

## Round 2

Exodus 6:10 – 7:13

Series: Book of Exodus [#06]

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### Highlights From Round 2:

#### Introduction

The early part of the book of Exodus is remembered for the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh, between God's servant and Satan's forces over letting the people of Israel go from bondage in Egypt to freedom in their own land. God told the Pharaoh through Moses "Let My people go!"

We saw *Round 1* in this contest last time. Moses stepped into the ring and delivered God's direction to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh rejected it and then stepped up his oppression of the Israelites. Because everything was going wrong, the leaders and people of Israel blamed Moses and rejected God's word. Yet, God was still in control

Today, as we pick up the account at verse 10 in chapter 6, we come to *Round 2* of this contest. We are going to look at the highlights of this round, the truth God had for Moses and Aaron, Israel and has for us. So keep your Bibles open as we look at five key highlights.

#### **God demonstrates His sovereign plan and control in the flow of history.**

The first highlight from *Round 2* is God demonstrating His sovereign plan and control in the flow of history. It begins with verse 14 and goes through verse 28. Verse 14.

"These are the heads of their fathers' households. The sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn: Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. The sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon." (14-15)

That's the first two verses ... *and there are twelve more!* It should be no surprise to anyone that this and the other genealogies are not on most people's list of favorite Scripture passages. I've never met anyone who told me this or any genealogy, even those about Christ, is one of their favorite parts of Scripture. On the other hand, many people admit to skipping over genealogies when they come to them in their Scripture reading.

So what's the point of these listings of names, few of which we recognize and many of which we can't pronounce? "All Scripture," 1 Timothy 3 tells us, is God-breathed, or inspired by God. All Scripture is "profitable" to us. So these lists are not just for history buffs.

Why this list? First, it helps place Moses and Aaron, and the people of their day, in history. While our faith transcends any historical point, it is rooted in actual times, places, events and people — it is rooted in history.

Then, this list shows the background of Moses and Aaron's descendants whom God later appointed to be priests, as recorded in chapter 28. Beyond these, and other purposes, this listing demonstrates that God is sovereign, that He works out, He accomplishes His plans in the flow of history.

Some people are included whose names may be familiar such as Reuben, Levi, Korah, Eleazar and Phinehas, but we don't recognize most of them. There are women listed as well as men, and a Canaanite woman is listed among these Hebrews. Not one of these people, no one in this family tree is unimportant, even if we only know his or her name. God sovereignly directed the flow of history to place Moses and Aaron to lead their people out of Egypt, and then to place the following generations from Aaron, the priests who ministered for God and the people.

God was in control. He is in control. He always will be in control. We can look back at how Christ has been preserving and building His church through the flow of the last two thousand years using a few people who are known to us, and so many we don't know at all. We can look at our own lives, families and friends and see God's sovereign grace working, accomplishing His plans and purposes in recent days and back through generations.

### **You can't coast on yesterday's faith.**

The second Highlight from *Round 2* is that you can't coast on yesterday's faith. Last time we saw in chapter 5 that Moses was faithful in a very difficult task. God called him to from Midian back to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of bondage.

The task was difficult. Although he had been gone from Egypt for forty years, his history of choosing the Israelites over Pharaoh's family and killing an Egyptian to protect and Israelite understandably did not lead to a grand home coming celebration. Then, he wasn't known to his own people. Also, God told him from the start that this deliverance would not be instant or easy. And he had his nagging doubts about being a leader. Yet, in that first round with the Pharaoh he stepped out in faith and did exactly what God told him to do.

As today's section opens at 6:10, God calls Moses to answer the bell for *Round 2* with the Pharaoh. Verse 10,

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land.’” (10-11)

How did Moses respond? Let's read on at verse 12.

“But Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, ‘Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?’”

In the first round he learned more about God and faith, and had grown in faith. But here he also came face to face with the reality that he never could reach a place where living by faith is automatic, where trusting God would not present challenges, where he could coast on what he have learned and done in the past. Moses needed to step up and step out by

faith in this new day, this new challenge.

Moses could not coast on yesterday's faith and neither can we. We can and do grow in faith as we exercise trust in God, just as Moses did. We also face new challenges and tests of faith each day and, in fact, each moment. Living by faith is challenged every step of the way by our natural sinfulness and Satan's forces.

We find an analogy to this point in the first chapter of Romans, where the apostle Paul wrote,

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed *from faith to faith*; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’” (16-17)

The phrase “the righteousness of God is revealed *from faith to faith*” has been discussed at great lengths since the early church. A fair number of suggestions have been given to try to get a handle on Paul's point. As I read Paul's language, he could be emphasizing that those who are saved by the gospel grow *from faith to faith*, and so understand and live out the righteousness of God more and more.

John Calvin, the Reformer who published his work on Romans 470 years ago, put it this way,

“...as our faith makes progress, and as it advances in knowledge, so the righteousness of God increases in us at the same time...”

Now here is my point: as we live by faith in each moment, *from faith to faith*, we grow in faith, we grow in righteous character, we grow in pleasing God. *We cannot coast on yesterday's faith.*

**The third highlight from this encounter is that not responding to the light God gives you has disastrous results.**

We can't find a better *poster boy* for this principle than the Pharaoh. God diagnosed the Pharaoh's baseline condition in 7:14—his “heart [was] stubborn.” The Pharaohs were thought to be gods. This Pharaoh wielded a great deal of power on the world stage. He was self-focused, proud and arrogant. His heart was not easily moved.

When Moses and Aaron performed a miracle in response to the Pharaoh's order, and even though it was more powerful than what his magicians did, verse 13 tells us his “heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them.” It is insightful to follow the progressive hardening of the Pharaoh's heart in response to the light God gave him through the mighty works He performed through Moses and Aaron in chapters 7 through 14.

- Five times we are told the Pharaoh's heart “was hardened” (7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35).
- Three times we are told Pharaoh “hardened his heart” (8:15, 32; 9:34).

- Six times we are told “the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart” (9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8).
- And four times God said “I will harden” Pharaoh’s heart (4:21; 7:3; 14:4, 17).

Every time God gave him light, that is, every time God revealed some truth of who He is, Pharaoh, in his stubbornness, hardened his heart and God—the sovereign, righteous, holy judge—also hardened Pharaoh’s heart. In the end it was only under extreme compulsion and in extreme desperation that he let the Israelites go. But even then his hardened heart could not let it go. So he sent his army after them, and lost it as God brought the waters over them, swallowed them up just as Aaron’s staff swallowed the magicians’ staffs. His stubborn, foolish heart was hardened, it was enshrouded in darkness just as the land of Egypt was during the ninth plague (10:21-29).

This principle is universal in all generations of humanity: not responding to the light God gives you has disastrous results. Have you wondered why some people hear the gospel time after time and never accept it and, in some cases, become more and more resistant to it? One of the principles in operation is the hardening of their hearts when they do not accept the truth of God they have been given.

The apostle Paul gives some descriptions of this. In Ephesians 4 he tells us

“So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, *because of the hardness of their heart*; and they, *having become callous*, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”  
(17-19)

In 1 Timothy 4 he states that false teachers have become “seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron” (4:2).

And so, the writer of Hebrews stresses, pleads that people do not harden their hearts (3:7-8); that when they hear God’s voice they do not harden their hearts (3:15; 4:7). He tells us to “encourage one another day after day ... so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (3:13)

Those who have not come to faith in Jesus Christ experience hardening of their hearts when they reject God’s truth. Those who have come to faith in Jesus Christ can build up callouses and hardened hearts when they do not respond to the truth of God in the Bible which the Holy Spirit draws to their attention as they listen to it, read it, study it. Yes, not responding to the light God gives you has disastrous results.

**The fourth highlight from Round 2 is that no power is a match for God’s power.**

From Genesis through The Revelation the Bible asserts that God is the only true God, and that He is Sovereign, He is All-Powerful. God is able to do anything He decides to do that

is consistent with His nature and is in agreement with His will.

Later, when Israel was out of Egypt in the wilderness, they complained about the manna God provided for them every night. They wanted meat, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic as they had in Egypt. Then Moses complained to God,

“Why have you been so hard on me? What have I done to deserve this? Where am I going to get meat for all these people?” (Numbers 11:11-13, paraphrase)

God promised them meat, but then Moses asked God, “Where is it going to come from? It’s impossible!” God replied, “Is the LORD’s power limited?” (Numbers 11:23). God provided quail for a whole month until the people hated it (cf. 11:20).

Jeremiah learned that God is all-powerful. He joyfully shouted “Nothing is too difficult for You!” (32:17). The Psalmist echoes, “... our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.” (Psalm 115:3)

The record of this Pharaoh is just one of many, many tangible, historical proofs of this truth found in the Bible. As we survey the broader picture, this encounter, this *second round*, is the warmup for the display of God’s power in the ten plagues that follow. Those plagues were an ongoing, intensifying demonstration that no Pharaoh, no magicians, that no one and no power is a match for God.

Here in chapter 7 God used a miracle to show His power to the Pharaoh. Aaron threw his staff on the ground and it became a serpent. The court magicians duplicated that “with their secret arts” (7:11), but Aaron’s staff swallowed all of theirs, showing that their Satanic-enabled power was a limited, inferior, copycat power.

When we move into the plagues, in the first plague Aaron struck the Nile with his staff and it turned to blood. Then the court magicians were able to turn some water into blood. In the second, Aaron stretched out his staff over the rivers, streams and pools and frogs came up and covered the land. The court magicians also made frogs appear. I’m sure the people would have much preferred them being able to make all those frogs *disappear!* God demonstrated His power by making the frogs die off at a time He allowed the Pharaoh chose.

In the third plague, God had Aaron strike the ground with his staff and gnats appeared throughout the land. Here God put a stop to the magician’s copycat work. They were unable to do this, and told Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” (18:16). They recognized the superior power of the Spirit of God, and that all their secret arts and gods were no match for the LORD.

You and I can remember and live by this truth. Many terrible things happen in our world. Their power is no match for God. Individuals, religious groups and governments in many places persecute Christians. Their power is no match for God. Satan’s forces are on the prowl to derail and destroy God’s people, including you and me. Their power is no match

for God's power. No power is a match for God's power.

### **The final highlight from *Round 2* is that success is doing what God tells you to do.**

What is your definition of success? Whether you think about this much or little, like the word or not, it is a critical question because we make choices, invest our time, energy and resources in what we think is important, in what we think makes a person *successful*.

There are, of course, a vast number of answers. For some success is

- growing, developing, improving.
- For others, reaching a goal, or achievement.
- Then there is winning! Being #1.
- Some see it in their bank balance, the size of their house or the kind of car they drive.
- Others measure it by having a sense of peace.

As Christians we often think and talk about success as bringing glory to God, learning and living more of God's truth, and becoming more like Jesus Christ. How do we work toward and measure our *success*? Look at verse 6 in chapter 7. "So Moses and Aaron did it; as the LORD commanded them, thus they did." The words "did it" point back to God's word to Moses in verse 2, "You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land."

In a nutshell, success is doing what God tells us to do. This summary encompasses all of our being and doing— all our motives, priorities, character; our goals, speech and actions. It also gives us a practical starting point for both looking back and ahead. "Have I done what God tells me to do this week?" "In this situation or decision what has God told me in His word that should direct me?" Yes, being successful is doing what God tells us to do.

### **Conclusion.**

If you watch sports highlights on television you get to see some of the best plays, matches or games of the day or week. The commentators will sometimes say things such as, "What a play!" "What a game" "That was one of the best ever!" Or, "Everyone will always remember that one!" We know there often is more than a bit of hyperbole in play. Most people won't remember that game, that play, that highlight.

What about the highlights we've seen today? Will we remember that ...

- God demonstrates His sovereign plan and control in the flow of history?
- That you can't coast on yesterday's faith?
- That not responding to the light God gives you has disastrous results?

- That no power is a match for God's power?
- That success is doing what God tells you to do?

I hope we remember these truths and choose to have them guide how we live.

As you spend a few moments with God now, thank Him for each of these unchanging truths. Begin to review your thoughts and actions to see if all of your life is really based on these truths. If God has been speaking to you, nudging or prodding you, respond to Him *now*. Determine to keep on growing in understanding and living on the firm foundation of these truths.

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