

## WHO IS THE LORD? Exodus 6:1-9

**INTRODUCTION:** Knowing who somebody is affects how we respond to them. If a stranger makes a promise to me, I am not inclined to put much stock in the promise until I know more about them. Sometimes people come to Providence from churches in other cities and want to get involved here right away. While we appreciate their enthusiasm and desire, we also know very little about them and might not be ready to entrust them with a lot of responsibility until we know them better. But once we know them, understand their character and commitment, hear about them from others, observe who they really are, we are much more likely to give them a place to serve.

Back when Providence was just an idea, one aspect of that idea was that no church will ever become very much if it does not trust the Lord completely. And that no one can trust completely someone we do not really know.

So in the months before we started the church, a group of families met together to study a little book called *Knowledge of the Holy* by A. W. Tozer. In 23 short chapters, Tozer opens a world of knowledge about who God is in all His attributes and perfections.

*With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine Presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit, (Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, p. vii).*

This has always been true. Until we know who God is, we will neither adore Him nor trust Him, worship Him nor follow Him. Much of the anemic spirituality we see in the church is the result of people not knowing who He is. *"...but the people who know their God will display strength and take action." (Daniel 11:32)*

In the life of Moses, the issue of who God is was one of the keys to all that God did in his life and in the life of Israel. Today we want to explore what role that played in the early stages of his becoming a man of faith.

**THESIS: Who can know the greatness of the LORD our God and not trust Him with our lives?**

### I. UNTIL WE KNOW WHO IS LORD, WE WILL LIVE OUR LIVES AS IF THAT DOES NOT MATTER.

--The early stages of the exodus account emphasize the significance of knowing, or not knowing, who God is.

#### A. PHARAOH NEITHER KNOWS NOR CARES ABOUT THE LORD

**Exodus 5:2** *But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go."*

--In this brief speech, Pharaoh puts into words what everyone apart from the Lord believes—"Who is the Lord? Why should I be concerned what He thinks? I am going to do what I do regardless of who He is...or even if He is!"

--God does not intend for the world He created to operate without the knowledge of who He is.

**Rom. 1:18-21** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

--So even though Pharaoh does not know God or care to know or even allow his actions to be in any way influenced by Him, God holds him and all people accountable—knowing Him gives life and hope, not knowing Him leads to death and despair!

## B. MOSES KNOWS THAT KNOWING THE LORD MATTERS, BUT DOES NOT TRUST HIM YET.

### 1. An Initial Inquiry—What is Your Name?

**Ex. 3:13** *Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?”*

--Before going off on this mission of liberation, Moses wanted at least to know the name of the God sending him.

### 2. An Urgent Question—Who are You to treat us this way?

--After Moses had approached Pharaoh about letting the people go, Pharaoh decided that he would make an example of them by forcing them to work harder—not only making brick but having to find the straw themselves.

--The people were angry with Moses and Aaron for interfering and making their lives more unbearable than before and called on the Lord to bring judgment down on them.

--God had sent them in His name to ask for Israel’s release, but the results had been disastrous for them!

- Moses was despondent and confused
- Israel was angry and antagonistic
- Pharaoh was more prideful and arrogant

--So Moses asks, demands even, an answer from the Lord to know who He is and why they should keep trusting and obeying Him.

**Ex. 5:22-23** *Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “O Lord, why hast Thou brought harm to this people? Why didst Thou ever send me? <sup>23</sup> “Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he has done harm to this people; and Thou hast not delivered Thy people at all.”*

--In other words, “We did what You asked and You did not come through—You did not keep Your word and no one has been delivered; who are You that we should continue to trust You!”

--What follows is an extraordinary series of actions on the part of the Lord to reveal exactly who He is and why they should—why they must—know Him and trust Him in every way and in all things!

**Ex. 6:1** *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he shall let them go, and under compulsion he shall drive them out of his land.”*

--“Now you shall see...” – up to this point, this all may have been just a strange exercise for you but “now” you are in a position to pay attention...to see and believe...to know that I am the Lord!

## II. ONCE WE KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD, WE MUST LIVE OUR LIVES FOR HIM ALONE.

--If we are not convinced that He is the Lord, we will ignore His will and dismiss His plans—we will do what we want and rebel against what He wants.

--But when He has revealed who He is, as He has done over and over again, we are without excuse for continuing to leave Him out of, or limit His influence on, our lives.

**Ex. 6:6-7** *“Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. <sup>7</sup> Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

--What follows is an extraordinary demonstration of supernatural, miraculous proof that the LORD is God—that there is no other!

--And the message is loud and clear—*Who can see the greatness of our God and not trust Him with their lives?*

--In three events, God gives Israel more proof that He is the LORD than can ever permit any dissenting opinion or alternate conclusion!

- *The Exodus*
- *The Passover*
- *The Parting of the Red Sea*

--“*Now you will see...*” was the message the LORD spoke to Moses, and then all the world will also know that He is the Lord...the God of *absolute authority...perfect mercy...all power.*

--The main point of emphasis in all these things is that God’s name be known as the only true God, the Lord of heaven and earth.

***Ex. 7:5*** “*And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.*”

--That also is stated in various ways in *7:17; 8:10; 8:22; 9:14, 16; 10:2.*

--If you know that He is the Lord, your life must change forever...nothing remains the same when we know Him to be who He really is because we will then treasure Him, fear Him, love Him, desire Him!

**ILLUS.** In the last few years, much has been stated about the exodus from the church of the younger generation—some estimate as many as 70% abandon their spiritual lives and the church in their late teens and through much of their twenties. Some blame has been placed on programs that failed to be relevant, others have seen it as a sign that the church is not really necessary, and yet others have tried to use it as an excuse to introduce radical changes to ministry.

The truth is, for many reasons, the departure of so many is the result of our failure to lead them to know and treasure the Lord. What you treasure, you never abandon or throw away, so we have seen the results of giving out information about God without imparting our passion for God.

In Moses’ day, the Lord simply said, “*Now watch and see what I will do...then they will know that I am the Lord!*”

Then if they still choose to walk away, they will do so with understanding...if they continue in unbelief, they will refuse to walk in the light of what they honestly know to be the truth.

--So what did God do to prove to everyone that He is the Lord?

--That He is the God of *absolute authority...perfect mercy...all power.*

#### **A. THE AUTHORITY OF THE SOVEREIGN GOD: EXODUS**

--The hardened heart of Pharaoh resisted every appeal by Moses and Aaron to let the Israelites go free.

--When words would not work, the Lord showed everyone that His authority is absolute...He is Lord of the elements and surely is Lord over leaders and nations.

- 1. Water to Blood – 7:19**
- 2. Frogs – 8:2-4**
- 3. Gnats or Lice – 8:16**
- 4. Flies – 8:21**
- 5. Livestock Diseased – 9:3**
- 6. Boils – 9:8-9**
- 7. Thunder and Hail – 9:18**
- 8. Locusts – 10:4-5**
- 9. Darkness – 10:21-22**
- 10. Death of the Firstborn – 11:4-5**

--Finally, in desperation, but not acknowledgment that the LORD alone is God, Pharaoh gave in and let them go free.

--At any point, the Lord could have simply intervened and forced the hand of the Egyptians, but His purpose was greater than just the freeing of the Israelites from bondage.

--Extending His hand of authority over all things, He accomplished His higher purpose which was to reveal that He alone is the Lord, He alone has authority over all things, He alone is Lord of lords, God of all gods.

## **B. THE MERCY OF THE LAMB OF GOD: PASSOVER**

--Prior to the last plague, the death of the firstborn of the land, God showed His hand of mercy in three ways:

### **1. He blessed Israel with great riches**

***Ex. 11:2** "Speak now in the hearing of the people that each man ask from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor for articles of silver and articles of gold."*

### **2. He made Moses great in the eyes of all**

***Ex. 11:3** And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the man Moses himself was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.*

--But even though Moses was great, the Lord made sure that even at this point in Israel's history, **Jesus is better.**

### **3. He provided a Lamb for salvation**

***Ex. 12:13** 'And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.'*

--The blood of the lamb on the doorposts became a picture of the blood of the Lamb on the cross—the blood of a lamb slain for the purpose of saving those under its covering.

--In the Passover, God showed that He has made a way, even in the midst of His stern judgment for life to overcome death by His mercy and grace.

--As others died around them, those who believed God and trusted in the blood of the lamb were kept safe, alive and ready to move forth into the freedom of new life.

## **C. THE POWER OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD: RED SEA**

--But as you know, the hard heart of pharaoh was not going to give up without a fight, so even after the Lord led Israel out of Egypt, showing them the way.

***Ex. 13:21** And the LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.*

--But Pharaoh once again changed his mind and gave the Lord the opportunity to demonstrate even to the Egyptians that He is the Lord.

--He thought that Israel had made a monumental error in going down toward the Red Sea since that was a one-way street to a dead end—he knew that he had them.

--But what he did not know is that the Lord was directing them...they weren't wandering blindly (14:3)!

--In fact, the Lord intentionally led them toward this dead end because once again He planned to show everyone that He alone is Lord.

**Ex. 14:4** *“Thus I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.*

**Note:** Moses was growing in his confidence in the LORD and coming to believe that because of who He is, there was no reason to doubt Him any more. The Israelites were not there yet—in spite of all the miracles and mercies they had seen from Him, they panicked and yelled at Moses, blaming him for taking them from the security of their bondage to die in the desert in their freedom (14:11-12). Pharaoh was not convinced and still believed he was able to control the situation. The Lord, with power that only the Almighty could have, made sure that everyone had no other explanation for what was to happen—“He *must* be the Lord!”

--Moses takes his place in leadership and challenges the Israelites to fear nothing because the God they followed was the Almighty God and could be trusted without fear.

**Ex. 14:13-14** *But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. <sup>14</sup> “The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.”*

--What a difference in Moses from the man who did not know God enough to trust Him before the plagues and Passover showed Him both the *authority* and *mercy* of this great God!

--The rest of the story proves conclusively to everyone that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the LORD—is trustworthy as One whose authority, mercy and power are sufficient to make all of His promises, every word from His lips, the basis for a life-changing confidence in who He is.

- *Israelites passed through the waters, divided by the mighty hand of God in mercy.*
- *The Egyptians drowned in those same waters, covered over by the mighty hand of God in judgment.*

**Ex. 14:31** *And when Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.*

**CONCLUSION:** And so, Moses learned what it means to know the Lord. His faith grew and his leadership was established as a man who knew the Lord and could be trusted to lead the people to know and follow Him as well.

For all of us who recall those events, we find the transformation of Moses a great encouragement. Because He grew in the knowledge of who God is, He came to treasure the Lord and trust His Word.

Each of us can enjoy the same confidence when we come to know Him as He really is.

- **Hope** for every need in our lives is answered in the account of the exodus.
- **Mercy** for every sin in our hearts is afforded in the account of the Passover.
- **Power** for every obstacle in our path is available as in the account of the Red Sea.

But here is the main issue...Moses, great as he became as a man of faith, could not provide any of those things for us! Only through Jesus Christ do we know the God who brings all those things to us.

So we may sing with the Israelites a song of praise, exalting the Lord God for who He is. If we have asked, “Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?” He has answered so comprehensively that we cannot turn away from Him as if we do not know any more.

**Ex. 15:1-3** *Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and said, “I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; the horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. <sup>2</sup> “The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him; my father’s God, and I will extol Him. <sup>3</sup> “The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name.*

Moses asked and received such a powerful answer that the course of his life was changed forever. Even when he failed in the days ahead, he was confident in the Lord and trusted in His *mercy*. And when he faced challenges and threats, again his confidence stood firm as he trusted in His *authority* and *power*.

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He did not always understand the ways of God but he was always able to trust the words of God. Because of Jesus, we now know the same LORD. Moses was great...but Jesus is better. In His name, you can know the Lord. And you can trust Him to transform your life by what the knowledge of God does to anchor your faith in the only One worthy of the kind of devotion expressed in the song of Moses and Israel.

***Ex. 15:11*** *"Who is like Thee among the gods, O LORD? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?"*

Who would not live for such a glorious Savior who leads us to know such a glorious God!

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