

Day Two: An Impossible Escape

Let's start with a few questions



Q: Yesterday we learned about a huge problem—the *biggest* problem ever. What was it?

Q: Who decided to follow their own way instead of God's way, and let sin become the world's biggest problem?

Q: How were they punished for their sin?

Q: Later, when there were a lot more people on earth, were they mostly obeying God or mostly obeying themselves?

Q: Was there anyone on earth God was pleased with?

Q: What kind of adventure did Noah have?

The Big Problem Continues



Sin is *still* the biggest problem. The Bible teaches us that everyone struggles with sin—everyone who has ever lived.

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23 ESV*

And sin doesn't just make things hard for us while we are here on earth. God's Word teaches us that sin separates us from God forever.

*For the wages of sin is death,
Romans 6:23a ESV*

This is the death God told Adam and Eve would happen if they disobeyed. It's much bigger than the kind of death we usually think about. Sin earns us a *permanent death* that separates us from God forever.

The Bible uses the word 'wages' in this verse to make it easy for us to understand. When a worker works, they are paid wages for the work they do. When we sin, we collect the wages of sin: permanent death.

Sin is not a problem that we can solve on our own. We needed God to come up with a plan to get rid of sin. The Bible is the story of God doing exactly that. Throughout history, God chose people to do amazing things with God's help—all of them doing their part to make God's big plan work.

Many people call them 'heroes of the faith'. But they didn't always look or feel like heroes when God called them to do great things.

Q: Why do you think God chose people who weren't very heroic to do such important things for Him?

When they listened to God, trusted God, and obeyed God, **God was the real hero** who did amazing things through them, and everyone could see that.

An Unlikely Hero



God's people (the Hebrews) had been living in Egypt for 400 years. The Pharaoh (king) of Egypt feared the Hebrews, so he told his people to make them slaves. The Hebrews worked in difficult, dangerous, miserable conditions every day.

When a Hebrew baby named Moses was born, his parents knew that Pharaoh had a rule: all male Hebrew babies must be thrown into the Nile river! They had to protect him! They kept him secret for months, and when he could not be kept secret any longer, his mother put him in a basket and sent him floating down the river. She trusted God to take care of baby Moses.

God did take care of Moses! He made the daughter of Pharaoh find the basket! She loved the little baby and decided to raise him as her own. Moses went from living in secret to being a prince of Egypt!

An Impossible Bush



When Moses was older, God called on him to help the Hebrew people out of slavery and bring them out of Egypt. God spoke to Moses from a bush that looked like it was on fire but didn't burn up! That got Moses' attention! God spoke to Moses out of the strange bush and said:

"...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. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Exodus 3:9-10 ESV

Since Moses is the hero we're learning about today, you might think that he got really excited about this job and said something like, "Yes, Lord! I'm ready! Let's do this!"

That's not what Moses said. He said the opposite:

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Exodus 3:11 ESV

Moses basically said, "Hey, God, I don't think you've picked the right guy for this. I'm nobody special." God answered Moses:

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."

Exodus 3:12 ESV

That should have convinced Moses. When God says, "I will be with you," you have nothing to worry about, right? But this conversation went on for a while. Here's a simplified version of how it went:

Moses: But if I ask the people of Israel to follow me out of Egypt, they might want me to prove that I actually spoke to you. They might ask me your name. What should I say?

God: I AM WHO I AM. Tell them I AM sent you. You can also tell them that 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob' sent you.

Moses: But they still might not believe me. They'll probably say that you didn't really appear to me.

God: Throw your shepherd's staff on the ground. (The staff turned into a snake.) Grab the snake by the tail. (The snake turned back into a staff.) Now put your hand into your cloak and pull it back out. (It became crusty with sores from a terrible skin disease.) Now put it back in and back out again. (It was back to normal, as healthy as can be.) Show them these signs whenever someone refuses to believe you.

Moses: But I'm not good at speaking. I am slow of speech and tongue.

God: Who made man's mouth? Wasn't it me? I can easily take care of any speech problems you have. I will be with you and teach you what to say.

Moses: Please, Lord, send someone else.

Moses didn't seem like a hero in this conversation! He tried to get out of the job five times! God was angry about that, but God agreed to send Moses' brother Aaron with him so he would have some extra confidence.

Moses finally agreed to take the job. He went to Pharaoh and delivered God's message: **Let my people go.**

An Impossible Escape



Pharaoh didn't want to do that. He said no. He also made the Hebrews work harder than ever, to teach them that he was in charge of their lives and they should not to get any more ideas about leaving Egypt.

God sent plagues to convince Pharaoh to let his people go. *Every time* God sent a plague, Pharaoh *still* didn't agree to let them go—or he lied and said he would let them go and then quickly changed his mind when the plague stopped.

The Ten Plagues

1. All the water in Egypt was turned to blood. While this plague was going on, there was no safe water to use for crops, for drinking, for bathing, or anything.
2. Frogs came hopping into Egypt by the millions. They were everywhere. In every house. Even in people's beds.
3. Tiny, annoying gnats covered everything and everybody in Egypt.
4. Swarms of flies appeared in Egypt. They covered everything. To prove that God was helping the Hebrews and this was no ordinary swarm of flies, Pharaoh noticed that there were *no flies at all* in the part of Egypt where the Hebrew people lived.
5. All the livestock in the fields of Egypt died. Horses, cows, sheep, goats, and others all died. In the land where the Hebrews lived, though, none of their livestock died.
6. Boils (huge, painful sores) appeared on all of the Egyptian people.
7. Hail destroyed most of the crops in Egypt (but not in the land of Goshen where the Hebrews lived).
8. Swarms of locusts ate whatever plants and crops were left after the hail.
9. Darkness covered the land of Egypt. This was not normal darkness, like we have at night. This was 'a darkness that could be felt'. It lasted for three days! For all that time, no one in Egypt could get up or move around. All of God's people had light where they lived.

10. The final plague was death. God sent an angel of death to take the firstborn from every family in Egypt.

The first few plagues were very annoying, but did you notice that the longer Pharaoh disobeyed God, the worse they got? Finally, the worst plague of all, death, came to every household in Egypt—including the Pharaoh's own household.

Even the Hebrew families were in danger from this plague. The only way to be sure that the angel of death would pass over their house and not take their firstborn was to mark the doorposts of the house with the blood of a lamb that had been sacrificed and eaten in a special meal. That meal was called the Passover Meal.

After the tenth plague, Pharaoh finally gave in. He told God's people to go. They left quickly. Moses led many thousands of God's people out of Egypt—out of slavery—into a new life of freedom.

God promised to bring the Hebrews to a new land where they could worship God freely and not have to worry about being made slaves ever again. Sin was still a problem for them, though, and again and again they decided to follow their own way instead of God's way. That's hard to imagine after they saw God do so many amazing things to free them from Egypt, but they turned away from God so many times that God told them they'd have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until their children grew up and entered the promised land. Almost all of the grown-ups who had been rescued from Egypt did not get to enter the new land God had chosen for them.

Pray, Listen, Say, Memorize



Prayer

God, please help us to follow Your way instead of our own way. Your way is always better than anything we can imagine. Please forgive us when we make mistakes and help us to follow You more faithfully every day.



Watch or listen to the song 'Your Way's Better' by Forrest Frank and read the lyrics as you listen. Does this song sound like something Pharaoh would have listened to, or Moses?



Today's Truth

All people sin, but God sent a hero to free us from sin.



Memory Verse

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23 ESV