

# OpenTheo

## Exodus 5:1 - 7:7



### Exodus - Steve Gregg

In Exodus 5:1-7:7, Moses and Aaron ask Pharaoh to let the Israelites go for three days to worship God, but Pharaoh refuses and makes their work harder by not providing them with straw for their bricks. Moses doubts his ability to be heard due to his unclean speech, but Yahweh designates him as his mouthpiece to Pharaoh and promises to show his strong hand. The chapter provides a genealogy of Aaron's descendants and emphasizes that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is an administrative decision to carry out God's plan to judge Egypt with ten plagues.

### Transcript

Let's continue our studies in the book of Exodus at chapter 5. In chapters 3 and 4, Moses was making the objections to God's choice of him. As the man to stand before Pharaoh and to be the deliverer of Israel, God didn't accept any of his objections and therefore he had to go. And so he has come back from the land of Midian, where he's been for 40 years, and he's now back in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen, with the children of Israel.

And so we find in his first interview with the Pharaoh, as we come to chapter 5, verse 1, Exodus 5, 1. Afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is Yahweh that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh, nor will I let Israel go. So they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us.

Please let us go three days journey into the desert and sacrifice to Yahweh our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword. Now, the Egyptians were familiar with the idea that the gods might be angry if you do not placate them with sacrifices. All the pagan religions had this feature.

And many times natural disasters that came on lands were interpreted as the anger of their gods and often considered that it was the impiety of the people. We have the same concept in Israel, of course, in the Old Testament. Many disasters came on Israel because God was not pleased with them.

That's what the whole book of Judges records happening again and again. The people are not pleasing Yahweh and so he sends the Midianites or the Edomites or the Moabites or somebody into or the Chaldeans to afflict them. And so all lands knew that they were answerable to their gods.

The Egyptians knew this, too. And so Moses and Aaron were making an appeal that was quite reasonable in the day that our God is requiring us to worship him. And he may fall upon us and destroy us with pestilence or with the sword.

If we do not comply, Pharaoh should have understood that that would be a valid concern, although Pharaoh didn't care about Israel that much. As far as I went, if God had fallen upon them and judged them, that would probably have pleased Pharaoh well enough. And he was not going to be compliant.

Verse four says, Then the king of Egypt said to them, Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labor. And Pharaoh said, Look, the people of the land are many now and you make them rest from their labor. That is, there's this isn't a holiday.

These people, the slaves are not working, waiting to hear the outcome of this interview. And Egypt is losing the benefit of a large labor force while we're talking here. He says, So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers saying, You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before.

Let them go and gather straw for themselves, and you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not diminish it, for they are idle. Therefore, they cry out saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

Let more work be laid on the men that they may labor in it and let them not regard false words. Basically, the false words that Pharaoh's referring to are the words of Moses that God is going to deliver his people and that they should go out and worship God in the wilderness. And Pharaoh says, Don't let them listen to Moses.

Just put them back to work. Make it harder for them now. Now, bricks were made of mud and they were made more cohesive by putting straw in them.

Just as today, if we want to make buildings structurally sound, we don't just make walls of concrete, we put rebar in it. We put some kind of long, fibrous metal, in this case, into the concrete to hold it together. And they did the same thing with their mud bricks, only they used straw to hold them together.

And up till this point, the straw had been supplied by the taskmasters. The Israelites were required to make the bricks, but they were given the materials necessary, the mud and the straw was provided. But now, Pharaoh says, We need to make these people busier so they don't think about things like going off and worshipping their God.

So make them make the same number of bricks, but don't give them straw. Let them find their own straw. Well, where are they going to find their own straw? They have to go out and find dried grass.

They have to go harvest it. They need to bring it in and they need to chop it to the proper length to fit in the bricks and make bricks and make the same number of bricks as before. That was very unreasonable, but Pharaoh was not interested in being reasonable.

He wanted to punish them and make them understand that they shouldn't be having thoughts of freedom and thoughts that he regarded as idle. What's interesting is one of the cities that the Israelites built, we are told, was the city of Pithom. According to chapter one, verse 11 of Exodus, it says at the end of verse 11, they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Ramses.

Pithom has been excavated by archaeologists. And one thing that is of interest that they have found is that as they looked at the bricks in the walls of Pithom, the lower courses, the earliest bricks that were laid, have straw in them. They have finally cut straw as if it was manufactured for the purpose.

But as you go higher on the wall to the bricks that were placed later, the middle courses of bricks have grass that's pulled up by the roots in them rather than cut straw. And as you go higher to the higher courses of bricks, there's no straw at all in them. And what archaeologists have found seems to be a kind of a silent testimony to the truthfulness of this story.

That at the early stages of building, there was straw provided. At the later stages of building, the straw was not provided, and therefore the Israelites kept up as best they could by gathering grass that they yanked out of the ground by the roots and put them in the brick. But eventually, apparently, they couldn't even find enough of that.

So the higher course of the bricks don't have straw at all. And so it says in verse 10 in the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people saying, thus says Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go get yourself straw where you can find it.

Yet none of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters forced them to hurry, saying, fulfill your work, your daily quota as when there was straw.

Also, the officers of the children of Israel, apparently the leaders of the slave gangs of their own people who were supposed to be disciplining their own people to keep up. They were accountable to the taskmasters. And those officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and asked, why have you

not fulfilled your task and making brick both yesterday and today as before? Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh saying, why are you dealing with us with your servants? Thus, there is no straw given to your servants and they say to us, make brick.

And indeed, your servants are beaten. But the fault is in your own people. Now, apparently, the Israelites had not been told why this new arrangement, why this new policy was made.

They didn't realize it was related to Moses's request, but now they find out and they don't doesn't make them very happy with Moses. But the Pharaoh said, you are idle, you are idle. Therefore, you say, let us go and sacrifice to Yahweh.

Therefore, go now and work for no straw shall be given to you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks. So now they knew that this was related to the request to go worship Yahweh, which means it's related to Moses and his harebrained mission, as they probably considered it, because now Moses had shown up saying God is going to answer your prayers. You can be delivered.

But instead, the burdens were made heavier without any view of being enlightened. There was no natural evidence whatsoever that things were going to get better for them, and they were not so sure Moses was hearing from God and the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble after it was said, you shall not diminish any of the bricks from your daily quota. Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them.

Now, it's interesting that Moses and Aaron were somehow free from these tasks, even though they were Hebrews, maybe because they were so old. Maybe after a certain age, they were people their age among us. Maybe we're made supervisors or something rather than laborers.

Hard to say. But Aaron and Moses were apparently exempt from the works that was being done. So they were just standing there when these people came out and they said to them, let the Lord look on you and judge.

They said this to Moses and Aaron, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants to put a sword in their hand to kill us. So Moses returned to the Lord and said, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Why is it you have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people. Neither have you delivered your people at all.

Now, how long had it been? Well, we read that the officers had said in verse 14, why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today? And apparently two days had passed the day that Pharaoh gave the order and the next day.

And when the Israelites saw the next day that this was not being lightened, that's when they made their complaint to Pharaoh. So really, only apparently two days had passed since Moses had shown up.

They hadn't really given it very long, but I mean, the trend was already visible. It's not like things are getting a little better real slow. It's rather things are getting a lot worse real fast.

And therefore, they have reason to doubt that Moses really is God's messenger. And Moses himself wonders it. I mean, he knows God appeared to him, but he says, Lord, why did you send me? I thought you sent me to deliver these people.

But I showed up and now I just look like I've got egg on my face. I told them you're going to deliver them and things have just gotten worse. You're not exactly enhancing my credibility.

And why are you allowing this to happen to them? I thought you were on their side. And so in chapter six, the Lord said to Moses, now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand, he will let them go.

And with a strong hand, he will drive them out of his land. He's not just going to comply. He's going to be eager to drive them out of the land because he's going to be so quick, so eager to see them leave.

God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as. Else should I God Almighty, but by my name Yahweh, I was not known to them.

Now, this statement has occasioned lots of controversy because God seems to be saying that he was not known by the name Yahweh to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As if he's only recently revealed that name to Israel through Moses and that earlier generations of his rights didn't know the name Yahweh. But that's not really true, apparently, because when you read the book of Genesis, we find Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all using the word Yahweh.

And at least as Genesis stands today. So why does God seem to say otherwise? There are three explanations that have been given. Any of them may be true and they would solve the problem.

But it is a sufficient problem that scholars always feel obliged to wrestle with it. One suggestion is that God actually did not use the name Yahweh in revealing himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that when Moses wrote Genesis, he supplied the name Yahweh in places where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had originally used some other name. Like else should I should I mean the almighty God? We know that's the term that Job and his friends use.

The almighty should I. Job was very ancient and apparently lived in the days of the patriarchs. It would appear that else should I, as God recurs it here, that the name he revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob under might have been the name they knew. But that in writing Genesis centuries later, Moses, when he talked about God, supplied the word Yahweh in the proper places, even though that name had not been used by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

That would take these words of God literally. And it would also be a possible explanation. But it's not the only explanation.

It's not the one that most scholars take. Another suggestion is that we're going to send the word name in the distinctly Hebrew sense, rather than the way that we use the word name. When we talk about someone's name, we're just talking about the label that we use to address them.

Our names, our parents give us names in many cases in modern times because it's a family name or because that's the name they heard. Someone has a good name. They like the sound of the name or whatever.

I mean, there's various reasons why people are named what they are named. But in biblical times, a name was often given to someone because of its meaning and because it's almost prophetic, at least in the Hebrew history. A lot of the names, even people's names were changed after they were adults who reflect what their mission was or what their destiny was or what their significance was.

Jesus even changed the names of some of his disciples. God changed the name of Abram to Abraham. He changed the name of Jacob to Israel and so forth.

So we find a number of times people's names are changed because the name signifies something deeper than just the syllables by which you would address someone so that they'd know who you were talking to. You know, it's more than just your label. The name in Hebrew, a person's name speaks much more of his reputation.

We even talk that way, too. We talk about somebody's good name. We mean their reputation.

Their reputation is based on their character, on their achievements, on who they really are, not just a word by which they're called, but it is their identity. When in the Bible it talks about somebody's name, especially the name of the Lord, it's often referring to his character more than anything or even his identity. His status, his reputation.

There's all of this wrapped up in the term name. That's why when the Bible talks about us doing things in the name of Jesus, it means more than just affixing the word Jesus to the end of our prayers or to, you know, when we're casting out demons, say I command you in the name of Jesus to come out or we pray in the name of Jesus. We think of doing

things in the name of Jesus primarily just affixing the word Jesus to the statement we're making because we think of a name just as just as a word.

But in biblical times, a person's name referred to the whole the whole person himself, his character, his identity, his his authority and his reputation. And therefore, to say that we act in the name of Jesus, it actually means we act in the person of Jesus. We actually are brought into him in the body of Christ to be part of him, of his flesh and his bones.

We are part of Jesus and we speak as Jesus to the demons. We speak even as Jesus to the father. Jesus said in that day, you will ask me nothing, but you'll ask the father in my name and he'll give it to you.

We come to the father on the merits of and the reputation of and the character of and the authority of Jesus. That's what it means to act in his name. And when God talks about his name here, he says, by my name, El Shaddai, I was known to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But by my name, Yahweh, I was not known to them. Many scholars think that he doesn't mean that they didn't know the word Yahweh and that, in fact, as Genesis reads it, they actually did use the name Yahweh. And that is we could take that at face value that they did.

But what he's saying here is they knew me in one capacity as the mighty God. I mean, Abraham knew I could make his wife, who is barren, have a baby. You know, Jacob knew that I could preserve him for 20 years in a foreign land and prosper him in spite of his uncle's oppression.

And Joseph knew me as the mighty God who could elevate him from the prison house into the seat beside Pharaoh. They knew me as the almighty God, but they never knew me as the Yahweh, as in other words, the way that Israel is going to come to know me now. The name Yahweh forever after this is going to be associated with God, the redeemer, God, the deliverer.

And Abraham, Isaac and Jacob never knew me as that. They never knew me as a deliverer. They never knew me as a redeemer.

They never needed to be redeemed or delivered as Israel now needs to be. They knew my mighty power. They knew me as God almighty.

But they didn't know my character and my my behavior as Israel will now know it. So many scholars feel that's what he's saying here. He's not saying that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob were unfamiliar with the word Yahweh as a name for God.

But they had never really seen God's characteristic behavior that he's going to manifest in this case. And the name Yahweh from now on will be a covenantal name for the

redeemer of Israel, which he has never been before. So that is one way scholars take it.

To my mind, either that or the previous suggestion I made that, you know, that the word Yahweh is added by Moses to Genesis after the fact. Either one really explains this. But there's a third explanation, which is also a possibility.

And that is that in the Hebrew text, there are no punctuation marks. And therefore, if there's a question, there's no question mark. You have to just recognize it as a question.

Without that punctuation. And it is possible, and this is a commonly suggested solution to the problem, that in verse three of Exodus six, God should be understood to be saying this. I appeared to Abraham and Isaac and to Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh, was I not known to them? Asking it like a rhetorical question like not only did they know me as El Shaddai, but didn't they also know me as Yahweh? So that it's stated as a rhetorical question, which becomes, in effect, an affirmation.

An affirmation that they did know him as Yahweh as well as El Shaddai. So all these solutions are entirely different from each other. And they can't all be true.

Actually, probably only one of these could possibly be true. And it's hard to choose between them because they all really work. I leave it to you to choose your favorite and to know that you might be wrong because there could be other explanations that are right.

But one thing we can say for sure, this problem is not insoluble. You know, when there are problems in the Bible, when there are apparent contradictions in the Bible, sometimes we may never find out exactly how they're to be resolved. But the fact that there's at least one plausible solution to say nothing of two or three plausible solutions possible means that no one can really argue that the Bible is flawed here.

We may not know in what way the passage is vindicated, but it is vindicated one way or another. And there's more than one opportunity for it to be vindicated. So we'll not worry about the problem.

All we can say is these are the proposed solutions. Verse four, he says, I have also established my covenant with them. That would be with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were last mentioned in verse three.

God established a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage. And I have remembered my covenant.

So there's a number of reasons why God is acting here, why God is coming to the rescue of Israel. And by the way, if we didn't have the book of Genesis, it'd be a mystery to us



as we come to the book of Exodus. If Exodus was the first book of the Bible and we came to Exodus as cold without any knowledge of Genesis, we wouldn't really know why God cares about this particular group of slaves.

I mean, we might say, well, God cares about the downtrodden. God stands for the underdog. And that would possibly be a good answer.

But we wouldn't know the real reasons, the real reasons that God is on their side because what happened in Genesis. And he says there's he says there's really two reasons I'm coming to the aid of Israel here. One is I made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that I'd give their descendants this land that they were sojourners in.

And that's going to happen as a result of what I'm going to do here. The other thing is, I feel sorry for you guys. I've heard you groaning.

I feel like you've suffered enough. It's time for me to fulfill those promises. So it's what I said to your ancestors and it's what you're going through right now that motivates me.

Both of these things are on God's mind. For six, therefore, say to the children of Israel, I am Yahweh. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

I will rescue you from their bondage and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgment. I will take you as my people and I will be your God knows how many I will. These are God's commitments.

He's making he's making these. All of these are promises. He's making it this time.

Then you shall know that I am Yahweh, your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Now, remember, I said that if the name Yahweh in verse three is referenced to the character of God as Yahweh, the deliverer, that would seem to be confirmed here. He says, then you will know that the Abraham and Isaac never knew God as Yahweh, the deliverer.

But Israel will when I will do all of these things. He says, then you will know that I am Yahweh, your God, who brings you from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a heritage.

I am Yahweh. That's what I do. So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel, but they would not heed Moses because of the anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.

So all these encouraging I will, I will, I will, I will most of the boy. That's good news. I go tell the children of Israel at that.

But they hear it. They say, I don't believe you. You were talking that way yesterday.

And look how things have gone since then. Just leave us alone, would you? And they were bitter and they would not believe. Verse 10 and Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, go and speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he must let the children of Israel go out of his land.

And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying that children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me? For I'm of uncircumcised lips. Now, uncircumcised to the Jewish mind is simply a term that means unclean, unacceptable.

And probably, I mean, Moses might be saying, you know, I'm not a good speaker, but that would seem irrelevant because God has already put Aaron into the picture for that purpose. He may be saying my speech. Anything I have to say is to be unacceptable to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh has already shown his disdain to me. He's not going to respect what I have to say. My words are not the words of a man that he's going to pay attention to.

I have unacceptable lips. I'm not one of the people that Pharaoh is asking counsel from or looking for direction from. And then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Now, that statement in verse 13 is kind of a summary of the whole story. And the reason that summary is given is because it's going to break away for a moment to a side issue. And that is what the genealogy is of Moses and Aaron.

Jewish genealogies are very important. And the main thing here is to show that Moses and Aaron are descended from Levi, the tribe of Levi, because later in the story, the tribe of Levi are going to be selected to be the priestly tribe. And Aaron is of the tribe of Levi is going to be the high priest.

And so to show the Levitical pedigree of these men, we have a time sort of an aside, maybe a parenthesis here to tell us where they came from. It says these are the heads of their father's houses. The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanak, Halu, Hezron and Carmi.

These are the families of Reuben and the sons of Simeon were Gemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jacob, Zohar and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. These are the families of Simeon. These are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations, Gershon, Kohath and Mareri.

And the years of the life of Levi were 137. Now, these three Reuben, Simeon and Levi were the oldest sons of Jacob in order of their birth. Levi was the third.

You might think we're going to go through the other nine, too, but we're not. This list was

given only to get us so far as Levi, because Levi is now the family going to look at. We talk about Levi's three sons.

We're going to talk about, you know, the line through which Moses and Aaron came. But the reason for mentioning Reuben and Simeon apparently is to show that the particular position that the Levites held in the in the in the family structure that Levi was the third son of Jacob. And so the first and second sons are mentioned, but the ones below Levi are not mentioned because once we get to Levi, we're not interested in anything else for the present purpose.

But to see how these men came from the tribe of Levi. Interestingly, it also says that the years of Levi were 137, though we're not told the ages of Reuben and Simeon when they died. So the sons of Gershon, which was one of the sons of Levi, there were three.

First, 17 were living and shimmy. According to their families and the sons of Kohat, another of them, of the sons of Levi, were Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Aziel. And the years of the life of Kohat were 133.

The sons of Mareri were Mahali and Mushi. These are the families of Levi, according to their generations. So we have all three of the sons of Levi mentioned separately, although the second of them, Kohat, is the one that Moses and Aaron come from.

So only Kohat's age is given. We're given more detail about the generation specifically related to Moses and Aaron. We're not told the ages of Gershon or Mareri at the time of their death.

But we find in that list, in verse 18 of the sons of Kohat, one named Amram. And is he that we will next focus on in verse 20. Now, Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as a wife, and she bore him Aaron and Moses.

Now, it doesn't mention that Miriam also was born and older than Aaron. Why do we know that? Because it later comes out that Aaron is three years older than Moses. And yet Miriam was old enough at the time of Moses birth to be set watch over the basket in the bulrushes.

And and therefore, she would have been older than three years old. So she would be older than Aaron. But she's not mentioned because she's a girl.

And but she is significant in the story. But often the daughters are not mentioned in a genealogy. The sons are because it is the son's names that are carried on to the next generation, not the daughter's names.

So she bore Aaron and Moses and the years of the life of Amram were 137. And then we have the sons of some of the others that are. Well, I guess we will talk about them.

I was going to skip over some of them. But I wanted to say something about Amram and Jochebed. As I said, Jochebed means Yahweh is glory.

And therefore, even before Moses was born, Jochebed's parents knew the name Yahweh. And so the name Yahweh was apparently revealed in Israel before the time of Moses. You can see that Amram married his father's sister, his aunt.

What's interesting to me about that is that later on in Leviticus 18, where there are various relationships mentioned where, you know, people are too closely related to approve of marriage between them and therefore certain marriages are forbidden in Leviticus 18 to close relatives. In Leviticus 18, 12, it says, you shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister, for she is near of kin to your father. So in the law, it's illegal for a man to marry his aunt, his father's sister.

Now, who wrote the law? Moses wrote the law. This is very good evidence that Moses didn't make up the law, because if he made up this law, he'd make his own parents an illegitimate marriage, making himself and Aaron illegitimate children. Because his own father married his aunt, and that was what produced Aaron and Moses.

It's obvious that God came up with these laws, not the men, because no man would write a law making it up to make his parents' marriage illegitimate, and himself and his own birth, therefore, that of an illegitimate child. Now, of course, Moses was not illegitimate because these laws restricting the incestuous marriages didn't exist before Moses was given them by God. And incestuous marriages are what we would call incestuous marriages, even what the law itself would refer to as such, were fairly commonplace before the time of the law.

Not only Moses' parents being in a marriage that would have been later unlawful, but Abraham married his half-sister. That also would be unlawful under the law later on. Also, Jacob married two women who were sisters of each other.

And while the law did not forbid polygamy exactly, it did forbid a man to marry two women who were sisters. And so some of the important families that led to the rise of Israel, and specifically to the birth of Moses, were marriages that would, at a later time in the law that Moses gave, be condemned in the law, which, of course, indicates that for whatever reason God permitted it before and forbade it at this later point, it's clear that it's God and not man that came up with these laws. As I said, no Israelite would have come up with laws forbidding these marriages since they would, in a sense, illegitimize many of the main generations of their ancestry, the most important ones.

And, of course, going back to Adam and Eve's children, we know that they had to marry their own sisters because there wasn't anyone else to marry. So the laws that later forbade these things were not relevant prior to the giving of the law. Now, Exodus 6, 21, the sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zitri.

And the sons of Uziel were Mishael, Elzathan, and Zitri. Now, these were sons of Kohath, brothers of Amram. So these men who are mentioned are the uncles of Moses.

And some of their sons are important because Korah, for example, is the one of them who led a rebellion against Moses later on in the wilderness. In verse 21, the sons of Izhar. Now, Izhar was Moses' uncle and Korah, therefore, was Moses' first cousin.

And the rebellion of Korah in the wilderness was, therefore, a rebellion not just by some stranger in the crowd, but by Moses' own first cousin, Korah. And then we read of Aaron taking a wife, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nashan, his wife. Verse 23, And she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Now, Nadab and Abihu both died in one day. In fact, the very day the tabernacle was open. First day that it was open for worship.

They're priests. They go in there to offer incense. They do it the wrong way.

They get incinerated. Which left only Eleazar and Ithamar as priests to serve a whole nation, along with their father, Aaron, after that. But these are the four sons that Aaron started out with.

And the sons of Korah, no doubt mentioned because the sons of Korah become important later, they wrote some of the Psalms. Although Korah himself was a rebel and died when the earth opened up and swallowed him when he rebelled against Moses, his sons were not swallowed up and they later became worship leaders in Israel. In the time of David and later, apparently, they were writing Psalms.

And a number of the Psalms were written by the sons of Korah. So we're given their names here. The sons of Korah were Athir, Elkanah, and Abiasah.

These are the families of the Korahites. Now, Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Puteo as a wife, and she bore him Phineas. And these are the heads of the fathers, the Levites, according to their families.

These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, according to their armies. These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron.

Well, that sounds a little redundant, but I guess we just want to make sure we know which Moses and Aaron we're talking about. The ones from this genealogy. Now, I didn't mention, but I should mention that it goes beyond Aaron's sons to even one of his grandsons or one important grandson.

And that's Phineas. And the reason that Phineas is mentioned and not many others of his

generation are included is because he was later important also. You might remember in the incident at Baal Peor, where the Israelites were worshiping idols and sleeping with Moabite women, probably cult prostitutes of the Moabite religion, that a plague was sent by God on the children of Israel.

It was consuming many of the Israelites, and Phineas ended the plague because there was a very brazen Israelite man who took one of these harlots into his tent in the side of everybody. And they were in there sinning, and Phineas ran in there with a javelin and threw it through both of them, killed them in the act. And so he was a hero and stopped the plague that way.

So he is mentioned, though other grandsons of Aaron are not mentioned. OK, so that's the Aaron and Moses we're interested in here. Verse 28.

And it came to pass on the day when Yahweh spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt that Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, I am Yahweh. Speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I say to you. But Moses said before the Lord, behold, I am of uncircumcised lips.

And how shall I? How shall Pharaoh hear me? Now, obviously, this is a summary of what we've already read. This is not saying that this conversation happened again. What it's saying is that we've had a bit of a summary in verse 13, sort of a summary of the whole story that was interrupted by a parenthesis that told the genealogy of Moses and Aaron.

And then the summary continues to the end of chapter six and brings us. It wants to remind us, since we've been distracted by this genealogy for a little bit, wants to remind us of what had happened last. What had happened last before the summary and before the parenthesis was that Moses had said, God, Pharaoh won't listen to me because I'm of uncircumcised lips.

And that brings us back full circle to that spot, which was, of course, where we were in verses 10 through 12 before the before the interruption. Chapter seven. Yahweh said to Moses, see, I have made you as a god to Pharaoh and or as God to Pharaoh and Aaron, your brother, should be your prophet.

Now, this was stated earlier a little bit, although God had said that Moses would be like God to Aaron. Now, that doesn't mean that Moses is going to be like a divine person, but rather God to speak to Moses. He's not going to speak directly to Aaron.

He's not going to speak directly to Pharaoh. He's going to be the mouthpiece of he's going to be the one that represents God. The interests of Yahweh are going to be represented in the man Moses.

And as a prophet speaks for God, so Aaron will speak for Moses like a prophet of Moses. You shall speak all that I command you and Aaron, your brother, shall speak to Pharaoh that he must send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart

and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

But Pharaoh will not need you so that I may lay my hand on Egypt and bring my armies and my people, the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by great judgment. Now, he says, I'm going to bring my armies. He's probably referring to Israel as his armies.

Although he says some people think that the armies referred to some of the plagues. God's bringing an army of locusts, an army of frogs, an army of gnats, an army of flies, an army of boils and of hail and so forth. These are God's warfare that he's bringing against Egypt.

And he's saying, I'm going to harden Pharaoh's heart so I can bring these armies of mine against him and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt as a result. Although the way it's worded, it could mean that the children of Israel are the armies of God. And they certainly are.

They do fight God's battles after they leave Egypt so that you could see it either way. And it has been seen both ways by different scholars. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh when I stretch out my hand on Egypt and bring out my children, the children of Israel from among them.

Then Moses and Aaron did so just as Yahweh commanded them. So they did. And Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83 years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

So we're going to now see the confrontation begin. But before we do, I want to make a comment about God hardening Pharaoh's heart. This is not the first time it's been mentioned.

And I said I would mention at some point we're going to see it mentioned many times, approximately 20 times or more. There'll be references to Pharaoh's heart being hardened in most instances, at least 10 instances. It says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

I think there are three instances that say that Pharaoh hardened his heart. And then there's a number of instances, I believe there's maybe nine or 10 instances where it simply says his heart was hardened. Now, the word hardened is not always the same word in the Hebrew.

There's three different words that are used in all these cases where it talks about Pharaoh's heart being hardened. Three different Hebrew words. And one of the words means that his heart is made obstinate or resistant.

Another word that's used quite frequently means it is simply strengthened, that God strengthens his heart. Actually, a couple of the words have that general meaning. Now, to say that God strengthens Pharaoh's heart would suggest that he's not really changing

Pharaoh's heart.

He's simply fixing it in a position that it already is in. So it doesn't change. He's strengthening Pharaoh.

Now, at a later date, we read. Well, let me turn you to Romans chapter nine for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is discussed by Paul in Romans chapter nine, verse 16 and following. Paul says, so then it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy for the scripture says to Pharaoh.

Even for the same purpose, I have raised you up that I might show my power in you and that my name might be declared in all the earth. Therefore, he has mercy on whom he wills and whom he wills. He hardens.

God has mercy on whoever he wants to have mercy on, but he hardens whoever he wants to harden. And it says in verse 17 here, and this, by the way, is quoting from Exodus nine, verse 16. God said to Pharaoh, even for the same purpose, I have raised you up that I might show my power in you and that my name might be declared in all the earth.

This means I will show my power by bringing plagues upon you. The way God shows his power in Pharaoh is to judge the man to bring plagues upon him. And God says, I've raised you up in order to do this to you.

And it sounds sort of unfair. In fact, Paul says that God, a reader might say, well, then how does God find fault? Who has resisted his will? Why could God even hold it against Pharaoh? If God is going to harden him, whom he has mercy on, whom he wills and who he wills, he hardens. Now, I want to point out, first of all, that Romans nine is very often misapplied by popular exegesis.

Almost all preachers, when they want to talk about Romans nine, they make it sound as if it is saying that Pharaoh was predestined to go to hell. And that people who are predestined to go to hell, God hardens them. And people who are predestined to go to heaven, God shows mercy on them and he shows mercy on whom he will and he hardens whom he will.

And this most people understand Romans nine to be a description of God's predestination of who will be saved and who will not be saved. However, the scriptures that Paul uses in this passage do not talk about that subject. For example, earlier in the same passage in Romans nine, he quotes from Genesis, where God says about Jacob and Esau when they are in the womb, the older shall serve the younger.

And then Paul quotes from Malachi chapter one, where God says, Jacob, I have loved Esau, I have hated. Now, these passages are quoted, especially by Calvinists, to suggest that God has predestined even before people are born, whether God will hate them or



love them. That is, whether he'll save them or damn them.

And then they go to Pharaoh and the hardening of his heart and and in general, the hardening of people's hearts, because whom he will, he shows mercy on and whom he will, he hardens. Basically, the way Calvinists have understood this is that God has made a decision before anyone was born that he would save some, the ones he wants to save and that he will not save the others because he doesn't want to save them. At least he doesn't want to save them as much as he wants to save these ones, because he could save any he wants to.

According to Calvinism, God is sovereign. He does what he wants to do, and therefore he can save anyone he wants to. Man's will is not a factor in the equation.

Man doesn't have the power to say no to God. There's this thing called irresistible grace in the Calvinistic theology that God has selected you. You will irresistibly be drawn.

You can't say no to God. In fact, if you've not been elected for salvation, they say you can't say yes to God because they say you are. You are so corrupt, so totally depraved that you if you're not born again, you hate God and you will never believe or repent unless God changes you into another kind of person.

And so the Calvinist view is that people who are not born again hate God and cannot say yes to God. Even if they hear the gospel, they cannot believe they cannot repent. It's impossible.

But God has selected some before they were born to be saved. And those ones, he unilaterally elects them to be regenerated and he regenerates them. He doesn't be born again.

And upon doing so, they then come into a new kind of life where they now can repent. They now can believe. And so it all it's not man's will at all that's involved in salvation.

They said that if you're saved, it's just because God's will was to save you. If you're lost, it was God's will not to save you because he could have saved you, too. But he didn't chose not to.

That's his sovereign choice. That's Calvinism. Now, they use Romans nine for this, as if Jacob was chosen to be saved and he thought was chosen to be lost.

Pharaoh was chosen to be lost and Moses or someone else was chosen to have mercy, God's mercy on him. But that's not what any of these passages teach. You see, Jacob and Esau, the Bible does not say that one of them was saved and one of them was lost.

And the scriptures that Paul quotes about them in Romans nine don't say anything about that either. The scripture he quotes in Genesis, the older shall serve the younger. This

has to do with the destiny of Jacob and Esau and the nations that came from them.

That the nation of Edom would serve the nation of Israel. It has nothing to do with who's saved and who's lost. Lots of people were servants in the Roman Empire who were saved and their masters were lost.

They served their masters, but the master wasn't saved in them. Salvation has nothing to do with who you're serving in the sense of who you're subordinate to in the social structure. There's no comment in Romans nine about the salvation of Jacob or Esau, nor in the Old Testament is there necessarily.

That is, the Old Testament does not say that Esau went to hell. As far as that goes, it doesn't say that Jacob went to heaven, though he probably did, because in the book of Hebrews were told that he was a man of faith. But what about Pharaoh? The hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not about salvation.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart was an administrative act, whether he would let the people go or not. His own personal choices about whether to be a godly man or a wicked man, he made long earlier than this. God didn't harden Pharaoh's heart from birth so that he would be an evil man and go to hell.

The man was an evil man before God began to harden his heart. God came and found him as an evil man. He was an oppressor.

He was a tyrant. He was irreverent. He said, who is Yahweh that I should care what he thinks? This is the kind of man Pharaoh was before God did anything to him.

And God then hardened him or strengthened him in that position so that the man would not succumb to the pressure under the plagues and get into early. Now, even the hardening of Pharaoh was not to guarantee that the man would go to hell, but to guarantee that the ten plagues would run their course before the man caved in. It was God's desire that the man would cave in, but not before these plagues had run their course.

God stopped hardening Pharaoh's heart after the tenth plague. He hardened it for the first ten plagues. And by the way, after he let Israel go, God hardened his heart again to pursue them.

These hardening of the heart of Pharaoh had to do with his administrative decisions as a ruler, had nothing to do with his personal salvation. And likewise, when Paul says that whom he will, he shows mercy upon and whom he will, he hardens. As God shows mercy on the ones he wants to and he hardens whom he wants to.

This is not saying that God has selected unconditionally to save some people and others not to be saved. Yes, God shows mercy on whomever he wants to show mercy on. But is

there anything he takes into consideration in deciding whom he wants to show mercy to? Of course, Jesus said, blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy.

God says he gives grace to the humble. He resists the proud, gives grace to the humble. God shows mercy to the ones he wants to.

And the ones he wants to are the ones who are humble, the ones who are merciful. In other words, there are certain behaviors that people do. Which God says, if you are one of these people, if you humble yourself, if you're merciful, then you will obtain mercy, you will obtain grace.

You won't earn it that way, but you'll obtain it. God will give mercy to whoever he wants to, and he wants to give it to merciful people and to humble people and not to proud people. So, whom he wills, he hardens.

Moses is not saying that all the non-elect are hardened. Remember, Calvinism teaches that if you're not regenerated, you can't come to Christ anyway. And if God hardens, as Calvinist thinks, all the non-elect so that they can't get saved, why does he have to do that? If they can't come to him without a special regeneration from him in the first place, why does he have to harden them? What's the point of hardening the heart of somebody to guarantee they won't get saved if, in fact, no one can get saved without a special act of grace in the first place? There'd be no need to harden them, just leave them as they are if he wants them lost.

This is not talking about Pharaoh being lost. Of course, Pharaoh was lost. He died in rebellion.

But God didn't make him a rebel. God didn't choose him to be a rebel. God raised him up and made him stand through these plagues, did not let him cave in to the pressure of the plagues because God wanted those plagues to run their course.

God wanted to judge Egypt. He wanted to judge all the gods of Egypt, as he later said in chapter 12. The nation of Egypt and its ruler were already evil people, an evil nation, ripe for judgment.

And God had decided, this is the way I want to judge them, thoroughly, in waves, ten waves of plagues upon them. In order for that to happen, I can't have Pharaoh repenting on me because then I have to show him mercy. So I'm going to harden his heart, at least until the plagues are over.

Now, after the plagues were over, God's judicial hardening of Pharaoh, we don't have any reason to believe that God would have to continue that. Now, if Pharaoh died in the Red Sea, then he died on repentance, clearly enough. I don't know that it's all that clear that he died in the Red Sea.

He sent his armies in and he may have been at the head of them. I've looked and looked to find some specific statements that say this Pharaoh died in the Red Sea, but it kind of seems like he did. But I don't know that it's stated that clearly.

But if he died in the Red Sea, then, of course, he died without repenting. But the point is, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not like God decided, this is a man I don't want to save. This is a man I don't want to see in heaven.

And therefore, I'm going to harden his heart so he'll be an evil man. That's not what happened. The man chose to be an evil man before God ever came near him.

Like my mother used to say when I'd make faces when I was a little kid, just, you know, messing with your muscles, your face, how weird you could look. My mother used to say, what if your face would freeze in that position? Well, the implication is, of course, you couldn't blame anyone but yourself, because if you hadn't put your face in that position, if it froze there, you did it, you know. And it's sort of like with Pharaoh, there's a will freeze.

His will was in a certain contorted position by his own choice. And God froze him there for a while. He hardened him in there.

He strengthened him in that position. He paralyzed his will so that he could not change while these plagues ran their course. But this is an unrelated issue to salvation.

And so always in the Bible, the hardening of the heart is not directly related to salvation in most cases, at least not in these historical cases. Maybe the hardening of the remnants of Israel or the blinding of them in the New Testament could be said to be a judicial act to keep them from salvation. But I believe that every time God interferes with a person's ability to see the truth or interferes with their ability to repent, it's because he is working a temporal judgment on them.

It's not because he doesn't want them ultimately saved. He's usually doing it on people who've already decided they're not going to be saved. They've already decided that's not where they're going.

And so they simply volunteer for the position of being God's punching bag. And so he keeps them in that position long enough to punch him up enough to do what he wants to do. In the case of Pharaoh, it's not only Pharaoh, but his nation that came under judgment.

But in order for the nation to come under judgment, the Pharaoh has to be stiff and unyielding and unsympathetic and not capable of repenting. So that's what happens. Now, you know, we haven't gotten very far through chapter seven, but we're not going to without going way over our time.

So I think we'll stop here for a break. .