

January 23 Su Reading 23 — Genesis 41:14-41 — God, the Future-teller

While Joseph was in prison, God revealed the future to Joseph through the dreams of the chief cupbearer and chief baker. Then, two years after those prophetic dreams were fulfilled, Pharaoh was disturbed by a dream and the chief cupbearer told him about 30-year-old Joseph.

<sup>14</sup> Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. <sup>15</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." <sup>16</sup> Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."<sup>[fn]</sup> <sup>17</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile. <sup>18</sup> Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. <sup>19</sup> Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup> And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows, <sup>21</sup> but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke. <sup>22</sup> I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. <sup>23</sup> Seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, <sup>24</sup> and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. <sup>27</sup> The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. <sup>28</sup> It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>29</sup> There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, <sup>31</sup> and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. <sup>32</sup> And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. <sup>33</sup> Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land<sup>[fn]</sup> of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. <sup>35</sup> And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. <sup>36</sup> That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

<sup>37</sup> This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. <sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?"<sup>[fn]</sup> <sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. <sup>40</sup> You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command.<sup>[fn]</sup> Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

#### ESV Footnotes

(41:16) Or (compare Samaritan, Septuagint) Without God it is not possible to give Pharaoh an answer about his welfare

(41:34) Or over the land and organize the land

(41:38) Or of the gods

(41:40) Hebrew and according to your command all my people shall kiss the ground

**Giving Credit to God** — God was working behind the scenes in this story. He gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams but did you notice that Joseph did not take credit for it? When Pharaoh told him, *"I have heard ... that ... you can interpret it"* (v. 15), Joseph replied, *"It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer"* (v. 16). After he was told the dreams, Joseph twice more gave credit to God: *"God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do"* (v. 25) and *"God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do"* (v. 28). Even Pharaoh was convinced that the interpretation was God's doing rather than involving Joseph's ability, saying, *"Since God has shown you all this ..."* (v. 39). It is so natural and tempting to take credit for things that God has done. We need to develop the habit of turning praise that comes to us back to the God who supplied our ability. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"* (James 1:17).

All glory, laud and honor  
to you, Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.

You are the King of Israel,  
and David's royal Son,  
Now in the Lord's name coming,  
our King and blessed One!

— Theodulf, Bishop of Orléans (c. 820);  
translator: J. M. Neale (1854)

[All Glory, Laud and Honor - YouTube](#)

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January 24 M Reading 24 — Genesis 45:1-20 — God Who Preserves

After the seven years of plenty, the famine was so bad in Canaan that Jacob (Israel) sent his sons to Egypt to buy food. Joseph recognized who they were but didn't reveal himself to them, even toying with them while they made several trips. Finally, the time came to identify himself and he revealed God's purpose for his slavery.

<sup>1</sup> Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. <sup>3</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. <sup>10</sup> You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup> There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.' <sup>12</sup> And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup> You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." <sup>14</sup> Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. <sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

<sup>16</sup> When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. <sup>17</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan, <sup>18</sup> and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I

will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.' <sup>19</sup> And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. <sup>20</sup> Have no concern for<sup>[fn]</sup> your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

#### ESV Footnote

(45:20) Hebrew *Let your eye not pity*

**God Did It** — Joseph's brothers had felt guilty for years about selling him into slavery and lying to their father about it. Joseph's disclosure brought it all out in the open. While they stood fearful and dumbfounded before him, he showed them that God was working behind the scenes to accomplish His plan for the family of Israel. He said, "So it was not you who sent me here, but God" (v. 8). God's purpose was "to preserve life" (v. 5) and "to preserve ... a remnant on earth" (v. 7). God's plan accommodated even the sinful actions of Joseph's brothers. "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28 NASB). If you are going through some tough times right now, consider that God may have a particular purpose for it to fit into His greater plan of providing good not only for you but for many others. Trust Him! He is good. Worship Him! He is worthy.

Many years later, after the death of Jacob (Israel), Joseph reassured his still-fearful brothers by saying, "...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (50:20).

The tune for this old hymn may not be familiar to you but you can sing along with it here: [God Moves in a Mysterious Way](#). Or, it may also be sung with the tune for "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.  
He plants his footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

You fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

— William Cowper (1774)

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#### January 25 Tu Reading 25 — Exodus 2:1-10 — The God Who Arranges Circumstances

The book of Exodus jumps ahead in time to about 400 years after the death of Jacob (Israel) in Egypt. We now move from the God-developed hero, Joseph, to another needed spiritual leader, Moses. He was born at a time when the Egyptian Pharaoh was attempting to limit the growth of the people of Israel by killing all their newborn boys.

<sup>1</sup> Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. <sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes<sup>[fn]</sup> and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. <sup>4</sup> And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. <sup>5</sup> Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. <sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." <sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" <sup>8</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. <sup>9</sup> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.

<sup>10</sup> *When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."*<sup>[fn]</sup>

#### ESV Footnotes

(2:3) Hebrew *papyrus reeds*

(2:10) *Moses* sounds like the Hebrew for *draw out*

**A Fine Child** — The arrangement of circumstances in this story is almost beyond belief. Baby Moses was doomed by a political edict but his mother refused to see him die and turned him over to the hand of God by placing him in a basket in the Nile among the reeds so he wouldn't float away. Did she know that Pharaoh's daughter regularly went to that spot to bathe? If so, why would she do that when the princess' father was out to kill all Hebrew baby boys? Why didn't Pharaoh's daughter send his basket down the river or have her servant submerge it? It was because God was involved and caused her to fall in love with the baby when she saw it even though she recognized that it was a Hebrew boy. She "*saw that he was a fine child*" (v. 2) and she "*took pity on him*" (v. 6). Those are the fingerprints of God! Then, she ended up paying Moses' mother to nurse her own child until he was weaned (v. 9). Only God could arrange that. These circumstances were orchestrated by God just as He had worked in bringing Joseph to the position of leadership in order to feed his family and bring them together. Now, God began to develop Moses to be the leader who would bring the people of Israel out of Egypt. God uses circumstances; He even creates circumstances. He is doing it in our lives today as well. He is developing us and positioning us to be in the right place at the right time to accomplish what He wants done in His overall plan for the world and for His people. You are "*a fine child*," too!

**Meditation:** Pharaoh's daughter named the baby "*Moses*" because she said, "*I drew him out of the water*" (v. 10). The ESV footnote tells us that the Hebrew word for "draw out" sounds like the word for "Moses." Did she know Hebrew? Did the Egyptian language share the same verb for "draw out"? Is that another "coincidence" from God? An interesting connection is that God said through the prophet, Hosea, "*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son*" (Hos. 11:1). God "drew Israel out" of Egypt. When the baby Jesus was born, God preserved His life by having his parents flee with him to Egypt because of the threat of another king, so God "drew Jesus out" and sent the family to Galilee.

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January 26 W Reading 26 — Exodus 3:1-22 — The Name of God

Moses grew into manhood in the house of Pharaoh with affluence and education. Then, feeling that he could do something to help his own Hebrew people, he went too far and too fast, and ended up killing an Egyptian. He then fled to the country of Midian, east of the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea. There, he was married and God began training him in the school of leadership.

<sup>1</sup> *Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.* <sup>2</sup> *And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.* <sup>3</sup> *And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."* <sup>4</sup> *When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."* <sup>5</sup> *Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."* <sup>6</sup> *And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup> and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup> Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." <sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup> He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."<sup>[fn]</sup> And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD,<sup>[fn]</sup> the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. <sup>16</sup> Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, <sup>17</sup> and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" <sup>18</sup> And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' <sup>19</sup> But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.<sup>[fn]</sup> <sup>20</sup> So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. <sup>21</sup> And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, <sup>22</sup> but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

#### ESV Footnotes

(3:14) Or *I AM WHAT I AM, or I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE*

(3:15) The word *LORD*, when spelled with capital letters, stands for the divine name, *YHWH*, which is here connected with the verb *hayah*, "to be" in verse 14

(3:19) Septuagint, Vulgate; Hebrew *go, not by a mighty hand*

**The "I AM"** — The name of God is Yahweh. That name was used many times in the book of Genesis but it is introduced formally here for the first time as the name of God. Moses was met by "the angel of the LORD" (v. 2) in the flaming bush, who was immediately identified as "the LORD" (YHWH) and "God" (v. 4). Therefore, many believe that this special being, "the angel of the LORD," was the pre-incarnate Son of God. When Moses asked God for His name, He connected His name with the verb form, "I am," saying, "I AM WHO I AM" (v. 14). About 1,500 years later, when Jesus was confronted by the Jewish religious leaders, He said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). His opponents immediately understood that He was identifying Himself with the divine name, "I AM," and "they picked up stones to throw at him" (v. 59). This name of God and its connection with the verb form, "I am," points to the omnipresence of God: He is everywhere present. He is present in every place and in every time. He is with us throughout

Your Name is a strong and mighty tower  
Your Name is a shelter like no other  
Your Name, let the nations sing it louder  
'Cause nothing has the power to save  
But Your Name

— Paul Baloche, Glenn Packiam (2006)

[Your Name \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

our whole lives and through every trial and joy we experience. The “*I AM*” is infinite in “being.”

**Meditation:** God was very specific in telling Moses that His name was Yahweh (YHWH, “*the LORD*”), saying, “*This is my name...*” (Ex. 3:15). But He also added something about its importance, that it is to exist “*forever*” and is “*to be remembered throughout all generations*” (v. 15). It is His forever-name and we are to remember it. This name was intentionally forgotten by the Jews when they feared taking God’s name in vain and substituted the words “*the LORD*” whenever they wrote or spoke about God. They remembered the written consonants (YHWH) but forgot the unwritten vowels. Yahweh doesn’t want that; He wants us to “*forever ... remember it.*”

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January 27 Th Reading 27 — Exodus 4:1-17, 27-31 — The God of Miracles

*<sup>1</sup> Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” <sup>3</sup> And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. <sup>4</sup> But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— <sup>5</sup> “that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” <sup>6</sup> Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.”<sup>[fn]</sup> And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous<sup>[fn]</sup> like snow. <sup>7</sup> Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. <sup>8</sup> “If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. <sup>9</sup> If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”*

*<sup>10</sup> But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” <sup>11</sup> Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? <sup>12</sup> Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” <sup>13</sup> But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” <sup>14</sup> Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. <sup>15</sup> You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. <sup>16</sup> He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. <sup>17</sup> And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”*

*<sup>27</sup> The LORD said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. <sup>28</sup> And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. <sup>29</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. <sup>30</sup> Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. <sup>31</sup> And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.*

#### **ESV Footnotes**

(4:6) Hebrew *into your bosom*; also verse 7

(4:6) *Leprosy* was a term for several skin diseases; see Leviticus 13

**Signs of Power** — The miraculous appearance at the burning bush convinced Moses that it was Yahweh. Then, God gave Moses the assignment to convince the Hebrew nation that God had not only appeared to him, but that he was called to deliver them from Egypt’s affliction. But God often has problems getting people to participate in what He wants to do on earth. Moses raised every objection he could think of against being God’s leader. An infinitely powerful God can do anything, however, so He provided Moses with three miraculous signs to present as proof that Yahweh had appeared to him. The signs worked and “*the people believed ... that the LORD had visited*” His people (v. 31). It is one thing to be *given* a sign as proof, but quite another to *demand* a sign for proof. Jesus later criticized the general population of His time who wanted Him to produce a sign to prove that He was the Messiah. He responded, “*Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation*” (Mark 8:12). The purpose of a sign from God is to produce faith. The intention for the staff-serpent-staff miracle was “*that they may believe*” (v. 5). The reason for the flipflop miracle involving leprosy was that “*they may believe*” (v. 8). Miracles are the means to an end: faith. Can we believe without the miracle? That is what God wants from us.

**Meditation:** Did you notice the miracles surrounding Aaron’s visit? God told Moses that Aaron “*is coming out to meet you*” (v. 14) before He told Aaron to go (v. 27). God knew that Aaron would obey Him—without miracles. Another miracle was the place of their meeting. It was “*at the mountain of God*” (v. 27). That was the same place that God had met and called Moses, at “*Horeb, the mountain of God*” (Ex. 3:1). It was not a coincidence. There would be one more miraculous fulfillment of a prophecy God gave to Moses at the time of his calling: “*... when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain*” (Ex. 3:12). God can do anything.

Here is the appropriate second verse for a hymn we sang earlier: “Praise to the Lord.”

<p>Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things so wondrously reigneth: Shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth. Hast thou not seen how thy desires e’er have been Granted in what he ordaineth?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">— Joachim Neander (1665)</p> <p><a href="#">Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (with Orchestra) - YouTube</a></p>
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January 28 F Reading 28 — Exodus 6:1-13 — Almighty Presence

Moses and Aaron then went to Pharaoh to ask that the Hebrews be allowed to go on a three-day journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to Yahweh and have a feast. The request backfired and the king added to the burdens of the Hebrews by making them gather their own straw for making bricks, which embittered the slaves against Moses and Aaron.

<sup>1</sup> *But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”*

<sup>2</sup> *God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD. <sup>3</sup> I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty,<sup>[fn]</sup> but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. <sup>4</sup> I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. <sup>5</sup> Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. <sup>6</sup> Say therefore to the people 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 slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. <sup>7</sup> I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup> I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.’”*

<sup>9</sup> *Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.*

<sup>10</sup> *So the LORD said to Moses,* <sup>11</sup> *“Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land.”* <sup>12</sup> *But Moses said to the LORD, “Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?”* <sup>13</sup> *But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.*

**ESV Footnote**

(6:3) Hebrew *El Shaddai*

**Compared Appearances** — God made this interesting comparative statement to Moses about His appearances: *“I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them”* (v. 3). His appearances as *“God Almighty”* are recorded for Abram (Gen. 17:1) and Jacob (Gen. 48:3). How was it that God was not *“known to them”* by the *“name of the LORD,”* Yahweh? There are 50 verses in Genesis, showing that individuals heard or spoke the name of Yahweh, e.g., Adam (4:1), Lamech (5:28), Noah (9:26), Abram (14:22), Sarai (16:2), Hagar (16:13), Lot (19:14), Isaac (24:3), Abraham’s servant (24:12), Laban (24:50), Jacob (28:16), and Leah (29:32). So, the name Yahweh was known by the patriarchs but not in the way that God revealed Himself to Moses. Four times in our passage for today, God announced Himself with this identifying statement: *“I am the LORD”* (vv. 2, 6, 7, 8). It seems to me that one of the differences between these appearances is that God’s *power* was emphasized for the patriarchs (*“Almighty God”*—v.3) whereas His *presence* was the focus for Moses (*“I am...”*). God would certainly demonstrate his power with Moses but He would also be his constant companion. God would be present with Moses as he struggled with the Hebrew leaders and with Pharaoh. In fact, God’s presence with Moses would be the main feature during the next 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Moses’ experience with God was a step up from that of the patriarchs. God is present with us today in an even more intimate way than with Moses because He sent His Son as Immanuel, *“God with us,”* to be our constant internal companion. God’s great name in the Old Testament was Yahweh; His great New Testament name is Jesus.

Oh, the glory of Your presence  
We Your temple give You reverence  
Come and rise from Your rest  
And be blessed by our praise  
As we glory in Your embrace  
As Your presence now fills this place  
— Steve Fry (1983)  
[Oh the Glory of Your Presence - YouTube](#)

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**ACCOUNTABILITY TIME** — If you are up to date in all your reading assignments as of today, please let me know at [accbibleread@gmail.com](mailto:accbibleread@gmail.com).

January 29 Sa Reading 29 — Exodus 8:20-32 — The Discriminating God

The plagues had started. Moses warned Pharaoh and repeated his request regarding the distant sacrifice, but it was refused, so God caused the Nile River to flow with blood. A second refusal sent a carpet of frogs over the land; the same thing happened with a plague of gnats. Something was quite different, however, with the fourth plague.

<sup>20</sup> *Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.”* <sup>21</sup> *Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and*



*your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand.* <sup>22</sup> *But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.*<sup>[fn]</sup> <sup>23</sup> *Thus I will put a division*<sup>[fn]</sup> *between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.* <sup>24</sup> *And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.*

<sup>25</sup> *Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land."* <sup>26</sup> *But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the LORD our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us?"* <sup>27</sup> *We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he tells us."* <sup>28</sup> *So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me."* <sup>29</sup> *Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the LORD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."* <sup>30</sup> *So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD.* <sup>31</sup> *And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained.* <sup>32</sup> *But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.*

#### **ESV Footnotes**

(8:22) Or *that I the LORD am in the land*

(8:23) Septuagint, Vulgate; Hebrew *set redemption*

**Set-apart People** — The primary difference in the fourth plague was that God made a distinction between “*my people*” of Israel and “*your people*” of Egypt (v. 23). The flies would swarm throughout all Egypt except for the area of Goshen in the eastern delta of the Nile where the Hebrews lived. God would protect His people in the midst of His judging plague on Egypt. What was the purpose of this discriminating action? It was “*that you may know that I am the LORD*” (v. 22). The all-wise, all-powerful God can not only perform *massive* miracles but also *selective* ones. The protective nature of this miracle was repeated in subsequent plagues as well. God is able to protect His own people. I always think of this example when the discussion about the Great Tribulation arises. Some argue that the Church must be raptured before that terrible event begins because God’s people will not suffer His judgment, but the Egyptian plagues demonstrate that God can be selective in applying punishment. What kind of a “plague” do you see surrounding you today? Do you believe that God can and will protect His own people during widespread hardship? He can and he will. David said, “*But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.*” (Ps. 4:3).

**Meditation:** Why did Moses refuse Pharaoh’s negotiation attempt for Israel to sacrifice only “*within the land*”? (v. 25). Moses’ reason was that it would be compromising God’s command. He said that the sacrifice must be done a three-day distance away because that was exactly what God told them to do (“*...as he tells us*”—v. 27). Remember that when you are tempted to bend God’s rules slightly because it seems logical or comfortable or peaceful. Let’s always choose to do exactly “*as he tells us.*”