

GOD IS KEEPING HIS PROMISES TO AND THROUGH ORDINARY PEOPLE

Exodus 6:13-27

Please review this week's catechism question.

STUDY

1. How does each of the following verses give an explanation to what is “really” happening in each of the following events?

- The sun rises and a new day begins: Psalm 118:24
God made this day and gave it to his creation as a gift. It is to be received with joy and gratitude towards God.

- Rain falling upon a field of corn: Acts 14:17
God sent the rain and is providing food for human beings to show his ongoing generous provision.

- An extended family joyfully celebrating the 5th birthday of one of the children belonging to the family: Acts 14:17
God has filled this family's heart with joy. Their happiness is a gift from God.

- A millionaire sitting on the deck of his yacht with his wife, content and happy, sipping wine and enjoying the fresh sea breeze; who gained his wealth through starting his own business and working hard and honestly for 30 years: Ecclesiastes 5:19-20
God is enabling this man to enjoy the wealth and possessions, which God has given him.

- The same millionaire in the same situation but with this added information; he has never given a dime to the church, the cause of Christ or the poor in the name of Jesus, though he has given much to many different kinds of charities. He despises Christ and Christians: Luke 12:13-21 & Psalm 73:16-20
He is on the edge of disaster. He is not secure at all but in the most dangerous of positions. God is going to destroy him forever in hell

because of his greed and indifference to God and his purposes in the world.

- The godly daughter of a faithful pastor/missionary gets a severe headache and dies within hours of returning from a year serving poor children in another country: 2 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Peter 1:6-7, Hebrews 12:7-11

God has sent a trial into this family to teach all to put their hope in God, to purify their faith that there will be greater joy when Christ returns, and so they can share in the holiness of God.

- Two teenage siblings fight over the TV remote: James 4:1-4
The teenagers believe being in control of the TV remote is a better pleasure than being loved by God in Christ.

The fact is that we all can “see” the circumstances of our lives and the lives of others but we don't really “see” what these events and circumstances mean without God's explanation. God has given us this book to explain what is going on in our lives and in the world. The Bible does this in many different ways. One of the most common ways is by telling us the stories of regular human beings and then giving us a “behind the scenes” look at what is really going on. The point of this is so that we can see our lives in the lives of the Biblical characters and so when we understand what is going on behind the scenes of their lives, we can understand what is going on in our lives. If we did not have the Bible but were merely observers of the events recorded from Genesis 12 through Exodus 5 we would be hard pressed to see any overarching, divine work going on.

2. Without reference to God or God's plan describe what you, as a human observer, would have seen if you had lived in Egypt during the 80 years Moses has lived (Exodus 1-6:12).

If we had lived in Egypt during the time recorded in the opening chapters of Exodus, we would have simply observed a very common human experience. A powerful people, filled with racial hatred and fear of enemies, have subjected another people to slavery. The most powerful nation on earth at the time has used its power to keep another nation in its power in order to profit from their free labor.

Then, we would have seen a couple of crackpots show up and command the leader of the nation to let the slaves go free. We would have marveled at their superstitious and outlandish claim that the God of the slave people had shown up and was ordering the king of this most powerful nation to let the people go. Not surprisingly, the leader of the enslaving power is incensed by this insubordination and to squelch any thoughts of rebellion he has increased the level of oppression to intolerable levels. Naturally, the enslaved people are completely despondent, hopeless, and angry at the two crackpots who opened their mouths and made matters worse for them. As you would expect, the “prophets” are completely disheartened and have no interest in talking to the king again.

3. According to Genesis 15:12-19, Exodus 4:21-23 & 6:6-8, what is happening?

God is in the process of saving his people and bringing them into their own land. This is all part of the process that he is working in and through in order to deliver his people and give them their own country.

4. Compare Exodus 6:12 with Exodus 6:28-30. What do you notice?

Verses 28-30 are merely a repetition of v. 12 and what precedes it. They simply continue the story as it was being told in v. 12. If you eliminated vv. 13-27 you wouldn't lose anything in the story. These verses are an interruption in the flow of the story.

5. The main question regarding vv. 13-27 is this: why did Moses feel the need to insert this passage at this point in the story? Let's begin by first asking what do vv. 13 & 26-27 share in common? What's the big idea(s) in these three verses, especially in light of what's going on in the story when Moses inserts this passage?

Once at the beginning and twice at the end of this genealogy we are told that the goal of God for Israel is to bring them out of Egypt. Once at the beginning and twice at the end we are told that Moses and Aaron are the agents God will use to accomplish this goal. The salvation that God is preparing for Israel is infinitely beyond their

wildest imagination. How can it be possible that they can escape this great and powerful king and his armies? What would it be like to be a free people? They have lived in slavery for centuries. Generations of Hebrews have been born into slavery and died while in slavery. The only life they have ever known is a life of serving their masters. This is all they know and so how can they imagine what it will be like to be free, to live in their own country, owning their own property, rather than being property? The nature of God's promise is staggering. It would be hard to imagine a greater, more impossible deliverance than this one.

If you were Moses and Aaron, it would be beyond your wildest imagination for this fierce Pharaoh to willingly let the people of Israel go and that by your command. Moses had to run for his life from Pharaoh. He's just finished telling him to let the people go and he has stubbornly refused and has increased the suffering of God's people as a result. It would be virtually impossible to imagine Pharaoh obeying the word of Moses and Aaron. What amazing things must happen in order for the hardhearted Pharaoh to release Israel from their slavery? The point of these three verses is this: God is going to do this most impossible thing. He is going to deliver Israel from the enslavement of the most powerful nation on earth and he is going to do it by the word of Moses and Aaron.

6. How do the following verses point to the spectacular nature of the salvation we've been promised through Christ?

➤ John 3:16 *We will not perish in hell but will live forever with God.*

➤ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 *Dead Christians will receive new, glorified bodies and the bodies of living Christians will be instantaneously glorified and together we will all greet Christ in the clouds as he returns and so we will be with the Lord forever.*

➤ Rev. 21:6-7 *We will live with God as his sons and daughters forever.*

➤ Isaiah 25:6-9 *Tears will be wiped away and death will be no more. We will live in the abundance of a royal feast forever.*

- Romans 5:9 *We will be delivered from the wrath of God through Christ.*
- 2 Thessalonians 1:10 *We will marvel at Jesus forever and ever.*
- Rev. 7:9-17 *We will worship Christ and his Father forever out of our joy in him. We will never be harmed again or lack for anything as Jesus will personally care for us and make sure every need is met. No more sorrow or sadness.*
- Rev. 21:27 *There will be no sin or impurity in heaven but only those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ in holiness.*
- Romans 8:29-32 with Romans 3:9-18 *God is taking sinners and by his sovereign grace he chooses, calls, justifies and glorifies them. He takes enemies and makes them friends. He transforms us into the image of his son. He is for us and will give us everything we need to make it safely to heaven.*
- 1 John 3:1-2 *God will lavish his love on us forever as we will be like Christ when he comes. He will love us as he loves his son forever.*

7. What is most amazing to you about our salvation?

8. Compare the genealogy in Genesis 46:8-25 with this genealogy. What are the significant differences and similarities?

Genesis

This lists the sons and grandsons of Israel who went to Egypt

The first three entries are the first three sons of Israel with their sons

Both lists tell us that Shaul, the son of Simeon was born of a Canaanite woman

Exodus

This lists the names of heads of the families/clans that make up the sons of Israel

The first three entries are the first three sons of Israel with their sons.

After listing the first three sons with their sons, then Moses lists the sons of each of Levi's sons.

The rest of the list continues with the sons of Israel and their sons and sometimes the great-grandsons of Israel. They are organized by birth order according to their mother in this order: Leah, Zilpah, Rachael and Bilhah.

The basic point of the list seems to be to record who went down to Egypt.

He tells the age of death of Levi, his second born son, Kohath and his first born son, Amram.

After telling us of Levi's grandsons he tells us about one of those grandsons, Amram. Amram married his aunt, Levi's daughter Jochebed and these were the parents of Aaron and Moses.

He continues with the sons of Kohath and tells us of Ishar's two sons but then he skips over Hebron and tells of Uzziel's sons.

Then we are told about Aaron's marriage to Elisheba and his four sons.

We are informed of the Korahite clans and finally are told about Eleazor, Aaron's son's marriage and the birth of a son named Phinehas.

Throughout the list we are told that these are the names of the clans of Israel or of the tribes of Israel on several occasions. This is not simply a list of names but a partial list of some of the clans that make up the 12 tribes of Israel.

9. Why does Moses make such a selective list and place it at this point in the story? We will discover the answer to this question if we think about what we know about some of these people. (Remember, the first

readers were the descendants of these men and knew all that is recorded in Exodus and Numbers.)

- What do we know about Reuben, Simeon and Levi? (Gen 34:25-26, 35:19-22, 37:31-32)

When he mentions Reuben, Simeon and Levi we immediately remember how these brothers behaved in the book of Genesis. They betrayed Joseph into slavery and deceived their father for 23 years about what actually happened to Joseph. Additionally, Reuben had sex with, perhaps through rape, Bilhah, one of the four wives of his father, Jacob. Simeon and Levi murdered all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah.

- Why are we told that Shaul is born of a Canaanite woman? (see Deut 7:1-6)

This is a detail that Moses didn't have to record but he did in order to show that one of the clans of Israel is descended from the wicked Canaanites, whom Israel was commanded to not intermarry with.

- Why does Moses tell us that his dad was married to his own father's sister, who was then Moses' and Aaron's mother? (See Lev. 18:1-4 & 20:19)

Aaron and Moses are the offspring of an incestuous relationship. According to what Moses wrote in Lev. 20:19, it is a sin to do what Moses' mom and dad did and if they did it after Lev. 20:19 was written they would be subject to the death penalty. The people of Israel are no better than any other people in the world. In Lev. 18:2, which is the beginning of God's decrees regarding sexual immorality, he forbids Israel from behaving in the sexually perverted ways that the people of Egypt and the Canaanites behave. Yet, we see that Israelites are acting just like the people whom God is saving them from, the Egyptians and just like the people God is going to destroy so they can have their land, the Canaanites. How shocking is this? The parents of the savior of Israel are as perverted as the pagan people God is going to judge! God is not saving them because of who they are. Moses does not have a claim to any high pedigree. He can't claim the reason

God chose him is because he came from such a godly home. God didn't choose Moses because of his godly heritage but in spite of his ungodly heritage.

- Why does he mention Korah? (see Numbers 16:1-35)

In Numbers 16 we are told how Korah along with 250 other men rose up against Moses and Aaron in rebellion. God destroyed Korah and his entire family and all the other men due to their rebellion.

- Why does he mention Mishael, Elzaphan, Nadab and Abihu? (See Lev. 10:1-5)

We are reminded of another sinful episode in the later history of Israel. As you may remember Aaron and all of his descendants are designated as the priests of God to work in the tabernacle. Aaron's two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu disobeyed a direct command of God and carried burning incense not made as God required into the tabernacle. Fire came out from the altar and burned up both of these young men. It was Aaron's cousins, Mishael and Elzaphan who carried their charred bodies out of the tabernacle and buried them.

10. What is the point Moses is seeking to make by putting his genealogy in the story at this point?

The main point that Moses is seeking to drive home in this selective list of names is that salvation is entirely of grace. God did not choose Moses because of anything in him and he is not saving Israel because of anything in them. His motive for saving Israel through Moses is his own love and grace. We see in the ugliness of these lives, that despite what we see happening a spectacular salvation is being worked out "behind the scenes." These sinful people and their sinful lives are part of God's work of salvation. Therefore we can have hope as we see our own sin and the sin that is in the world, that God is still at work. If these people are candidates for salvation, then so can we be. If their sin didn't prevent God's gracious work from going ahead, neither will our sin or the sins of those who harm us.

11. How does seeing the sinfulness of these people help you?