

The Story of Hope #7

A Cry in the Night

Exodus Ch. 1-12

Story of Hope Section 13-14

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According to what God had promised, Abraham's family began to increase. As each generation passed, the promise of the **Rescuer** was handed down from one generation to the next. Abraham's son, Isaac, had two sons, and it was Jacob, not Esau, who received the promises of God.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived semi-nomadic lives in Canaan. However, in Jacob's later years a famine struck Canaan causing his family to uproot and look for food in the land of Egypt. Egypt initially treats them well because of a man named Joseph who was one of Jacob's sons.

Then, things take a dangerous turn for God's chosen people. A new king, or Pharaoh, comes into power and he does not remember who Joseph was. What he does remember is how powerful, numerous, and strong the Israelites have become. So, to stop the rise of a great nation inside his kingdom, Pharaoh devises a plan to enslave the Israelites, and to wipe out a whole generation of Hebrew boys.

Pharaoh did not catch God by surprise. This evil was known long before it entered the mind of this man, and there was already an answer to it. Do you remember Abraham? If we flip back to Genesis 15:13-16, we will see that God knew this would happen. He knew, and His rescue plan was already in place.

This new rescue plan had a new type of rescuer, a baby boy, named Moses. At his birth, Moses was hid for three months. When his parents could no longer hide him, Moses' mother placed him in a small raft made of reeds and she set her small child in it near the spot Pharaoh's daughters came to bathe. When the princess saw the basket and heard the pitiful cries of the infant, Pharaoh's daughter was moved with pity, and adopts Moses as her own.

Moses was weaned, and grew up in the house of Pharaoh. The instrument that God would use to rescue his people lived alongside the instrument that God would use to punish the Egyptians. Around the age of forty, Moses saw a fellow Hebrew being beaten by a slave master. Lashing out in rage, Moses kills the Egyptian. Fearing for his life, Moses fled from the land of his birth to Midian.

Moses became a shepherd and for the next forty years lived the life of a herdsman. His life now consisted of protecting, guiding, and finding food for his flock. One day, as Moses was out with his flock, he encountered something that baffled him.

A bush was on fire, but the bush did not burn up. Curious, he moved closer to this odd sight and out from the bush God spoke to Moses. God introduced Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God then tells Moses how He is going to rescue His people. Moses and his brother Aaron would go and speak to Pharaoh. They were to command Pharaoh to let the Israelites free. Although they would do signs and wonders, Pharaoh will not budge. He would need to be compelled by a mighty hand.

Moses returned to Egypt and entered the courts of Pharaoh. God commanded Pharaoh to free his people. Instead of freeing the Israelites, Pharaoh orders them to work harder. Again, Moses confronts Pharaoh, repeating the message from God. This time Moses and Aaron performed a series of signs but the magicians of Egypt copy. Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen.

In order to demonstrate His power over the false gods of Egypt and to convince Pharaoh to release the Israelites, God executed a series of ten dreadful plagues. Each time, as predicted, Pharaoh refused to release the Israelites. Finally, God sent a final plague aimed at the heart of Egypt. God would kill the first born son of every creature in Egypt. There was only one way to be rescued from this judgement.

God commanded Moses to tell the Israelites what to do. They were to take a lamb, and set it aside for death. It had to be a perfect lamb, one without blemish. The lamb could be taken from either the sheep or goats, but it had to be male. The lamb was to be watched between the tenth and fourteenth day to be sure that it was the right lamb, one without blemish. Then, they were to kill this perfect lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts and lintel of their homes. They were to enter the house, and to stay under the blood of the passover lamb until morning.

That night, they were to roast the body of the lamb on a fire, and eat its flesh in entirety because they would need its subsistence for their journey. The blood of this lamb was to save them from death. It was not the example of the lamb, or even the life of the lamb that was to rescue them. Rather, it was the death of the lamb that provided the blood that rescued them, and it was the body of the lamb that was eaten to give them life for their journey.

The Israelites believed and respond in obedience to the words of the LORD. Each man took the life of a lamb and spread the blood over his doorpost as a visible sign of his belief. Next week we will continue the story, but let's look at a few different themes that pop up in this epic narrative.

Under the Blood. First, it was those who were under the blood of the lamb that were rescued. The ones who were outside the blood were not. This first passover was to be repeated by the Israelites yearly. It was to be a reminder passed down to their children and grandchildren. It was a picture that God wanted remembered. It was a picture of the way that God would bless the nations of the world through a descendant of Abraham's family.

Response Reveals Belief. God reveals Himself to mankind and mankind is given a season of choice. A time to choose to respond in belief, or to not. It is God who then closes the door on man's season of choice. Pharaoh is a perfect example of this. God revealed Himself to Pharaoh through a series of signs and wonders, but Pharaoh hardened his heart against God and refused to listen. His response revealed his unbelief. God then closed the door on Pharaoh's season of choice. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and God used Pharaoh to punish the Egyptians who believed in him as a god. The Israelites on the other hand responded in a way that revealed their belief. They killed the passover lamb, and they entered the house staying under the blood. Their response revealed their belief, and because of this belief, God rescued.