

Trapped.

Observe: We feel trapped. We escape. But the escape is a trap.

Could the trap be inside of me?

Bible Passage: Exodus 1 to 13

Historical context:

- Location: Egypt, Nile river delta, Goshen
- Period: Around 1500B.C., probably 1446B.C.
- During the Thutmosid dynasty (1570 to 1300 B.C.)

God cares? Who cares.

- Life isn't great. But might you consider God's claims?

Exodus 3

7 I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them...

How do you feel about this?

If you're interested in the Passover, go to page 5.

If you're curious about Pharaoh's responses, continue with this next part.

Freedom for Pharaoh: Truth confronting lies (through flies etc)

Observe

What do you notice about God's responses to Pharaoh in the first seven encounters?

What happens in the next 2 encounters (plagues 8th and 9th, boils and hail)

And beyond this? (Plagues 10 and 11, Locusts and Darkness)

Encounters reference list:

<p>1st Encounter: Asked nicely Exodus 5 Pharaoh responded by treating the slaves more cruelly, going opposite to what God asked for. This is Pharaoh hardening his heart.</p>
<p>2nd Encounter: Who is the ultimate God? God reasonably answers his question “who is the Lord?” according to his own criteria. Exodus 7:12,13 But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. Response: 13 Yet <u>Pharaoh’s heart became hard</u> and he would not listen to them.</p>
<p>3rd Encounter: Plague 1 - Blood River 7: 22 But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and <u>Pharaoh’s heart became hard</u>; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. 23 Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart.</p>
<p>4th Encounter: Plague 2 - Frogs Exodus 8 Moses replied, “It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the Lord our God. 11 The frogs will leave you and your houses... ...But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, <u>he hardened his heart</u> and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.</p>
<p>5th Encounter: Plague 3 - Gnats Exodus 8 Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, 19 the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But <u>Pharaoh’s heart was hard</u> and he would not listen</p>
<p>6th Encounter: Plague 4 - Flies Exodus 8 22 “But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land. 23 I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow.” 24 And the Lord did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh’s palace and into the houses of his officials; throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies. 25 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land.” [...] 28 Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the Lord your God in the wilderness, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.” [...] 30 Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord, 31 and the Lord did what Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people; not a fly remained. 32 But this time also <u>Pharaoh hardened his heart</u> and would not let the people go.</p>
<p>7th Encounter: Plague 5 - Livestock die Exodus 9 All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. 7 Pharaoh investigated and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet <u>his heart was unyielding</u> and he would not let the people go.</p>

Next two plagues after the first 7 encounters.

What was God's response? Pharaoh's response?

8th Encounter: Plague 6 - Boils

Exodus 9:

11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. 12 But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron

9th Encounter: Plague 7 - Hail

Exodus 9

24 hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 25 Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. 26 The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

27 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. 28 Pray to the Lord, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer."

[...]

33 Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the Lord; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land.

34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. 35 So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go

10th and 11th Encounters: Locusts and Darkness. What's God's response?

What's at stake?

Cruelty, oppression, slavery. Yes. But what's *driving* all this?

Romans 1

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,...

How did Pharaoh "suppress truth"? Which truths did he suppress?

- Who is the ultimate God?
- Who is the source of life? Who is life itself?
- Is there a difference between Israel's God and Egypt's pantheon of gods?
- Explain "set apart" (holy). Which god/God deserves this description?

That was Pharaoh. Now what about *you*? What's your response to all this?

Freedom from death: The Passover and Passover Lamb

God is the source of life, God is truth. But how have I responded to Him?

In my pride and my pain, I have turned away from God to look only at myself. I trust myself. I care only about myself. God is not on my mind. I have not sought Him.

What does this mean for my connection with God? What is “death”?

- What will happen on the night of the 14th day? What is the “Passover”?
- What is the “Passover Lamb”?
- Why must it die?
- God’s judgement—who will this come down on? Only the Egyptian slave masters?
- Is this real? Will the firstborn death really happen? Or is this just an opinion?

The lamb must die. But what must be done next? Why?

- *Who* needs to hide under the blood of the Passover Lamb?
- Is this real? Or just someone’s random opinion? What happened that night?
- Who is the Passover Lamb? (If you’re not sure, it’s okay. We can talk about this another time.)

Based on what you do know now, can we respond to God?

1. Dear God who created me,
2. I have listened to my pride. I trust in myself, my _____
3. I focus on my pain. I have not cared about you.
4. You are the source of life. But I trusted in another as the source: _____
5. You are truth. But I believed lies about you.
6. I am under your righteous judgement. I am separated from you. Death, now and forever, is my problem.
7. But you care. you came.
8. You sent your Passover Lamb.
9. Your judgement fell on the Lamb. The Lamb paid for my pride, my selfish pain, my distrust of You.
10. The Lamb took my place.
11. I hide under the blood of your Passover Lamb. Your judgement passes over me.
12. You rescued me. Now I am free. You brought me to yourself, so I can know you, be with you, trust you and be more like you each day.

Thank you, God.

I pray this in the name of the Passover Lamb whom you have sent.

Did you say this to the Creator God? *We'd like to know.*

Do you have questions about the prayer? *We'd like to chat with you.*

On the next page, please select any option(s).

Pass it to the friend who brought you, or to a Bethesda Community usher, or to me.

Or share your information with the Bethesda Community church office: 6448 8658

.....Tear here.....

Response Options list:

<p><input type="radio"/> I said the above prayer today. Yes, please contact me: <i>Name and contact information:</i> _____</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> <i>Why Jesus? Who was he?</i> I'm curious—why do you say Jesus is the Lamb that God sent? Why Jesus, and not someone else, to connect me back to God? May we explain what <i>alpha</i> is? (10minute phone call) If yes, please leave your name and contact: _____</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> I've wondered about this question: _____ Can we find a time to hang out and chat about it? <i>Yes, please contact me</i> _____</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> <i>What's God like? Who am I?</i> I want to know what the bible says about what happened between me and God right from the beginning. How come the world became like that? <i>Adam's story</i> in the first book of the bible, <i>Genesis</i>, can begin addressing these questions. Would you like to explore this over 3 to 4 sessions? If so, please share your name and contact information: _____</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> I'm happy to keep up contact and connect off and on when you have events like this. You can contact me: _____</p>
<p><input type="radio"/> No, thank you. I have other avenues that I'm exploring and prefer not to be contacted at this time.</p>