLDIER'S MANUAL

## Lesson Three: The Exodus

### Introduction:

#### A. The Biblical Narrative:

##### 1. Background... God's People Cry Out

- a. When we left off, **Joseph** had brought his family down to Egypt. God's providence was at work taking care of His people and keeping His promises. They were living in Goshen in the land of Egypt and life was good. They were beloved in the land because of all the good Joseph had done. Time passed, between 215-300 years, and God's **people** grew in number. They became a great nation... the first promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, and then Jacob was coming to pass. With Joseph dead, a new **Pharaoh** arose who did not know Joseph and viewed the Israelites with an eye of suspicion. Life for God's people became **difficult (Exodus 1:8-10)**
- b. As time passed, their suffering only intensified. They were forced into **slavery**... used and abused to accomplish the great buildings of the Pharaoh and harvest the fields. They were physically abused. They were emotionally beat down. They lost their freedom. **Moses** uses intense words to capture it. When that didn't slow down their growth, Pharaoh ordered the execution of all male babies through the ugly practice of partial birth abortion. God's people were beat down, hurting and needing deliverance (**Exodus 1:11-16**)
- c. Two heroes of this time were two midwives named **Shiphrah** and Puah. These women were ordered by Pharaoh to execute all male babies, but they refused. It's then that he issued an order for the Egyptians to cast all baby **boys** into the Nile (**Exodus 1:12**). God's people tried their best to hide their sons, but you can only do that so long. This is an attempt at massive genocide! A lady named **Jochebed** made a plan. She put her son, Moses, in a basket and float him along the bank on the Nile River where she knew Pharaoh's daughters frequented. She sent her own daughter along with the child, hiding but watching. When **Pharaoh's** daughter found Moses, his sister was there to offer their **mother** as a nurse to take care of the child. So Moses grew up, being taken care of by his own mother while part of the household of Pharaoh. His real **mother** was able to teach him about God and his identity as a Hebrew while he received the best Egypt had to offer! (**Exodus 2:3-6**)
- d. Oppressed and beat down, **God's** people were crying out to God. God heard their cries and was prepared to rescue them, all as part of God's grand plan (**Exodus 2:23-25**). One day **Moses** saw one his Hebrew brethren being abused by an Egyptian and Moses struck down the Egyptian, killing him and then buried him in the sand. Moses feared the consequences and fled to the land of Midian. There he marries a woman named Zipporah and they have a son. They name him Gershom which means "sojourner in a foreign land" which indicates Moses knew he ultimately didn't belong there. One day, God appeared to Moses through a burning bush. The bush was on fire, but it wasn't consumed. God told Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy **ground (Exodus 3:1-5)**. God tells Moses that He had seen how His people had been suffering and was ready to deliver them and lead them to the promised land (**vs. 7-8**). God tells Moses he will lead them out
- e. Moses was reluctant. It was an intimidating task. He offers several excuses to God which God obliterated. Finally, God told Moses to take his brother Aaron to use as a spokesman. Moses heads back to Egypt to tell Pharaoh that God, the Great I Am, says, "Let my people go!" It wouldn't be easy, but Moses would succeed (**vs. 19-22**)

##### 2. The 10 Plagues... Egypt Is Decimated

- a. **Moses** and Aaron appear before Pharaoh with God's message. To prove that God had sent them, Moses had Aaron throw his staff on the ground. It turned into a snake. Aaron grabbed it by its tail and it turned into a snake again. Pharaoh called his **magicians** in and they did the same thing... but by trickery. Aaron's staff snake then **swallowed** up the magician's snakes. Pharaoh's heart was hard & he refused to let them go (**Exodus 7:10-13**)
- b. Starting at this point war breaks out. It is God vs. Pharaoh. Pharaoh digs his feet in with a stubborn rebellion and all of Egypt begins to suffer as a result. God sends a series of 10 plagues. Initially the magicians tried to replicate, but eventually it was clear they did not have the kind of power God has! NOTE: Some believe each plague was a direct attack by God against the various false gods of the Egyptians showing their powerlessness over this world.
  - 1) Water to blood – All the water in the land became blood. The Nile was blood. The streams were blood. Their water pots were filled with blood. Take a bath? Nope... it was blood. Imagine the stench!
  - 2) Frogs – Frogs came up from the water and were everywhere... their beds, in their ovens, in their cookware, and all throughout their homes. Imagine how gross this was! Imagine how everything was ruined!
  - 3) Gnats – Moses struck the dust and all the dust of the earth became gnats. For the first time Pharaoh's magicians were not able to imitate this one. Imagine the constant annoyance & potential diseases
  - 4) Flies – God sent swarms of flies throughout the land... but this time God spared the land of Goshen where His people lived, distinguishing His people & Egyptians. Flies leave maggots! The land was ruined!

- 5) Death of Livestock – All the horses, donkeys, camels, cows and other livestock were struck with a disease. Again, God’s people were spared. ALL of Egypt’s livestock died. Food now & for future is dead!
  - 6) Boils – Moses threw silt up in the air and boils broke out over man and whatever among the beast were left. This is ironic... The magicians tried to copy this plague, but they were too covered in boils to do it!
  - 7) Hails – This time God warns Egypt. Those who listened to God were spared. Moses stretched forth his hands & it began to thunder & hail with fire. Crops ruined! Again, God’s people were spared
  - 8) Locusts – A thick swarm, thicker than ever had been or will be seen. They devoured all the plant life which might have survived the hail. Not a green thing remained.
  - 9) Darkness – Everything went pitch black... ZERO light for three days. No one left their place the whole time
- c. With each plague Pharaoh’s heart hardened. A times, he seemed to flirt with the idea of letting them go but it would only be under his terms, not God’s terms. If his heart seemed humbled, it was only to get the disaster to go away. Pharaoh refused to let the people go. **(Exodus 9:7; 10:16-18)**
3. Finally a 10<sup>th</sup> plague is announced. This time, the first born from all of Egypt would die, but Israel would be spared **(Exodus 11:6)**. God told every family to take a lamb and sacrifice it. They were to take some of the blood and wipe it on the doorposts of their houses. They were to roast the meat and eat it as part of a meal. They were to eat it dressed to leave, sandals on and staff in hand. God was going to lead them out **(Exodus 12:5-8, 11)**. This, along with a feast of unleavened bread, was done be done every year forever as a reminder of what God had done for them. That night the angel of death passed through Egypt and every first born male was struck dead, including Pharaoh’s own son, but no one in Israel died. Cries rang out throughout all of Egypt. Can you imagine the simultaneous terror? Pharaoh finally said go! **(Exo 12:30-32)**
4. All of Egypt wanted Israel out immediately. So they got up, taking no leaven for making bread and hastily went, so they fed on unleavened bread. The Egyptians even gave them their own silver, gold, and clothing! 600,000 men, plus women & children, left
- a. God led His people with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. They just had to follow God.
  - b. But Pharaoh wasn’t done... He decides he will chase down Israel with his army and recapture them **(Exodus 14:9-10)**. Israel sees that impressive army coming and fears. To make it worse, the Egyptians were behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. They looked like they were trapped. It certainly looked like they were finished!
  - c. Moses calms the people and calls them to simply trust God **(Exodus 14:13-14)**. God had Moses stretch his hand over the sea and God parted the waters with a strong wind. Israel literally crossed it on dry ground **(vs. 21-22)**.
  - d. Pharaoh was still not deterred. He and his army kept pursuing. As Israel reached the other side, God had Moses stretch his staff back over the waters and they collapsed on the Egyptian army & they drowned **(vs. 28-31)**.

#### B. Timeless Lessons From The Narrative

1. The story of the Exodus is a powerful reminder that God sees and God knows His people. Even when it might have seemed that God was oblivious, He was there **(Exodus 2:25; 3:7)**. It is an incredible comfort to know that God is there! Even when we don’t understand why things are being allowed to happen, we can take comfort in knowing God sees and knows our lives. This tells me I am not alone, God cares & God knows what I need most. I have not been abandoned **(2 Timothy 2:19)**
2. In this narrative, Jochebed’s trust in God shines as a bright light in a dark situation. How was she able to keep Moses hidden? How could any mother give her child up like that? How could any mother put her son in a basket in the river? The answer is not the Jochebed was desperate. The answer is she had faith **(Hebrews 11:23)**. Our faith in God should drive us to do difficult things, to make hard sacrifices, and face tough choices. This doesn’t make our circumstances seem simple, but it does give us a foundation of strength and hope from which we operate.
3. The exodus also emphasizes God’s faithfulness. In the beginning God made a promise of victory to Eve for all a mankind that would come through her seed (her descendants). God made three promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... a great nation, a great land, and a great seed. The picture of Israel in Egyptian bondage makes this look incredibly bleak. Had God forgotten His promise? How could God make it happen? At the moment it would have been hard to see and accept, but that time in bondage was all part of God’s plan to keep His word and bless all mankind. We can trust God’s word completely, even when things seem impossible. God’s providence, promises, & prophecies are sure! **(Hebrews 6:16-18)**
3. One final lesson... Don’t be Pharaoh! Pharaoh knew very early on in this situation that God was in control and that he was powerless, but he didn’t want to admit it. There was something God called for that went against His desires and wishes. He only submitted to God when things got extremely out of hand. As soon as he seemed to be in control again, he turned against God again. Ultimately, his rebellious heart cost him EVERYTHING. Are you kicking against God? Notice throughout this Pharaoh’s heart hardens. Yours will too! Say YES to God early and often! **(James 4:7-10)**

#### C. The Messianic Thread Woven Throughout The Narrative

1. God’s people were in bondage in Egypt, desperately needing a deliverer. They were beat down. They were oppressed. They were captives to a cruel master. Life was hard. Death was real. This is a powerful picture of anyone’s position outside of Christ. We are slaves of sin, hurting and oppressed. We are powerless in ourselves. Jesus is our deliverer! **(Heb 2:14-15)**
2. Remember that lamb that was slain and the blood applied to the doorposts? Remember how this sacrifice and the blood shed meant they could live? Jesus is our Passover lamb! While we should die, His blood gives us life! If the blood of Christ has been applied to you, even though you have sinned, God is able to pass over you! **(Revelation 5:5-14)**