

## Lesson 6: THE SHOWDOWN IN EGYPT; WHO IS THIS YHWH?

We're now at the point, after the dispersion at Babel, after God makes His covenant with Abraham, Abraham's family moves to Egypt. We can now see God moving in a number of ways. First of all, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery in the latter chapters of Genesis, but God took those lemons and made lemonade. He was preparing a place for His people, for a time, allowing them to grow in number in ideal conditions. But eventually, a Pharaoh came into power who didn't know or acknowledge Joseph's value or respect his family. In fact, out of fear, he enslaved them. God allowed this for a time. But eventually, in his timing, He engaged Pharaoh and the other gods of the Egyptian pantheon in order to show everyone who was boss.

When God began to build His nation, His family, His people, it was clear that He wanted to reclaim the nations through the influence of Israel. This being the case, it should also be clear that Israel would be in the crosshairs of the rogue element of the Diving Council.

## **Who is this YHWH?**

It doesn't take long for Israel to wind up between a rock and a hard place. Genesis 37-50 explain why Israel went to Egypt. God's provision for the extended family through a great famine is evident. But God didn't tell them to leave after the famine was over. And that was intentional. God was allowing time for Israel to multiply. They had to become a nation. And as we read in Exodus one, that happened prior to their enslavement. When Israel left Egypt, the Egyptians actually paid them to leave, thus they had the operating capital and provisions they would need for the tabernacle once they

entered the Promised Land. But there was another reason God had them stay behind, even though He knew of the treatment they'd receive from Pharaoh. God was waiting patiently. But why?

After Moses fled Egypt and went to Midian, God called out to him from a burning bush (**Ex. 3:1-14**). God told Moses to return to Egypt with basically one "simple" marching order. He was to tell Pharaoh to, "Let God's people go!" As expected, Pharaoh bristled at such a command. After all he was "god in the flesh" as far as he and the Egyptians were concerned. (see the parallel with Caesar in the NT). Pharaoh was king of the super-power of the day. He was seen to be over the "temat" of all the Egyptian gods. And he was responsible for ensuring the temat was happy – something that wasn't apparently so once YHWH began to drop plague after plague on Egypt. Pharaoh had never heard of YHWH. Who was he to have to

answer to some obscure god of a bunch of shepherds? Who was he to have to answer to some god he didn't know? After all, if YHWH was so powerful, then why were His people enslaved?

### **Exodus 5:2**

**2 And Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.”**

Well, Pharaoh was about to find out just who the God of Israel was. In one sense, Pharaoh had been set up, (**Ex. 4:21**). God picked a fight. After centuries of slavery, it was time for God's people to move towards the land God had carved out for Himself and his family. It was time for Egypt and its gods to be punished. And the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was part of the plot.

We're told in the Bible that the plagues brought on Egypt were aimed at their gods – especially the last one, being the death of the firstborn – which a direct assault on the house of Pharaoh.

### **Exodus 12:12**

**12 “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.**

### **Exodus 12:29**

#### **The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn**

**29 And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.**

### **Numbers 33:4**

**4 For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.**

Pharaoh had mocked God and it wouldn't end well for him.

This heavenly assault on Egypt and her gods had the desired effect. News traveled by mouth back then, but it also traveled quickly. By the time Israel had crossed the Red Sea, whatever people group they encountered had already heard of the thrashing God had given the temet of Egypt. News doesn't go unseen or unheard when the greatest superpower of the day goes down.

**Joshua 2: 8-11**

**8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9 and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land,**

**that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.**

**Joshua 9:9,10**

**9 So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to**

**Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth.**

Moses father-in-law summed it all up when Moses returned from Egypt.

**Exodus 18:11**

**11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.”**

Moses, when he was safe, dry and sound on the eastern banks of the Red Sea asked the rhetorical question:

**Exodus 15:11**

**11 “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?**

Once Israel was rid of the threat of the Egyptian army, they were headed to meet their God. But



the truth was that though they knew His name, they didn't really know much else about Him. For the most part, the people had stories that had been passed down along the family tree, but they had little else. Nothing had been codified at that time. We have the Bible and in hindsight things are pretty clear to us. But Israel had a lot to learn and Sinai was going to be their classroom.

I've tried to stress the value of phrases and concepts throughout this study. Words like "family" and "nations" are two of these. As Moses stood before Pharaoh, he related God's message. "Israel is my son..." (**Ex. 4:22,23**). The idea of God having a son, in this case, referring to Abraham's descendants, is important because the concept of a family takes us back to God's creation of Adam and Eve.

To recap, God wanted a human family. He wanted the be/ live among His human family

on the earth He created, as His family multiplied and overspread the earth. He wanted both His “spiritual” and human families to live with and serve Him. He wanted the entire planet to be like the garden of Eden. But then God forsook the nations after having scattered them at Babel. This meant that He had no children – at least until He called Abraham. Israel was God’s new family. The original plan, from Eden, was now back up and running. The people of Israel were now to fill the role that had once belonged to Adam and Eve.

Now Israel, having left Egypt, is heading for Mt. Sinai. There, at Sinai, Moses Aaron and 70 elders will get to see God in human form. The Law was written with the finger of God (**Dt. 9:9,10**). This language should be familiar to us as we’ve seen it in other passages, referring to God in human form. God and His heavenly host gave the Law to Moses (**Acts 7:52,53**).

After the Law was given – Moses, Aaron, Aaron’s sons and 70 elders of Israel got to see God in human form. This time they met with Him for a meal on Sinai. Meals were how covenants were ratified. (Note pavement stones on Sinai. Temple imagery) Notice the parallel regarding the meal. Just as the last supper sealed the new covenant in Jesus’ blood, this meal celebrated God’s new covenant with Israel – the Law.

## **Why the Law?**

God gave Israel the Law so that they would be holy (**Lev. 19:2**). He wanted His family, Israel to be different, set apart from the other nations. This would distinguish them as being His family. As God is completely distinct from all other gods and everything earthly, so God’s people needed to be distinct from all other people. Any thoughts on how this works for us today?

## What did holiness mean?

We really need to understand the concept of holiness. Holiness was to be identified with God, to be dedicated to God and to enjoy all the good things in life that come from being right with God. Once again, one of the purposes of Israel was to draw the other nations back to God (**Isa. 42:6; 49:6**). The nation as a whole inherited the position of Abraham to be a blessing to all the nations. (**Gen. 12:3**)

## Believing Loyalty

Being right with God is another way of speaking of salvation, But despite what many believe or have been taught, Israelites didn't come to salvation by keeping the Law or even trying to keep the Law. Whether you're talking OT or NT, salvation is never earned. And it's never spoken of as being deserved. It is ALWAYS given by the grace of God in response to faith.

Just as we do on this side of the cross – the Israelites of the OT had to have faith in order to be saved. They had to believe their God was the God of all gods – trusting that He had made them His people. The Law was not HOW they achieved salvation. Rather, it was how they showed loyalty to the God in whom they claimed to believe. For an Israelite, salvation about faith in the character and promises of the God of gods and about the refusal to worship any other god. It was about believing loyalty in the heart – not checking boxes in order to gain favor with God.

For example: King David was an adulterer and even had a man killed in order to cover up his affair (**2 Sam. 11**). He was a lawbreaker according to the Law and deserved to die as a result of his crimes. Nevertheless, he is said to have been a man after God's own heart. He never wavered in His belief in YHWH as the Most-High God. He never switched loyalty to

another god. As we've seen, God was merciful to him.

We find that the same believing loyalty is necessary in the NT. Believing the Gospel means believing that the God of Israel came to earth as a man, voluntarily died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins and then rose on the third day. We must believe that and embrace it by faith and then show our loyalty to Jesus by forsaking all other gods. Regardless of what any other religion may say about salvation, the Bible tells us that there is no salvation in any other name than Jesus, (**Acts 4:12**) and that faith must remain intact (**Rom. 11:17 – 24; Heb. 10: 22; 38,39**). A personal failure is not the same as trading Jesus for some other god. And God can tell the difference.

**So why does all this matter?**

There's a great deal of symbolism and theological messaging in what happened at Sinai. The scene where Moses and those with him enjoyed a meal with God in human form should now jump off the page at us. Let's look at the facts and parallels.

Numbers are in many cases important in the Bible. Certain numbers pop up time and again, showing patterns in their meanings and usage. There were 70 elders on Sinai with Moses. If you count the nations cast aside by God – allotted to other gods, as we see listed in the table of nations, you will come up with the number 70. Why 70 elders, 70 sons of God and 70 disinherited nations? The pattern is deliberate. Let's look at the NT. When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He sent out 70 disciples (**Lk 10:1**). This was a precursor to the Great Commission. This number telegraphed the idea that the disciples of Jesus would reclaim the nations for the kingdom of God.

Israelite would have noticed the number immediately. This kingdom will reach its fruition at the end of days in the new global Eden of Revelation 21 and 22. The repetition of the number 70n sends a message: God's new family, Israel – the children of Abraham, will be the means to recover what was lost. The Apostle Paul saw the idea as not stopping there. He wrote in Galatians 3 that believers in Jesus, no matter their lineage or ethnicity, have inherited the promises given to Abraham. Everyone who believes in Jesus is a child of Abraham, through faith (**Gal. 3:26 – 29**). That means all of us are tasked with taking back the nations from the dark powers. We are to turn people who are under the spiritual dominion of other gods to faith in Jesus. We are God's new human council on earth. And when we are glorified, we will join His divine family in the new Eden.



We see this idea conveyed in a number of places in the bible. Believers will inherit the rule of the nations with Jesus at the end of days (**Rev. 3:21**). This means that we will displace the sons of God who have dominated the nations since Babel. Look at the phrasing John uses.

### **John 1:12**

**12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:**

Now compare that to:

### **1 Jn. 3: 1-3**

**1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be,**

**but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

Do you see the repetition of the phrase, “children of God?” Some translations use, “Sons of God.”

This is why Paul lamented the actions of some of the Corinthian Christians who were suing each other in the Gentile courts. He asked them if they knew that we would one day judge angels. If we are entrusted to such a thing, we should be able to get through this life without litigating against our brothers (**1 Cor. 6:3**).

When we are glorified, (made divine) we will outrank angels. We will one day be like Jesus, (**1 Jn. 3: 1-3; 1 Cor. 15: 35 – 49**) and rule with Him over the nations (Rev. 2:26) now controlled by hostile forces. As believers we will ultimately reverse the disinheritance of the nations as well

as the curse of death that extended from the failure in Eden.

And because of all this – God’s plan, **we ought to live as if we believe this is our destiny,** Everything in God’s OT plan leads back to us. Go back to what God wanted in Eden – His 2 families, both human and divine, to live and rule together on earth. That plan was thwarted by rebellion, but it was rebooted by the rescue of Israel from Egypt. The Messiah would come from Abraham’s children and He would undo the failure in Eden.

Without Israel, we would have no destiny. And that’s why the gods and their followers would try to erase Israel time and again.