

Introduction to Exodus

I. Title of the Book

- We get the English title “Exodus” from the Latin Vulgate (Liber Exodi), which is derived from the Greek LXX, “Exodos” or “Exodou,” which means “exit” or “a way out.” This title is obviously linked with the major event of this book, the Exodus, in which the Lord brings his people out of the land of Egypt. This event is very significant for the nation of Israel and becomes foundational for many things moving forward, which you’ll see as you continue to read through the OT.
- The Hebrew title is once again taken from the first phrase of the book, which is “we-elleh shemot” (וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹתַי). This means “and these are the names.” This is also sometimes shortened to just “shemot,” which means “names.” This Hebrew title is significant for a couple reasons. First of all, the phrase “And these are the names” creates a fitting link between Genesis and Exodus. The use of the conjunction “and” at the very beginning of the book emphasizes that we are picking up where Genesis left off. The story and, as we’ll see, God’s plan is continuing to move forward. The second reason as to why the title involving “names” is important is because there is also an emphasis on names in this book and more specifically we see an emphasis on the Lord revealing his name to his people. And we need to remember that when we speak of a name, especially in the Bible, it is much more than something that people call you, but rather it involves who you are, your character. And so we are going to see God revealing who he is to his people throughout the book of Exodus. And this provides a fitting transition into the theme of the book.

II. Theme of the Book

- There are a couple fitting themes that you can pick out for the book of Exodus, but the main two that I prefer are “The God who Redeems” or “The God who Reveals His Name.” We’ll see that both of these themes are fitting and are not mutually exclusive either because part of God’s revealing of his name will involve him revealing himself as the redeemer of his people.

III. Structure of the Book

- Unlike Genesis, the book of Exodus doesn’t have any clear indicators that give us a structure that we can hold to. Therefore, there are multiple ways to try and outline this book. However, one suggestion is to see the structure of the book related to the geographical locations that events occur. This is the outline that we are going to go with and is what is given below.

Israel in Egypt (1:1-13:16)

Israel’s Journey from Egypt to Sinai (13:17-18:27)

Israel at Sinai (19:1-40:38)

IV. Historical Background

- Before we get into the text of the book of Exodus itself, we need to address some matters of historical background.

A. The Date of the Exodus

- First, we need to quickly talk about the date of the Exodus. This may seem unnecessary but it is important to discuss because depending on when you date the Exodus will affect the background of what is going on in the time of Moses and even will impact the background of what was going on with Joseph back in Genesis.
- There are two main views on the date of the Exodus. The first view, which we will call the “Late Date” says that the Exodus took place during the 1200s B.C. with many saying sometime around 1260 B.C. The second view, which is called the “Early Date” says that the Exodus took place during the 1400s B.C. with a more precise date of 1446 B.C. Remember that the bigger number is earlier because we are dealing with B.C. So let’s look at these two views.
- First, let’s take a look at the Late Date view, which places the Exodus around 1260 B.C. and see some of the main supporting arguments in favor of this view.
 - *Archaeology* - One of the primary things that pushes people towards the late date is that the archaeological evidence in Israel for the timing of the conquest seems to fit better with a later date for the exodus rather than the earlier date.
 - *Cities of Raamses and Pithom* - notice in Exodus 1:11 it mentions that the Pharaoh used the Israelites to build the cities of Pithom and Raamses. And since you have a city named Raamses it was probably named so because it was named after the Pharaoh that was ruling during that time, which they would say was Rameses II (the pretty well known pharaoh), who lived in the 1200s as well.
 - *The Hyksos* - the last main argument used in favor of this date has to do with a group of people called the Hyksos. The Hyksos were a Semitic group of people who temporarily took over control of Egypt. Holding to the late date of the Exodus would place this rule of the Hyksos over Egypt during the time of Joseph. Proponents of this view would then say that this also explains why Joseph, who was also from a Semitic people, rose to such a high position in Egypt. It was because his Semitic buddies were in power and therefore promoted him.
- Now let’s take a look at some of the arguments for the Early Date of the Exodus.
 - *1 Kings 6:1* - the first piece of evidence is found in 1 Kings 6:1. In this passage the text states that it was in the 480th year after the Exodus that Solomon began to build the temple. Almost all scholars agree that the building of Solomon’s temple began in 966 B.C. and so if you add 480 to 966 then you would arrive at the date of 1446 B.C. Those who hold to the late date argue that this number is being used symbolically and likely refers to 12 generations of 40 years but in reality a generation is more like 25 years so then that would be like 300 years and you would be around

their 1260 date. However, if you take this 480 at face value, which there seems to be no reason why we shouldn't you would arrive at the early date of 1446 B.C. for the Exodus. As I'm sure you can already start to tell, I hold to the Early Date of the Exodus and this is one of the main reasons why because the Bible itself seems to indicate this. But this isn't the only piece of evidence in favor of this.

- *Archaeology* - I mentioned before that proponents of the later date point to the lack of archaeological evidence during the time of the conquest if you held the Early Date of the Exodus. But let me make some quick points about that. First off, you should be careful drawing conclusions from a lack of archaeological evidence because we have not dug everywhere and discoveries can happen if just given some more time. Second, you have to understand the nature of Israel's conquest. When they entered the land to conquer they actually left most of the buildings and stuff intact. Why? Because they were to move into them after. And also you only had three cities that were burned: Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. And so if you were looking at archaeological layers you wouldn't actually expect to see a whole lot of destruction anyways.
- *Hyksos* - we'll talk a little more about the Hyksos in a little bit but real quick we can address a couple things about why the Hyksos were likely not in power during the time of Joseph based upon some observations from Scripture itself. First, do you remember what Joseph did before he appeared before Pharaoh back in Genesis? He shaved. This may seem like a small insignificant detail but this would point to the fact that actual Egyptians were in power then because there would have been no need to shave before seeing a Hyksos king. Second, Genesis also talks about how shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians, including the Pharaoh, which would have been weird for a Semitic people that also were shepherds. So the Hyksos were not in power when Joseph came into power.
- *Moses' Wandering in Midian* - Do you remember how Moses kills an Egyptian and then flees to the land of Midian? Acts 7:30 makes it clear that Moses was in Midian for 40 years. So you have to have a pharaoh during this time that reigned for over 40 years. There are only two candidates: Rameses II (who the late date points to) and Thutmose III. What's significant though about this is what happens to the Pharaoh who was ruling when Moses flees? At the end of Exodus 2 we see that that Pharaoh dies. And so the pharaoh who wanted to kill Moses cannot be the same pharaoh of the Exodus, which goes against many people who try to claim Rameses was the one who ordered the building of the cities of Pithom and Raamses as well as the one who was in power during the Exodus.
- *Pharaoh's Daughter* - Another evidence for the earlier date is the fact that the early date gives a great candidate for the daughter of Pharaoh mentioned in the book of Exodus. We'll work out all the details of the

various Pharaoh's in a moment but suffice it to say that there was a woman named Hatshepsut, who is well known as a woman who would have disobeyed orders of her father. She was very strong willed and even reigned for a little bit over Egypt as we'll see in a second.

- *Thutmose IV Dream Stele* - lastly you have something called the Dream Stele. A stele is a stone or monument often with an inscription. Well there is a stele located at the Sphinx in Egypt, which details a dream that Thutmose IV had in which the Sphinx told him that he would one day be king over Egypt. Now think about this for a second. Why would this be kind of weird to need such an inscription to legitimize your rule? Back then who often was the heir to the throne? The firstborn. So why would you need an inscription saying you were the rightful heir? If you were not what? The firstborn. And we see that Thutmose IV was not actually the oldest son but rather was the second oldest and so why would he be taking over? His brother died. How do you think he died? In the tenth plague where all the firstborns died. And this is the only time that you have the younger brother ruling rather than the firstborn. And guess when Thutmose IV and his father (who would have been the father of the Exodus) lived? In the 1400s right at our date of the 1446 B.C. Exodus.
 - [Merneptah Stele also supports early date because it talks about conquering people in Israel in the 1200s, which would be weird if Israel was just leaving Egypt at that time]
- It seems clear then that the Early Date is the correct view of the Exodus. This, admittedly, is the minority view on this topic but as we have seen it seems to fit all the details of Scripture best. And now that we have established this, we can move on to trace a brief history of Egypt from the time of Joseph to Moses to give us a helpful background as we enter the book of Exodus. But also realize that talking about the date of the Exodus not only gives us the proper background but it also grounds this event in history and we need to understand that we are dealing with real events that actually happened. These aren't myths or legends. And if they are real events, then the theology that these events teach is also true. So that's why we spend so much time on details like this.

B. Egyptian History from Joseph to Moses

- Using the Early Date for the Exodus, Joseph would have been in Egypt during the 12th dynasty. This was a powerful and prosperous dynasty, which lines up with Scripture because remember in Genesis there was a great famine that hit all the lands. And as a result people came from all over to give a bunch of money to purchase food. And as we pointed out before, this dynasty was native Egyptian and not the Hyksos. This is important for reasons we have mentioned before but even more so because the only explanation as to how Joseph, a non-Egyptian, could rise to such a prominent role in Egypt is because of who? God. It wasn't because his Semitic buddies were in control that he got promoted it was because God worked it out to occur that way and even when the odds were against it, God did it.

- Then after the death of Joseph and after the 12th dynasty, that's when the Hyksos came along and took control over Egypt. And if you think about it, what do you think would have happened to Israel during this time? We have mentioned before how people often think the Hyksos would have been Semitic buddies with Joseph, so what do you think would have happened with Israel during the Hyksos rule? They probably prospered and grew significantly during that time. God was making them into a great nation just like he promised.
- So the Hyksos reigned for about 150 years until the 18th dynasty of Egypt kicked them out and took back control of Egypt. This is the dynasty in which the events of the book of Exodus are going to take place in. Now think for a second, if you just kicked the Hyksos out of your land, how would you view the Israelites after that? Not very good. You would probably see them more as an enemy and you can start to understand why the Egyptians do what they do in chapter one of Exodus where they oppress the Israelites because they are afraid they may join their enemies and fight against them.
- This 18th dynasty was actually a very powerful dynasty and Egypt really becomes one of the first, if not the first, world superpower. They are that strong. And understanding this is important in understanding how God mentions that he raised Pharaoh up to display his glory, how? He is going to conquer the world's superpower.
- Ok so let's get a quick run down of the 18th dynasty that are significant for our study of Exodus. The Pharaoh that starts out in the book of Exodus is likely Thutmose I. He is the one who the text says didn't know Joseph and who oppressed the Israelites and tried to kill the babies and all that. Now it wasn't that he didn't know Joseph, like intellectually, but rather it means that he didn't know him diplomatically as a friend. And to make a connection here, Thutmose I is actually the granddad or step granddad of Moses.
- Thutmose I's daughter is Hatshepsut, who we mentioned before. She is the one who finds Moses in the Nile and takes him in as her son. Hatshepsut marries her half-brother Thutmose II and shortly after this marriage Thutmose II dies and Hatshepsut essentially reigns over Egypt. And when you think about it, who was essentially her son? Moses. And so Moses actually had the potential to be the Pharaoh of Egypt.
- But then you have Thutmose III, who we also have mentioned before, he's the guy who reigned for over 40 years and all that. Thutmose III is the son of Thutmose II but not of Hatshepsut and so is vying for the throne as well and since he is the son of Thutmose II he does have that right to the throne but how do you think he viewed Moses? As a threat to the throne. And so now you understand when Moses kills that Egyptian towards the beginning of Exodus why he had to flee. Thutmose III saw this as an opportunity to fully take over the throne and eliminate Moses as a threat to his rule. So Moses flees and has to wait 40 years until Thutmose III dies.
- After Thutmose III dies, you now have Amenhotep II [Amenhotep I was actually Thutmose I's father]. Amenhotep II is the pharaoh of the Exodus. Now again make some connections with me. If you were reigning and your uncle, Moses,

comes back and remember Moses is the only son of Hatshepsut, what do you think he would assume Moses was trying to do? Take back over the throne. So you can understand why Amenhotep is so adamant on not giving anything to Moses. He doesn't want to show any sort of weakness nor give any sort of opportunity to Moses to take the throne from him.

- Then after Amenhotep II you have Thutmose IV who we mentioned before as the Dream Stele guy. He became king because the older son of Amenhotep would have died in the 10th plague.
- So real quick if you understand all this you have a great background of what is going on here in Exodus but you also need to see how God orchestrated all of history in order to do a couple things. First, this all sets up to really test Moses. Remember Moses could have been what? Pharaoh. And so essentially the Lord is going to be asking him, "are you willing to give all that up?" Which also explains what Hebrews refers to when it mentions what Moses gave up to follow the Lord. He gave up the throne. Second, we also see that God sets all this up to put the pharaoh at the time (Amenhotep II) in a position where he would continually be hardened and not want to give in to any demands from Moses so that God could put his glory on display. This is all going on here and we need to catch this as we come into the book of Exodus.

Exposition of Exodus

I. Israel in Egypt (1:1-13:16)

- The Plan Continues (1:1-7)

- We mentioned before when talking about the Hebrew title of the book of Exodus that the first phrase actually begins with the conjunction "and," which indicates that this book is picking up where Genesis left off and that God's plan is still moving forward. But this fact is also emphasized in verse 7 as well.
- Notice in verse 7 that it mentions the people of Israel were "fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them." Where have we heard this sort of terminology before? Creation back in Genesis 1. The point is that God's creation agenda is moving forward. His plan to bring his people back to the original creation is still in motion and this is occurring through the nation of Israel. But we have also seen this phrase repeated with Noah as well as Abraham and the covenants associated with each of them. So we see that this plan was through Noah and then specifies to through Abraham and now we also see that it is continuing through the nation of Israel. Remember that God had promised Jacob as Jacob was about to go down to Egypt that it would be there that he would make them into a great nation and we see here that this is exactly what God is doing.

- Pharaoh Oppresses Israel (1:8-22)

- But we see that God's plan does not go unchallenged. And this shouldn't surprise us because there has been opposition all along but just like before we see that

God's plan is going to continue and also that he is going to turn evil into good just like he did back in Genesis.

- So what is the opposition? The opposition comes from Pharaoh and what does he do? He is afraid of how much Israel is growing and he is afraid as we mentioned before that they may team up with their enemies and so he hatches a plan to oppress the people of Israel by making them their slaves. But notice what happens as a result of this oppression. What does verse 12 say? The text says that the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more Israel multiplied and spread. That's not what you would have expected and I'm sure definitely not what Pharaoh expected. But what do you have here? God turning evil to what? Good. God is at work moving his plan forward.
- So Pharaoh's first attempt to disrupt God's plan is a failure but he has some other plans up his sleeve. Do you remember what he tries next? Infanticide. He instructs the Hebrew midwives to kill the sons of the Israelites when they serve as a midwife. And you probably know the story. Do they go through with it? No and when Pharaoh asks them about it, they say that the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women (kind of an insult against the Egyptians) and they actually give birth before they can even get there. And the question arises, were they lying? And did God reward them for lying? I would actually argue that they were not lying. Based upon the context you have God growing his people exponentially and God is showing that he is greater than Pharaoh in every way. And so I believe what is happening here is that God was working just as the midwives said. He was orchestrating it that the Hebrew women would give birth before the midwives actually got to them. This seems to also be supported by the Hebrew grammar of this text. For example, in verse 20 the "so" is not indicating results but rather is functioning as a summarizing or concluding statement. Then in v. 21, in the Hebrew, the first word (wayehi), which can be translated "it came to pass," is often used to introduce a new section and so here in verse 21 is where you have the results of what was just said. So the midwives were not lying but instead you have God working to show Pharaoh that he cannot stop his plan. And this is again confirmed by the second half of verse 20. What does it say? The people multiplied and grew very strong. Despite Pharaoh's best efforts, God's plan is still moving forward and the nation is still growing.
- But again Pharaoh doesn't just give up because we see in verse 22, what does he do next? He instructs his people to throw every son that is born to the Hebrews into the Nile. He can't control Israel and so now he turns to his own people. But just take a guess, is this plan going to work either? No. And we see that right away in chapter 2.
- **God Raises Up a Deliverer (2:1-10)**
 - We see in this chapter that God starts to raise up a deliverer who he will use to bring his people out of Egypt, which I'm sure you are all familiar with is who? Moses. And real quick notice that Moses is born in the midst of infanticide where you have Pharaoh trying to kill all the baby boys, can you remember another time in Scripture where we see someone being born in the midst of similar circumstances? Jesus. Remember when he is born you have Herod trying to kill

all the baby boys as well. And the question is why? Is that just a nice coincidence? No. The point is to show that Jesus is the New Moses. Just as Moses was the leader of the first Exodus, Jesus will be the leader of the New Exodus and even his birth proclaims that. [Luke 9:31 refers to Jesus' death as an Exodus; 2 Peter 1:15 refers to Peter's death as an Exodus]

- So we see Levite man and woman have a child and they hid him for a few months but then when it was not possible to hide him anymore, the mother makes a basket and places him in it and places him in the Nile. Real quick I need to point out that the term used for basket here is not the normal Hebrew term for basket, but rather it is the same word used for an ark like in Noah's ark. Now don't get me wrong, Moses' mom didn't build this huge ark to set her baby in and place it in the Nile, but rather Moses, in writing Exodus, uses this term to make the connection back to who? Noah and what event? The flood. And this is to show that this is the same type of deliverance or deliverer; this guy is the one the Lord has designated as the deliverer. Just like Noah was used in delivering through the flood, so Moses will be used to deliver as well.
- So Moses is in the basket in the Nile and then who ends up finding him? Pharaoh's daughter, which we have mentioned before is Hatshepsut. And what does she do with the baby? Spares his life and eventually takes him to be her son. Why is this ironic with what came before at the end of chapter 1? What did Pharaoh command his people to do? Throw all the Hebrew babies in the Nile. And who doesn't even listen? His own daughter. Not only does Pharaoh not have control over Israel but he doesn't really even have control over his own people. And an even further irony is his daughter preserves the one who is going to lead to the downfall of Egypt.
- **Moses Flees to Midian (2:11-22)**
 - What we are going to see in the next couple chapters is that God is going to grow Moses into the deliverer he is supposed to be. Just like with people like Abraham and Jacob who needed to grow and God worked to change them and grow them, so too he is going to do the same thing with Moses. Moses isn't the deliverer he needs to be yet, but God will refine and grow him.
 - So after Moses has grown up, you know the story, he sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and what does he do? Kills the Egyptian. And then the next day he goes out and tries to mediate between a couple of Israelites but they reject him and they ask if he is going to kill them like he killed the Egyptian. At this point Moses seems to struggle with trying to do too much in his own strength. And it is in this area that the Lord is going to grow him and to make him into the deliverer that he needs to be.
 - Well he realizes that it is known that he killed the Egyptian and remember the background information we talked about earlier of why this was a big deal? He then has to flee the country. So he goes to the land of Midian. And we see that he actually ends up meeting his wife while he is there and they have a son and notice what he names his son in verse 22. Gershom, which is the word for "sojourner." Moses is starting to be humbled and realizing that he is just a sojourner in a foreign land, he can't do it on his own. (Not clear if the foreign land he is

referring to is Midian or Egypt or may even be both in that he recognizes he needs to get back to the Promised Land). God is growing him in preparation for using him to deliver his people.

- **God Hears His People (2:23-25)**

- Notice also these last few verses of chapter 2. We see something really cool and pretty profound here. We see the pharaoh dies (referring to Thutmose III) but notice how you have the account of the people groaning and crying out and the Lord hearing them. We need to point out a couple things here real quick.
- Most texts in verse 23 say something along the lines of the people of Israel cried out for help or their cry for rescue. But what's important to point out is that the words "for help" and "for rescue" aren't actually in the Hebrew text. Literally it is just the people of Israel crying out because of their oppression. While it could include it, it doesn't necessarily specify that they were calling out to the Lord to save them or anything like that. The emphasis is rather on their pain rather than they are calling out to God. And this is so profound because God responds and is going to intervene on their behalf. Even when they didn't ask, God still cares and he acts. That's pretty amazing.
- And also don't miss that God "remembers" in verse 24, which we have seen before with Noah. Again this doesn't mean that God forgot and is now remembering but rather this refers to God's focused attention to act on your behalf and normally, like we see here, act on behalf of a covenant relationship. He is going to be faithful to what he has promised.
- So God remembered this covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, and he saw his people and he knew. The term "knew" emphasizes the relationship between God and his people. The Lord is going to act on behalf of his people and as a result he calls Moses, which we turn to next in chapter 3.

- **The Call of Moses (3:1-22)**

- With the call of Moses, this is where you have the burning bush situation where Moses sees this phenomenon happening and he goes over to check it out and then the Lord speaks to him from the bush. And there is so much in this discussion between the Lord and Moses here but unfortunately we don't have the time to dig into all those details but we'll hit a couple of the here.
- So we see the Lord call Moses and he tells him that he is going to send Moses back to Egypt to Pharaoh and he will use him to bring his people out of Egypt. But notice Moses' response here like in verse 11. Is Moses all up for this and ready to go? No. We see that Moses, who struggled before with doing things in his own strength, has now sort swung the pendulum to the far other side and now he views himself as kind of useless or something like that. And so the problem now is not that he is too humble in a sense, but rather the problem is that he is focusing on himself rather than on God. He needs to trust the Lord, that the Lord will be faithful to do all that he is promising.
- God gives him a sign that he will bring Moses and the people back to this mountain and that will be a sign to Moses that the Lord was with him. The emphasis of this sign is for Moses to understand that the Lord was with him and he should have been looking to God rather than himself the whole time.

- Moses then asks essentially for the name of the Lord. Who should I say has sent me? This is the first but not the last time in Exodus that Moses will ask about the name of the Lord and this ties in with the theme we mentioned before about the Lord revealing his name.
- And again we don't have a whole lot of time to unpack this here but the Lord's response is so important to understand. What does the Lord answer? "I am who I am." This shows both the transcendence of the Lord as well as the fact that he is also personal/relational. What we see from this phrase is that the only true way to define who God is is that he is God. Whenever we try to define God, we normally define him in the sense of what he is like or only a part of who he is. Like we say that he is loving, but is loving who God is? Not entirely, there is so much more encompassed in who God is. And so the only way to rightfully describe God is that he is God. This shows God's transcendence, meaning that he is completely "other" than us. We often think of God as merely a better version of us but what this text establishes is that God is not just a better version of us but rather he is categorically different from us. There is no comparison. He is God and there is absolutely no other like him. But at the same time we also have to realize in the act of God revealing his personal name to his people, this also shows that even though he is this transcendent God, he is at the same time personal and relational. He actually cares for his people. This is all wrapped up in this little phrase, "I am who I am."
- As we are going to see a little bit later, this name of God is also going to be revealed in what he is about to do, namely, the Exodus. And this is how, according to verse 15, his name is to be remembered throughout all generations.
- God then gives Moses the plan of how he is going to bring his people out of the land of Egypt.
- **Moses' Doubts (4:1-17)**
 - Despite all of this, we see in chapter 4 that Moses still has his doubts. And so God gives him a few signs to help the people believe that he has actually sent Moses (the staff turning into a serpent, hand turning leprous, and turning water into blood).
 - But Moses still has his doubts as he points to what? His speech. He says he is not eloquent, which is ironic because that phrase in Hebrew is actually an eloquent phrase. So we see that Moses still struggles with fully believing. But God helps Moses out by giving him who? His brother Aaron.
- **Moses Heads Back to Egypt (4:18-31)**
 - So we see Moses starting to now head back to Egypt and we need to quickly point out a couple things here in this section.
 - First, notice in verses 21-23 God kind of reminds Moses of the plan. And this is where we start to see this phraseology of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart. And this is often called into question and so we should briefly address what is going on here. As you continue to read through the book of Exodus you will see this repetition of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart or Pharaoh hardening his own heart and so on. What you need to understand is that there are multiple Hebrew words being used here and each have a slightly different emphasis.

- The first way it is used is in the sense of a strengthening. And so we often think when we hear that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart that Pharaoh actually wanted to let the people of Israel go but the Lord kind of changed his heart or mind to not let them go. But that's not the idea of the Hebrew term, which just carries the idea of strengthening. And so the idea is strengthening someone to do what they always wanted to do. So in this case, Pharaoh didn't want to let the Israelites go and so God essentially gave him the strength to go through with that.
- Second, this term can be used in the sense of making someone dull or dumb so that they can't see the obvious. So essentially Pharaoh will be stubborn and refuse to see all the obvious miracles being done before him.
- And the last way is when it refers to Pharaoh hardening his own heart, which refers to a resolve to resist and sort of change.
- So all of this shows that God isn't doing anything wrong here, but rather the main idea is that he is giving Pharaoh the strength to do what he always wanted to do.
- And so you can start to understand what is going on in Romans 9 when Paul picks up this idea. If someone doesn't want to believe the Gospel, and God gives them the strength to do that, did he change their desires or do anything wrong? No. It is not as if God is keeping someone from believing who wants to believe but rather he is giving them the strength to do what they always wanted to do, not believe.
- Another point I want to touch on real quick since it can be a really weird brief story to come across if you're reading through Exodus. It's in verses 24-26 where the Lord seeks to put Moses to death and then Moses' wife circumcised their son and touched Moses' feet with the foreskin and then that kept God from wanting to put him to death. And you are probably thinking, what in the world is going on here. And really the basic idea is that Moses is being called to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the Israelites go so that they can serve the Lord. Essentially stop hindering my people from serving me. But Moses by not circumcising his son is essentially keeping his son from being a part of the covenant with God. So essentially Moses is acting more like Pharaoh here and so God is essentially telling him to stop acting like that and instead act like the actual covenant leader that you need to be. If you are going to be a part of my people, be a part of my people. Don't be a hypocrite.
- **The Showdown Begins (5:1-23)**
 - In chapter 5 we start to have the battle between the Lord and Pharaoh more clearly begin.
 - Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh and say the famous phrase, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go.'" But notice the response of Pharaoh in verse 2. He says, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?" This is essentially fighting words. He is establishing that he doesn't know any such god and since he is the top dog, bring it on. The challenge has been made. To emphasize that this is the case, look at verse 10 here. Notice what the taskmasters say to the people, "Thus says Pharaoh." Ring any bells? What did Moses and

Aaron just say to Pharaoh? “Thus says the Lord.” It is almost as if, “you say your supposed God says this, well I say this instead.” The battle is on.

- And Pharaoh, as a result of this interaction with Moses and Aaron, makes the labor of the Israelites even worse by making them have to go and get their own straw for the bricks rather than providing it for them, but they still had to produce the same amount.
- **God Assures Moses (6:1-13)**
 - Even though Moses has some doubts at the end of chapter 5, the Lord then reminds Moses that this is essentially all according to the plan.
 - And an important verse here is verse 3 in which the Lord declares that he appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob but he did not make himself known to them as the LORD (YHWH). This doesn't mean that they didn't know this name but rather God is going to fully reveal what this name means through the acts he is about to do culminating in the Exodus.
- **The Genealogy of Moses and Aaron (6:14-30)**
 - Chapter 6 then wraps up with a genealogy of the sons of Levi culminating in Moses and Aaron. The placement of this genealogy may seem a little weird but it is likely to anticipate the importance of the tribe of Levi later on. Which, from this tribe comes the what? Priests. Those who mediate between God and his people. And this is exactly what Moses and Aaron are doing right now, so this genealogy may also serve to legitimize their role as mediators between God and his people.