

## Notes on the Book of Exodus

As with other scriptural commentaries already posted on this Home Page, the current one is intended not so much to offer new information about the book of Exodus but to assist the reader with *lectio divina*, a Latin phrase which defines the slow, meditative reading of Scripture common in monasteries. The chief purpose of *lectio* is to dispose a person to prayer, not study in the academic sense.

At the end of **Exodus**, a supplement of transliterated Hebrew words will be found which follows the same system as in other **Notes**. Because **Exodus** follows on the heels of **Notes on the Book of Genesis**, a good deal of references discussed upon in Exodus will refer to words taken from that first book of the Bible.

All English quotes are from the **Revised Standard Edition**.

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### Chapter One

Vs. 1: Exodus begins with a genealogy much like the Gospel of Matthew. There the word "genealogy" is cited, not "names," as is the case with the book at hand. Joseph is not mentioned ("Joseph was already in Egypt," vs. 2; "already" is not in the Hebrew text), for he had been sold into slavery and prepared the way for his father and brothers to migrate into that country.

Vs. 2: *Offspring* (nephesh; as in vs. 5): literally, "soul."

-Yarek (*loins*): not mentioned in the English translation; the Hebrew text literally reads, "the souls that came out of the *loins* of Jacob." Yarek also means "side." "Put every man his sword on his *side*" [32.27]. Obviously the arrival of Jacob and his sons in Egypt is a kind of exodus in preparation for the Exodus to take place later on; the same was often noted in the **Notes** on Genesis.

Vs. 7: With respect to the "descendants (Hebrew, 'sons') of Israel" after the death of Joseph and his brothers, Exodus makes four observations:

1) They were *fruitful* (parah) as in Gen 1.22, "*Be fruitful and multiply.*" Also with respect to the verse at hand, "I am God Almighty; *be fruitful and multiply*" [Gen 35.11].

2) *Increased greatly* (sharats): literally, "to creep," "to crawl." "And all flesh died...*swarming creatures that swarm* upon the earth and every man" [Gen 7.21]. This verb also applies to the plague of frogs, "The Nile *shall swarm* with frogs which shall come up into your house" [7.28; 8.3 in English].

3) *Multiplied* (ravah): as noted in #1 with respect to Gen 1.22 & 35.11.

4) "*Grew exceedingly strong*:" the verb is hatsam which implies a kind of binding or tying up. "Go away from us; for you *are* much *mightier* than we" [Gen 26.16]. From this verbal root is derived the noun "bone."

-Bim'od meod or *exceedingly strong*; literally, "in excessiveness excessively" to indicate not only the Israelites being prolific in numbers but in physical as well as moral strength. Me'od can be used as a noun or adverb.

-*"The land ('erets) was filled with them."* Cf. Gen 17.1-8 as to the covenant with Abraham. Note that vs. 8 says, "I will give to you...the *land* of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." Perhaps we could extend this 'erets to the lengthy period of exile in Egypt, but it is temporary as opposed to the permanent take-over of Canaan later in history.

Vs. 8: "Now there arose a king." The Hebrew text lacks "now" but has the connective particle waw prefixed to "arose." The very first sentence of Exodus began with this particle; it is frequently used to show the connection between texts ("and") and can also serve as a mental aide to recall or memorize the text.

-There is a certain ominous tone to vs. 8 through "arose" and "on (Egypt)," i.e., one of foreboding for the Israelites living there. This pharaoh's name is not mentioned throughout the entire book of Exodus.

Vs. 9: *Too many* (rav): compare with the verb used in vs. 7 from which this adjective is derived (ravah): "and increased greatly."

-*Too mighty* (hatsum): again as with vs. 7, "*Grew exceedingly strong*." This word is prefixed with the preposition min (*from*) which heightens the perceived threat from the Israelites.

Vs. 10: *Deal shrewdly* (chakam): from the verbal root "to be wise." The same form of this verb is used in Eccl 7.14, "Be not righteous overmuch and do not make yourself *overwise*; why should you destroy yourself?"

-*Multiply* (ravah): the same fear is expressed as in the previous verse.

-*"Enemies*:" the Hebrew text uses the verb, "those who hate us."

-*Escape* (halah): literally, "to go up, "to ascend." "A mixed multitude also *went up* with them" [12.38].

Vs. 11: *Taskmasters* (sarey misym): the first word (sar, singular) can apply to a military leader, "And Phicol, the *commander* of his army" [Gen 21.22]. It also means "prince:" "Who made you a *prince* and a judge over us" [2.14]?

-Misym: plural of mas or "tribute." Often it applies to servile work as in the verse at hand.

"So he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a slave at *forced labor*" [Gen 49.15].

-*Afflicted* (hanah): alternately, "to sing," "lift up the voice." For another use in accord with the verse at hand, "I am sorely *afflicted*; give me life, O Lord, according to your word" [Ps 119.7]!

-*Heavy burdens* (sivlah): as in 2.11, 5.4, 6.6; from the verbal root *saval*, *to bear*. “So he bowed his shoulder *to bear*, and became a slave at forced labor” [Gen 49.15, just quoted].

-“*Store-cities*” (miskenoth): in the sense of granaries. “And all the *store-cities* that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen” [1 Kg 9.10]. Compare with Joseph: “So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses (literally, ‘all that was in them’)” [Gen 41.48].

Vs. 12: *Oppressed* (hanah): the same verb as in vs. 11, “to afflict.”

-*Multiplied* (ravah): another use of this verb at the beginning of Exodus to show the favor of God towards the Israelites.

-*Spread abroad* (parats): a verb which fundamentally means “to break asunder,” “to scatter.” For another use parallel with the verse at hand, “They shall eat but not be satisfied; they shall play the harlot but not *multiply*” [Hos 4.10].

-*Were in dread* (quts): literally, “to be weary,” “to loathe,” that is, with respect to the Egyptians. For a parallel use with the verse at hand, “Let us go up against Judah and *terrify* it” [Is 7.6].

Vs. 13: “With *rigor*” (perek): from an unused verb, “to break.” Here the noun is prefixed with the preposition *b-*, literally, “in.” “You shall not rule over him with *harshness* but shall fear your God” [Lev 25.43].

Vs. 14: *Made bitter* (marar): originally “to flow,” “to drop,” from which myrrh is derived. “Her maidens have been dragged away, and she herself *suffers bitterly*” [Lam 1.4]. This verse contains five instances of words derived from the verbal root *havah*, *to serve* (as a slave): *serve* (twice), *service*, *work* (twice).

Vs. 15: “King of Egypt:” Exodus alternates between use of “king” and “pharaoh.”

-*Midwives* (yalad): the participle is used here from the verbal root, “to give birth.” “And when she was in her hard labor, the *midwife* said to her, ‘Fear not; for now you will have another son’” [Gen 25.17].

-“Hebrew:” a term often used by foreigners as opposed to “Israelite.”

Vs. 16: *Birthstool* (‘oven): the only use of this term in the Bible; literally, “stone.”

Vs. 19: *Vigorous* (chayah): here an adjective from the verb meaning “to live;” something akin to “lively.”

Vs. 20: Two more instances of *ravah* (*multiplied*) and *hatsam* (*grew*) “very strong.”

Vs. 21: *Gave* (hasah): literally, “to do,” “to make.” The literal Hebrew text would read, “He (God) *made* them families.”

Vs. 22: "Every son that is born to the Hebrews." "Hebrews" is lacking in the Hebrew text.

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## Chapter Two

Vs. 1: Reference to the parents of Moses whose names are not mentioned; the only identification is that both were from the house of Levi.

Vs. 3: *Basket* (tevah): For an alternate use though with a certain parallel, "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood" [Gen 6.14].

-*Bulrushes* (gome'): or marsh reeds. "Ah, land of whirring wings...which sends ambassadors by the Nile in vessels of *papyrus* upon the waters" [Is 18.2]!

-*Reeds* (suph): compare with gome' just noted. The former pertains more to those which grow in salt water. "Reeds and *rushes* will rot away" [Is 19.6].

-*River* (ye'or): an Egyptian word which pertains to the Nile as noted throughout Exodus.

Vs. 4: "His sister" is Miriam. "The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister" [Num 26.59].

-"What would be done to him." A way of indicating the precarious future of Moses as well as Miriam's curiosity which is reminiscent of Jonah: "He sat under it in the shade until he should see what would become of the city" [Jon 4.5].

Vs. 5: *Maidens* (naharah): in the sense of girl. "She has sent out her *maids* to call from the highest places in the town" [Prov 9.3].

-There is no mention of distance or time between the time when Moses' parents put him in the basket and his discovery by Pharaoh's daughter. However, cf. vs. 7 below.

Vs. 6: Two words referring to Moses: *child* (yeled) and *babe* (nahar; related to naharah in vs. 5).

-*Took pity* (chamal): "The Lord *being merciful* to him, and they brought him forth and set him outside the city" [Gen 19.16]. Compare with God's remembrance of Noah after the flood: "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark" [Gen 8.1].

Vs. 7: "His sister:" most likely referring to Miriam and indicating the close distance and time interval between Moses having been placed in the basket and his discovery by Pharaoh's daughter.

-*Nurse* ('ishah yanaq): literally, "a woman who gives suck," the only use of this phrase in the Bible. "Behold, I will extend prosperity to her like a river...and you shall *suck*; you shall be carried upon her hip and dandled upon her knees" [Is 66.12].

Vs. 8: *Girl* (halmah): referring to Miriam, this term meaning a girl of marriageable age. "The singers in front, the minstrels last, between them *maidens* playing timbrels" [Ps 68.25].

Vs. 9: *Wages* (sakar): i.e., Moses is returned to his mother through the intervention of his sister Miriam. "You must come into me, for I have *hired* you with my son's mandrakes" [Gen 30.16].

Vs. 10: "And he became her son." Literally in Hebrew, "and he was to her to son."  
-*Moses* (Mosheh): related to the verb in the same verse, *drew* (mashah). "Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses his servant" [Is 63.11]. The Hebrew text reads, "Moses his people."

Vs. 11: There is no mention of Moses' upbringing in Pharaoh's household. This verse begins immediately after Moses had received his name and was suckled by his own mother.

-*"Went out to his people"* indicates that Moses left Pharaoh's household and instinctively went to the Israelites.

-*Burdens* (sivelah, singular): cf. vs. 11, "Taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy *burdens*." Vs. 11 uses a variant of this term. "Why do you take the people away from their work? Get to your *burdens*" [5.4].

-*Beating* (makah): implies threshing as in 2 Chron 2.10, "Twenty thousand cors of *crushed* wheat."

-*"His people:"* literally in the Hebrew text, "his brothers."

Vs. 12: *Looked* (panah): literally, "to turn."

Vs. 13: *Struggling* (natsah): the source of this contention is not mentioned. "When men *fight* with one another...then you shall cut off her (wife's) hand; your eye shall have no pity" [Dt 25.11-12].

-*"The man who did the wrong."* The adjective rashah is used for these English words. "Will you indeed destroy the righteous with the *wicked*" [Gen 18.23]?

-*Fellow* (reah): alternately, "friend." "You shall not covet your *neighbor's* house" [20.17].

Vs. 14: In addition to calling Moses a judge, the man who struck his fellow called him a *prince* or sar. This word was used in 1.11 (coupled with misym/mas, *taskmaster*) and can imply that Moses was no better off than these Egyptian overlords doing the oppression.

-*Kill* (harag): "Cain rose up against his brother Abel and *killed* him" [Gen 4.8].

-*Thing* (davar): from the verbal root meaning "to speak." Also used in the next verse ("When Pharaoh heard of *it*"); same with the verb harag.

Vs. 15: Two uses of the verb yashav: *stayed* and *sat down*.

Vs. 16: "Priest of Midian:" either Jethro (3.1) or Hobab (Num 10.29).

-*Drew water* (dalah): this verbal root fundamentally means “to let down;” cf. vs. 19. Compare with Gen 24.11, “The time when women go out to draw water,” although a different verb is used here. Nevertheless, both settings have parallels.

-*Troughs* (rahat): “The *watering troughs* where the flocks came to drink” [Gen 31.38]. For another use, “Your *flowing locks* are like purple” [Sg 7.5].

Vs. 17: *Helped* (yashah): implies deliverance or victory. “If the Syrians are too strong for you, then I will *help* you” [1 Chron 19.12]. This incident parallels that of Jacob and Rachel at the well in Genesis, Chapter 29.

Vs. 18: “An Egyptian:” the daughters of Reuel mistook Moses for an Egyptian.

Vs. 21: *Content* (ya’al): alternately, “to wish,” “to undertake.” “I have *taken upon* myself to speak to the Lord” [Gen 17.27]. Also, “And the Levite was *content* to dwell with the man” [Judg 17.11].

-*To dwell* (yashav): cf. vs. 15.

Vs. 22: Gershom: the son of Moses by Zipporah; derived from ger (*sojourner*).

-*Foreign* (nakry): compare with Moses as ger. “And so he did for all his *foreign* wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods” [1 Kg 11.8].

Vs. 23: *Groaned* (‘anach): used only twice, Prov 29.2 (“But when the wicked rule, the people *groan*”) and Jol 1.18 (“How the beasts *groan*”).

-*Bondage* (havodah, mentioned twice in this verse): from the verbal root havad, *to serve* (as a slave). Compare with sivlah: “to afflict them with *heavy burdens*” [1.11]. “It is the Lord our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of *bondage*” [Jos 24.17].

-*Cry for help* (shawhah): from a verbal root meaning “to be ample, “to be wealthy.” “From his temple he heard my voice, and my *cry* to him reached his ears” [Ps 18.6].

-“Came up to God:” note the contrast between the Israelites in Egyptian bondage which is also signified in other places as “down in Egypt” and that of God in heaven.

Vs. 24: “God *remembered*” (zakar; from which the noun “male” is derived): in the context of the last verse, such remembering is a gesture downwards, so to speak, to the Israelites in Egypt both from heaven and the future promised land. Note that the Book of Genesis frequently mentions “going down to Egypt,” especially in the context of the Joseph story. For another reference to the covenant with Abraham: “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing” [Gen 12.2]. For a use of the verb zakar, “God *remembered* Noah and all the beasts” [Gen 8.1].

Vs. 25: “And God saw the people of Israel.” Note that it seemed God had to hear the Israelites

first as in the preceding verse. This hearing-to-seeing culminates in the fact that God “*knew* (yadah) their condition.” The Hebrew text lacks “their condition.”

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### Chapter Three

Vs. 1: *Keeping* (rahaḥ): in the sense as acting as shepherd. “While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep; for she *kept* them” [Gen 29.9].

-*Father-in-law* (chatan): literally, “to give daughters in marriage” and thereby intimating association by marriage. For another use of this noun, “Surely you are a *bridegroom* of blood to me” [4.25]!

-Horeb: “at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel” [1 Kg 8.9].

-For another use of *wilderness* or midbar, cf. “The *meadows* clothe themselves with flocks, the valley deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy” [Ps 65.13].

Vs. 2: “Angel of the Lord:” “The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness” [Gen 16.7].

-*Appeared* (ra’ah): the common verb “to see.”

-*Flame* (lehavah): “The voice of the Lord flashes forth *flames* of fire” [Ps 29.7]. Note that the “angel of the Lord” reveals himself to Moses *in* this flame, not *as* a flame.

-*Bush* (seneh): more appropriately, one of thorns. “And the favor of him that dwelt in the *bush*” [Dt 33.16].

-*Looked* (ra’ah): as “appeared” in this same verse, here coupled with hineh (*behold*) to emphasize the marvel.

Vs. 3: *See/sight*: from the same verbal root, ra’ah.

-*Burnt* (bahar): “And both of them shall *burn* together with none to quench them” [Is 1.31]. Compare bahar with *consumed* (‘akal), previous verse.

Vs. 4: *Saw* (ra’ah): here applied to the Lord; compare with “angel of the Lord” (and ra’ah), vs. 2. Also used with regard to Moses (*to see*).

-“*Out of* (betok) of the bush:” compare with “*out of the midst* of a bush” in vs. 2.

-*Here I am* (hineh): as “behold” in vs. 2.

Vs. 5: “*Do not come near*” (qarav). Compare with the Israelites not being allowed to approach the holy mountain: “lest they break through to the Lord to gaze and many of them perish” [19.21]. For another use of this verb, “He shall *offer* it without blemish before the Lord” [Lev 3.1].

-*Put off* (nashal): “*Put off* your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy” [Jos 5.15].

-*Shoes* (nahal): more properly, sandals. Cf. Jos 5.15 just above for a similar use.

-*Place* (maqom). A similar sentiment: "Surely the Lord is in this *place*, and I did not know it" [Gen 28.16]. In the verse at hand, maqom is equivalent to "holy ground" ('admah). "The first of the first fruits of your *ground* you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God" [23.19].

Vs. 6: This verse is similar to Gen 26.24: "I am the God of Abraham your father."

-Moses' response to this revelation is to *hide* (satar) his face. "And from your face I shall be *hidden*" [Gen 4.14]. For another sentiment with the same verb, "He has *hidden* his face, he will never see it" [Ps 10.11].

-*To look at* (navat): in the sense of beholding which is more comprehensive than the English. "Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you are able to number them" [Gen 15.5]. In the verse at hand, navat is used with the preposition 'el- prefixed to "God," i.e., to/towards God.

Vs. 7: *Have seen* (ra'ah): used twice or consecutively to show emphasis.

-*Affliction* (hony). "Because the Lord has looked upon my *affliction*" [Gen 29.32]. In the verse at hand, hony rhymes with hamy (*my people*).

-*Taskmasters* (nagas; participle used here). For another use, cf. Dt 15.2, "Every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor; he shall not *exact* it of his neighbor."

-God's *knowledge* (yadah, verb) derives from his seeing and hearing. It is with respect to the Israelites' *sufferings* or mak'ov which can also mean "sorrow." "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of *sorrows* and acquainted with grief" [Is 53.3].

Vs. 8: God says that he has "come down." Up to this juncture, he has confined himself to the burning bush.

-*Deliver* (natsal): a verb which connotes pulling away and the reason for God's having come down. "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him" [Gen 32.11].

-*To bring up* (halah): interesting to consider in light of God's descent which was just noted. "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also *bring you up* again" [Gen 46.4].

-*Land* ('erets): "that *land*" and a "*land* flowing (etc.)." The characteristics of the land to which God will bring Israel, better, restore them:

-*Good* (tov).

-*Broad* (rachav). "I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly *broad*" [Ps 119.96].

-*Flowing* (zuv): as in Lev 20.24 and other frequent references.

-*Place* (of Canaanites, etc.): maqom as opposed to 'erets or a specific place which can connote the culture of the people there.

Vs. 9: *Behold* (hineh): as Moses' response, vs. 4.



-*Cry* (tsahaqah): as in vs. 7 which here “has come” to God; in vs. 7, God has “heard” it. This cry belongs to the “people of Israel;” in the Hebrew text it reads, “sons of Israel.”

-*Have seen* (ra’ah): as in vs. 7 and related to the people’s affliction whereas here this divine seeing applies to their *oppression* or lachats. “Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of *affliction*, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore” [Is 30.20]. The verb is also used in the verse at hand.

Vs. 10: “My people” and “sons of Israel:” cf. previous verse which refers to the latter. In the verse at hand, this divine sending to Pharaoh and bringing the Israelites from Egypt seem to be one and the same. The same sentiment is intimated in the next verse or Moses questioning God as to his mission.

Vs. 12: God being with Moses is bound up with a *sign* or ‘oth. “This is the *sign* of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you for all future generations” [Gen 9.12].

-*Serve* (havad): here in reference to God. Compare with 1.14 or applied to the Israelites’ oppressive work for the Egyptians.

-“This mountain:” i.e., Horeb as first noted in vs. 1.

Vs. 13: “God of your fathers:” implies ignorance of the Israelites during their prolonged stay in Egypt. Obviously they want to know God’s name which for ancients is important.

Vs. 14: *I am who am* (‘ehyeh ‘asher ‘ehyeh), the famous “name” of God; alternately, “I will be what I will be” (i.e., future tense). The only note offered here—further information obviously can be gathered from other sources—is the relative pronoun ‘asher. It derives from the verbal root ‘ashar whose fundamental meaning is straightness. By its very nature, a preposition is transitional in that it points to something else as opposed to focusing upon itself. With this in mind, we could say that the first “I am” moves to the second “I am” which points not so much to God’s being but to his activity and interest in creation and human affairs.

-“I am” is the response to Moses concerning the Israelites’ request to know his name. Note that the rest of the divine name (‘asher ‘ehyeh) is not mentioned, almost withheld. Since the verb here is *shalach* (*to send*), we could draw a parallel between the transitional nature of ‘asher and its implications of motion and involvement with the nature of sending itself.

Vs. 15: From this point on, the *Lord* or YHWH more properly speaking is used although it is found in Genesis.

-*Remembered* (zakar): cf. 2.24. It also suggested the notion of mentioning, of making known in a public fashion. “The squares of the town forget them; their name is no longer *remembered*” [Job 24.20]. Also as noted in 2.24, from *zakar* comes the noun “male” which related to the context at hand as responsible for begetting “throughout all generations.”

Vs. 16: *Elders* ('av): alternately, "fathers."

-In this verse God says that he had *appeared* (ra'ah) to Moses; compare with vs. 15, "sent me."

-*Observed* (paqad): the verb is used twice for emphasis. This is the only used of the verb in the Bible and has multiple meanings: "to visit," "to set," "to attack." For a reference in line with the verse at hand, "See how your brothers fare, and bring some token from them" [1 Sam 17.18].

Vs. 17: "I promise" is lacking in the Hebrew text which reads, "I said."

-Here God says that he will bring the Israelites up "out of the *affliction* (hony; cf. vs. 7) of Egypt;" compare with vs. 8, "to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians."

-*Flowing* (zuv): as in vs. 8. Perhaps use of this word is intended as a contrast with the flowing of the Nile River and all that signifies for Egypt.

Vs. 18: *Met* (qara'): basically, "to cry out." There is no mention (yet) that God has met "with us," only Moses.

-The same applies to the future request of making sacrifice to the Lord in the desert; as of this juncture, both Moses and the elders had no idea what this involved.

Vs. 19: "Unless compelled by a mighty hand." The Hebrew text reads, "no, not by a *mighty* (chazaqah) hand." "For the Lord spoke thus to me with his *strong* hand upon me and warned me not to walk in the way of this people" [Is 8.11].

Vs. 20: *Stretch out* (shalach): alternately, "to send" as in vs. 14. Also, "*will let you go*" also found in this verse. In the verse at hand, it is God's "hand" as opposed to "might hand" in the previous verse.

-*Wonders* (pala'; niphil participle). Note that the "smiting" with such wonders does not necessarily mean slaying the Egyptians, although that was part of the ten plagues to follow. "The glorious deeds of the Lord and his might and the *wonders* which he has wrought" [Ps 78.4].

Vs. 21: *Favor* (chen): alternately as "grace," "beauty." "And the Lord gave the people *favor* in the sight of the Egyptians" [11.3].

-*Empty* (reych): alternately as "vain." "And none shall appear before me *empty*" [34.20].

Vs. 22: This verse deals with what the Israelites will take from the Egyptians which consists of jewelry and clothing, i.e., external goods. Also, it pertains to women who will take them as opposed to men.

-*Sojourns* (gur) in her house:" most likely Egyptians who were sympathetic towards the Israelites. "And when a stranger shall *sojourn* with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised" [12.48].

-*Jewelry* (kely): alternately as “utensils,” “implements.” “That they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, *jewelry* of silver and of gold” [11.2]. Most likely later used to form the golden calf, “Take off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons and your daughters” [32.2].

-*Despoil* (natsal): the same verb used in vs. 8, “to deliver.” “Thus they *despoiled* the Egyptians” [12.36].

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## Chapter Four

Vs. 1: Chapter Four begins immediately with a response from Moses to God concerning his inadequacy to lead the Israelites. The Hebrew text literally reads, “And Moses answered and said.” We get similar responses from prophets whom the Lord had chosen such as Jeremiah: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth” [Jer 1.6].

Vs. 2: *Rod* (mateh): also as a royal scepter, “The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty *scepter*. Rule in the midst of your foes” [Ps 110.2]!

Vs. 3: *Serpent* (nachash): from a verbal root meaning “to hiss,” “to whisper” and thus implying the practice of divinization. Nachash is first mentioned in Gen 3.1, “Now the *serpent* was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made.” Moses fled from the serpent whereas the woman in Genesis did not.

Vs. 4: “*Put out* your hand” (shalach): the same verb used in the previous verse, “*Cast* it on the ground.”

-*Tail* (zanav): “And there will be nothing for Egypt which head or *tail*, palm branch or reed, may do” [Is 19.15].

Vs. 5: Part of the previous verse is an interjection with regard to the command of God to Moses (“so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand”) to grasp the serpent. The verse at hand continues God’s address to Moses or the purpose for this miracle, faith in the God of the Israelites’ fathers. Perhaps this frequent association of the Lord with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is to constantly remind the people of their origins which they quickly loose not only after their departure from Egypt and wandering in the desert but once they became established as a nation.

Vs. 6: *Bosom* (cheq). For another use, “And the blood of the wound flowed into the *bottom* of the chariot” [1 Kg 22.35].

-*Leprous* (tsarahath): from a verbal root meaning “to strike down.” For a similar context, “Behold, Miriam was *leprous* as white as snow” [12.10].

-*Snow* (shaleg): "Drought and heat snatch away the *snow* waters; so does Sheol those who have sinned" [Job 24.19].

Vs. 7: A play on the words *shuv* and *yashav*, "*Put* you hand *back*" and "*it was restored.*"

Vs. 8: *Heed* (shamah): basically, "listen." This verb of hearing may pertain to the "first *sign*" ('oth) or that which is visible. "And this shall be the *sign* for you, that I have sent you" [3.12]. The "latter sign" pertains to belief: "They may believe the latter sign."

Vs. 9: The "two signs" are situated within the context of belief.

-*Dry ground* (yabashah). "That the people of Israel may go on *dry ground* through the sea" [14.16].

Vs. 10: Moses claims not to be *eloquent* which can pertain to both Pharaoh and the Israelites. The text literally reads in Hebrew, "man words." He applies this to the Lord himself.

-*Slow* (kevad): from a verbal root meaning "to be heavy" and from which is derived the noun "glory." Here it applies to Moses' speech and tongue. This is the only reference of *kevad* as *slow*.

Vs. 11: *Made* (sum): more specifically, "to put," "set in place." For a use similar to the one at hand, "Blessed is the man who *makes* the Lord his trust" [Ps 40.5]. In vs. 11, such "putting" is with respect to a man being dumb, deaf, seeing and blind.

Vs. 12: Note that God does not go with Moses properly speaking but with his mouth.

-*Teach* (yarah): the verbal root from which Torah is derived. "*Teach* me your way, O Lord" [Ps 27.11].

Vs. 13: The verb *shalach* is used twice. The Hebrew text reads, "In me, Lord."

Vs. 14: *Anger* ('aph): fundamentally as "nose;" for example, "The Lord God...breathed into his *nostrils* the breath of life" [Gen 2.7]. For a meaning similar to the verse at hand, "When the Lord heard it, his *anger* was kindled" [Num 11.1].

-Aaron: Moses' brother. No mention is made of hiding him as a baby from Pharaoh's wrath as with Moses.

-"*Speak well:*" the verb *davar* is used twice to express this in Hebrew.

-*Be glad* (samach): "*I was glad* when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" [Ps 122.1]!

Vs. 15: "I will be with your mouth:" cf. vs. 12. As with many verses in Chapter Four, there is much emphasis placed upon speaking either by the Lord or by Moses and Aaron.

-*Teach* (yarah): cf. 12, almost imply the impartation of teaching in the sense of the divine

Torah.

Vs. 16: Note the two prepositions "to:" l- ("for you") and 'el- ("to the people"). The former is abbreviated from the latter.

-“(Aaron) shall be a mouth for you:” compare with “I (the Lord) will be your mouth” in vss. 12 & 15.

-“As God:” i.e., Moses’ relationship with Aaron. This sums up the whole intricate relationship (based upon speaking) thus far starting from God’s revelation in 3.13 to this point.

-*Rod/sign* (mateh/'oth): cf. 3.12 & 4.2. That is, the close connection between the two.

Vs. 18: “Go in *peace*” (shalom): Jethro’s statement to Moses when he requested to return to his “brothers” (Hebrew text) or “brethren” in Egypt. Moses’ flight to Jethro in Midian (2.15) suggests that he had to cross the Red Sea in order to return to Egypt.

Vs. 19: In the previous verse Moses is presented as taking the initiative to return to Egypt. In vs. 19 we have a command by the Lord to go there. In the first, it is a question of whether or not the “brethren” are alive or dead. In the second, those seeking Moses’ *life* (nephesh: alternately as “soul”) are dead.

Vs. 20: “Set (rachav) them on an ass.” This verb fundamentally means “to ride.” “Let him *conduct* the man *on horseback* through the open square of the city” [Est 6.9].

-“Rod of God:” the first time the rod is identified with God. Compare with 14.16, “Let up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.” Perhaps Moses did the same upon his return to Egypt with his wife and sons.

Vs. 21: “When you go back to Egypt:” compare with the previous verse, “Moses...went back to the land of Egypt.”

-*Miracles* (mopeth): referring to the ten plagues. For an alternate meaning, “I have been as a *portent* to many, but you are my strong refuge” [Ps 77.7].

-“In your power.” The Hebrew text reads, “in your hand...” the same hand which grasped the “rod of God” [vs. 20].

-*Harden* (chazaq): with respect to Pharaoh’s heart. “But the Lord *hardened* the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them” [9.12]. Compare with 8.15 which uses the verb *kavad* and is done by Pharaoh himself: “But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he *hardened* his heard and would not listen to them.”

Vs. 22: Two uses of the verb ‘amar: “You shall *say* to Pharaoh” and “Thus *says* the Lord.”

-*First-born* (bekor). “Reuben, you are my *first-born*, my might and the first fruits of my strength” [Gen 49.3]. For another use, “Be of good courage, and bring some of the *fruit* of the land” [Num 13.20].

Vs. 23: “Let my son go (shalach):” a request that will be repeated often by Moses to Pharaoh. “I AM *has sent* me to you” [3.14]. Compare “son” with “people” in vs. 21.  
-“That he *may serve* me” (havad): cf. 3.11 which makes a contrast with 1.14.  
-*Slay* (harag): cf. 2.14; compare with 12.29, “At midnight the Lord *smote* (nakah; suggests a hitting motion) all the first-born in the land of Egypt.”

Vs. 24: *Lodging place* (malon): as in Is 10.29, “They have crossed over the pass, at Geba they *lodge* (literally, ‘a lodge to us’) for the night.” The verse at hand seems more in line with Jacob’s dream in the spirit of Gen 32.21, “So the present passed on before him; and he *lodged* that night in the camp.”

-*Met* (pagash): connotes a rush or attack which fits in well with this verse. “I will *fall upon* them like a bear robbed of her cubs” [Hos 13.8]. One way of looking at this incident is that the Lord had revealed himself to Moses as “I AM WHO I AM” in 3.14. Perhaps the Lord regretted this revelation and sought to kill Moses.

Vs. 25: *Flint* (tsor): alternately as “rock.” “So Joshua made *flint knives* and circumcised the people of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth” [Jos 5.2].

-*Foreskin* (harlah). For an alternate use, “When you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as *forbidden* (i.e., uncircumcised)” [Lev 19.23].

-Zipporah “touched Moses’ feet” with her son’s foreskin, most likely “feet” as representing gentiles. “And with two he covered his feet” [Is 6.2].

-*Bridegroom* (chatan): cf. 3.1 as father-in-law.

Vs. 26: “So she *left him alone*” (raphah): i.e., Zipporah desisted, almost as though she were somehow allied with the Lord in his anger towards Moses. “When Is-bosheth, Saul’s son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage *failed*” [2 Sam 4.1].

Vs. 27: In vs. 20 Moses departs for Egypt, and during his journey *met* (pagash) Aaron. Compare with the use of this verb in vs. 24.

-The *kiss* (nashaq, noun) between the two takes place “at (b-, alternately as ‘in’) the mountain of God.” “And why did you not permit me to *kiss* my sons and my daughters farewell” [Gen 21.38]?

Vs. 28: “All the *words* (davar):” from the verbal root “to speak.” Here such words were *sent* along with Moses (shalach) a verb often used thus far in connection with Moses’ mission to the Israelites. The same applies to the *signs* or ‘oth as noted earlier. Note that this could be taken as the first instance of Aaron being the spokesperson for Moses (cf. vs. 14). The next two verses follow naturally from this when the two gather the elders and people of Israel. Vs. 30 has Aaron speaking on Moses’ behalf; the verb *davar* is used three times here.

Vs. 31: *Visited* (paqad): cf. 3.16, “I have *observed* you and what has been done to you in Egypt.”

The sequence of the verse at hand may be outlined as follows:

believed->heard->visited->seen (affliction)->*bowed their heads* (qadad): "And the people *bowed their heads* and worshiped" [12.27].

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## Chapter Five

Vs. 1: Two uses of 'amar (*to speak*), the common verb but used extensively by the prophets, which shows the close connection between God and his human agents: "Moses and Aaron...*said*" and "Thus *says* the Lord." Note the frequent uses of such expressions to indicate the dialogue between the Lord and Moses (and Aaron) as well as Pharaoh which continues through much of Exodus.

-*"Let my people go* (shalach):" the first of many requests to Pharaoh. "*Let my son go* that he may serve me" [4.23].

-*Hold a feast* (chagag): alternately, "to dance" as in a circular motion. "How I went with the throng and *led* them *in procession* to the house of God" [Ps 42.4]. At this early juncture there is no record of what type of feast would be held in the desert.

Vs. 2: Two uses of shalach used by Pharaoh. Perhaps the multitude of gods familiar to the Egyptians were confined to the Nile Valley; to enter the wilderness could be construed as sacrificing to demons, let alone an unfamiliar god.

-*"That I should heed his voice"* literally reads in the Hebrew text, "that I should hear *in* (b-) his voice."

Vs. 3: "*Has met with us*" as pertaining to the "God of the Hebrews" literally reads, "*has called* (qara') *on* (hal-) us" which is more intimate. Cf. 3.18 & 8.27, the former reference being the original command from the Lord to make this three day journey into the wilderness.

-*Sacrifice* (zavach): the first mention in Exodus of such an act, again as noted above, without a clear notion as how to do it. The first really clear indication of this sacrifice is in 12.27, "It is the *sacrifice* of the Lord" (in reference to the Passover).

-*Fall upon* (pagah). Here in the sense of slaying the Israelites, the consequence of not performing the sacrifice which presumably the Lord will make known to them in the wilderness. "*Rise yourself and fall upon* us, for as the man is, so is his strength" [Judg 8.21]. This verb can be used in a positive sense, "And he *came* to a certain place" [Gen 28.11]. In the verse at hand, pagah is taken negatively, being associated with pestilence and sword.

Vs. 4: *Take away* (parah): i.e., release the Israelites from their slave-labor. For an alternate sense of this verb yet in line with the sentiment at hand, "Ahaz...*had dealt wantonly* in Judah and had been faithless to the Lord" [2 Chron 28.19].

-*Burdens* (sivlah): as in 1.11.

Vs. 5: *Rest/burdens*: in the Hebrew, they may be taken as a play on the words shavat/sivlah. In this verse Pharaoh acknowledges the fact that the Israelites “are now many.” Compare with “The more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad” [1.12].

Vs. 6: *Taskmasters* (nagas; participle used here): cf. 3.7.

-“Of the people” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “in (b-) the people.”

-*Foremen* (shatar; participle used here): from a verbal root literally meaning “to write,” “to inscribe” and also found in vss. 14, 15 & 19. For another use, cf. Dt 20.9: “And when the officers have made an end of speaking to the people.”

Vs. 7: *Straw* (teven): “We have both *straw* and provender enough and room to lodge in” [Gen 24.25].

-“To make bricks:” both the verb and noun (from this verbal root) are used here, lavan. It fundamentally means “to be white.” “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly” [Gen 11.3].

-*Gather* (qashash). For another use, cf. Zeph 2.1: “Come together and hold assembly, O shameless nation.”

Vs. 8: *Heretofore* (shilshom): derived from a word meaning “three” signifying the day before yesterday. “And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favor as *before*” [Gen 31.2].

-*Lessen* (garah): alternately as “to take away, “to lay up.” “Why should the name of our father be taken away from his family because he had no son” [Num 27.4]?

-*Idle* (raphah): alternately as “to cast,” “to be let down.” “Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded” [2 Chron 15.7].

Vs. 9: This verse may be compared with King Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, who laid heavy burdens on his people, 1 Kg 12.1-11.

-“*Heavier* (kavad, verb) work:” the verbal root of “glory.” “You and the people with you will wear yourselves out, for the thing is too *heavy* for you” [18.18].

-*Work* (havodah): “And made their lives bitter with hard *service*” [1.14].

-Note the use of two prepositions in this verse which indicates the rough nature of this work: “be laid *upon* (hal-)” ...“that they may labor *at* (b-; alternately, ‘in’) it.”

-*Pay attention* (shahah): alternately as “to look around.” “*Look away* from me, that I may know gladness” [Ps 39.13].

Vs. 10: *Taskmasters* (nagas; participle used here) as in 3.7. In this verse the Hebrew text literally reads “of the people” whereas the *foremen* (shatar; participle used here; as in 3.6) are not “of the people.”

-“Thus says Pharaoh.” Cf. 4.22 (“Thus says the Lord”), a common mode of address by



inferiors speaking of behalf of their superiors.

Vs. 11: *Be lessened* (garar): as in vs. 8 which speaks of “bricks;” here it pertains to the Israelites’ “work.”

Vs. 12: *Scattered abroad* (parats): “But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they *scattered abroad*” [1.12]. “Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we *be scattered abroad*” [Gen 11.4].

-*To gather stubble*: the verb qashash and the noun qash from which it is derived; cf. 5.7.

Vs. 13: *Were urgent* (‘ots): “The sun stayed in the midst of heaven and *did not hasten* to go down for about a whole day” [Jos 10.3].

-“Daily task” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “thing-day.”

Vs. 14: *Done* (kalah): in the sense of being complete, here with respect to making bricks.

Vs. 15: *Cried* (tsahaq): “I have heard their *cry* because of their taskmasters” [3.7].

Vs. 16: *Are beaten* (nakah): cf. 2.11, “And he saw an Egyptian *beating* a Hebrew.” Also 12.29, “At midnight the Lord *smote* all the first-born in the land of Egypt.”

-*Fault* (chata’th): alternately as “sin:” “They proclaim their *sin* like Sodom, they do not hide it” [Is 3.9].

Vs. 17: *Are idle* (raphah): pronounced twice by Pharaoh in this verse; he also attributes it to the Israelites earlier in vs. 8. In the verse at hand, Pharaoh associates such idleness with their desire to make sacrifice to God.

Vs. 19: *Evil plight* (raha): the Hebrew text lacks “plight;” it literally reads, “in evil (noun).” “Though *wickedness* is sweet in his mouth, though he hides it under his tongue” [Job 20.12].

-*Lessen* (garah): cf. vs. 8.

Vs. 20: *Were waiting* (pagah). Cf. vs. 3, “Lest he (God) *fall upon* us with pestilence or with the sword.”

Vs. 21: *Made offensive* or literally, “made our spirit a bad smell.” The two words used here are ba’ash and ruach. “Israel *became odious* (verb alone) to the Philistines” [1 Sam 13.4].

Vs. 22: “*Turned* (shuv) again:” only the verb is used in the Hebrew text. Shuv is lacking earlier in Exodus with respect to the implication that Moses had done this before.

Vs. 23: *Has done evil* (yarah): literally, “to tremble.” “But God *was displeased* with this thing,

and he smote Israel" [1 Chron 21.7]. Compare with Moses asking the Lord, "Why *have* you *done evil* (raha) to this people?"

-*Delivered* (natsal). Cf. 3.8, "And I have come down to *deliver* them out of the hand of the Egyptians."

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## Chapter Six

Vs. 1: This chapter opens with a response from the Lord, a seamless connection with 5.23.

-*"Strong* (chazaq) hand:" found twice in the same verse. This phrase and others like is used again in 13.16. "I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and *strong* arm" [Jer 21.5].

-Compare the two verbs *send* (shalach) and *drive out* (garash). For the latter, "Behold, I will *drive out* before you the Amorites (etc., 34.11). For another use, cf. Ezk 36.5: "that they may possess and *plunder* it."

Vs. 2: "I am the Lord:" cf. 3.14 & 15. The beginning of an address by the Lord to Moses which continues through vs. 8.

Vs. 3: *Appeared* (ra'ah): cf. 3.16, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, *has appeared* to me."

-*God Almighty* (El Shaddai): "I am *God Almighty*; walk before me and be blameless" [Gen 17.1].

-By my name the Lord:" i.e., YHWH. Note the distinction, as it were, between "name" and "Lord," although the two are intimately related.

-*Make myself known* (yadah) or "cause to be known." Compare with frequent use of the verb shalach (*to send*) from after God's revelation to Moses in 3.14.

Vs. 4: *Established* (qum): fundamentally "to rise" and connotes a continuous "rising" into the future of the divine covenant as well as the land of Canaan being "an everlasting possession" (cf. Gen 17.8).

-*Dwelt* (gur): compare with *sojourners* (gur), from the same verbal root. "Know of a surety that your descendants will be *sojourners* in a land that is not theirs" [Gen 15.13].

Vs. 5: *Groanings* (ne'aqah): "And God heard their *groaning*" [2.24]. The verse at hand mentions "my covenant" whereas 2.24 has "his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." As in both verses, the verb zakar (*to remember*; connotes physical propagation into the future) is used.

Vs. 6: This verse hearkens back to 3.15 and contains three promises; more continue through vs. 7 & 9:

1) "From under the *burdens* (sivlah):" "Taskmasters...to afflict them with heavy *burdens*" [1.11]. Such bringing-out "from under" almost suggests that these burdens will fall to the ground and be left where they fell; i.e., a sudden bringing-out will occur.

2) *Deliver* (natsal) with respect to "bondage:" "I have come down to *deliver* them out of the hand of the Egyptians" [3.8].

3) *Redeem* (ga'al) with respect to "outstretched arm" and "great acts of judgment:" first use of this word in Exodus and connotes a buying back. "The angel who has *redeemed* me from all evil" [Gen 48.16]. As used later, cf. 15.13: "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have *redeemed*."

Vs. 7: *Will take* (laqach): the common verb which implies a sense of taking possession. "You shall *take* a wife for my son from there" [Gen 24.7]. In the verse at hand, God situates this taking as Israel for "my people" which intimates that prior to this point Israel was not his people or better, fully his people. The same applies to being their God. Note four uses of the preposition *l-* (*to, for*): literally, "to me," "to people," "to you" and "to God."

Vs. 8: "Which I swore" literally reads in the Hebrew text, "which I raised my hand." First comes this divine "raising" followed by bestowing the *land* or 'erts promised to Abraham, etc. -*Possession* (morash): first use of this term; compare with Gen 17.8, "...all the land of Canaan for an everlasting *possession*; and I will be their God." In this verse the term 'achuza is used which connotes something seized. For another reference to the verse at hand, cf. Ezk 11.15: "To us this land is given for a *possession*."

Vs. 9: "Moses spoke thus to the people." Compare with the introductory words to the address contained in vss. 2-8, "And God said to Moses." I.e., it is a transference from God speaking to Moses to Moses speaking to the people.

-The people did not listen to God/Moses for two reasons:

1) *Broken spirit* (miqotser ruach): the adjective derives from the verbal root qatsar fundamentally meaning "to cut off," "to be shortened." For another sense, cf. Num 11.23: "Is the Lord's hand *shortened*?"

2) *Cruel bondage* (mehavodah qashah): the adjective derives from the verbal root qashah fundamentally meaning "to be hard," "to be heavy." "And she (Rachel) was in her *hard* labor" [Gen 35.16]. The noun is closely related to havodah as in 2.23: "And the people of Israel groaned under their *bondage*."

Vs. 10: "And the *Lord* said to Moses." Compare with vs. 2, "And *God* said to Moses."

Vs. 11: "Go in:" that is to say, to speak with Pharaoh; it can imply that Moses was "outside" or not belonging to the Egyptian way of life. Compare with Joseph who had free access to the Pharaoh of his day.

-*"Let go out:"* in reference to the Israelites; contrast with Moses' "going in."

Vs. 12: “*Uncircumcised* (haral) lips:” that is, sealed lips or hearkening back to Moses’ lack of eloquence and being “slow of speech and of tongue” [4.10]. For another sense of this word, “Then you shall count their fruit as *forbidden*” [Lev 19.23].

Vs. 13: In vs. 10 the Lord spoke to Moses; here he speaks to Moses and Aaron.

-*Gave a charge* (tsawah): alternately, “to command.” This singular command applies to both the “people of Israel” and to “Pharaoh, king of Egypt.” It therefore involves two separate presentations and ramifications as to letting Israel leave Egypt.

Vs. 14: *Heads* (ro’sh): “These were the ones chosen from the congregation, the leaders of their ancestral tribes, the *heads* of the clans of Israel” [Num 1.16].

-Vss. 14-26 present a genealogy of both Moses and Aaron which traces the priestly lineage from Levi.

Vs. 26: “By their *hosts* (tsiv’otham)”: from the verbal root meaning “to go forth.” This term (in the plural) can apply to an army or retinue. “I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and all the *host* of heaven standing beside him” [1 Kg 22.19].

Vss. 28-30 continue from vs. 12, with the genealogy intervening. Thus “*on* (b-, literally ‘in’) the day” of vs. 28 may be seen as this genealogy present with Moses and Aaron when the Lord spoke with Moses.

Vs. 29: “I am the Lord:” a comparison between divine and earthly sovereignty, i.e., “Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

Vs. 30: This verse concludes with similar words by Moses and his reluctance (haral, ‘*uncircumcised* lips’) to speak with Pharaoh. Chapter Six continues seamlessly into Chapter Seven.

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## Chapter Seven

Vs. 1: Chapters 7 through 11 give an account of the ten plagues. The Lord speaks through 7.5. -“*Make* (natan) you as God to Pharaoh.” The verb literally means “to give,” almost as though the Lord were bestowing a favor upon the Egyptian ruler. The Lord sets in motion a process where Moses stands-in for him with Aaron being his prophet. It is interesting to observe that Aaron is both Moses’ brother and prophet which intimates the later relationship between other prophets and the Lord. The verse at hand contains the second mention of *prophet* or *navy*, the first one being Gen 20.7: “For he (Abraham) is a *prophet*, and he will pray for you.”

Actually, 7.1 is the first real description of the prophetic relationship which later plays an important part in Israel's history.

Vs. 2: The prophetic role—both here and in most other future instances—is spelled out in this verse: the Lord *commands* (tsawah), Moses *speaks* (davar) and Aaron tells (davar). The final intention is for Pharaoh to let Israel depart (shalach, *let go*) Egypt.

Vs. 3: *Harden* (qashah): for an alternate use, cf. Dt 10.16: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and *be* no longer *stubborn*." Throughout the manifestation of the ten plagues Pharaoh's heart becomes hardened. Qashah is the only verb used in this regard, one other verb being chazaq which suggests being strong but here in the negative sense: "But I will *harden* his heart" [4.21].

-*Signs* ('oth): "But this shall be the *sign* for you, that I have sent you" [3.1]. Also, 4.8: "If they will not believe you or heed the first *sign*."

-*Wonders* (mopeth): "See that you do before Pharaoh all the *miracles* which I have but in your power" [4.21]. Both signs and wonders the Lord intends to multiply.

Vs. 4: "I *will lay* (natan; cf. vs. 1 as 'to give') my hand upon Egypt." "Behold, the hand of the Lord will fall with a very severe plague upon your cattle which are in the field" [9.3].

-*Hosts* (tsiv'otham): as in 6.26, "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their *hosts*."

-*Great acts of judgment* (shephet):" in the sense of punishment. "And on all the gods of Egypt I will execute *judgments*" [12.12].

Vs. 5: Compare this verse where the Egyptians will "know that I am the Lord" with 6.7, "you shall know that I am the Lord your God."

-Such knowledge is contingent upon the Lord *stretching forth* (natah) his hand upon Egypt and bringing out the Israelites from that land. Compare natah with shalach (also 'to send,' 'let go') of 3.20, "So I *will stretch out* my hand and smite Egypt."

-*From among* (tok) them:" in the sense as the Israelites located in the very midst of the Egyptians.

Vs. 6: "And Moses and Aaron did so" literally reads in the Hebrew text, "And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord had commanded them thus they did" which shows the unity of the prophetic relationship between the Lord, Moses and Aaron noted in vs. 1. This verse suggests that the acts were already accomplished; however, they do not commence until vs. 14.

Vs. 7: The ages of Moses and Aaron are given (80 and 83, respectively) prior to the ten plagues. Perhaps their advanced ages implies that the wonders about to be effected are accomplished through such aged men.

Vs. 8: "And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron." The Hebrew text adds the common "and saying" at the conclusion of this statement. Here the Lord speaks to both as opposed to Moses alone (cf. vs. 1).

Vs. 9: "Prove (natan, give) yourselves:" i.e., with respect to a *miracle* or *mopeth* as in vs. 3, "signs and wonders."

-The Lord tells Moses that Aaron will act as a prophet (noted in vs. 1) by turning his rod into a *serpent* or *tanyn*. Compare with 4.3, "So he cast it on the ground, and it became a *serpent* (*nachash*). In the verse at hand, the term applies to a large fish or sea monster: "Am I the sea, or a *sea monster*, that you set a guard over me" [Job 7.12]?

-Apparently the *rod* (*moteh*) belongs to Moses and hearkens back to 4.1-5.

Vs. 11: *Wise men* (*chakan*, singular adjective which means 'wise' as well as 'skillful'). "So in the morning his (Pharaoh) spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its *wise men*" [Gen 41.8].

-*Sorcerers* (*chartom*): as in Gen 41.8, "magicians:" from a verbal root meaning "to inscribe" and thus implying scribes skilled in sacred writing.

-*Secret arts* (*lehatym*, plural): from the verbal root meaning "to burn" as well as "to hide."

-*Swallowed* (*balah*): also, "to destroy" as in Ps 21.10: "You will destroy their offspring from the earth."

Vs. 13: Pharaoh's heart remained hardened or *chazaq*; cf. vss. 3 & 14.

Vs. 14: "Pharaoh's heart is *hardened*" (*kavad*, *to be heavy*). "But I will *harden* his heart" [4.21].

Vs. 15: "River's (y'or) bank:" the Egyptian word for "Nile."

Vs. 16: The first plague where "God of the Hebrews" is first mentioned.

-Two uses of the verb *shalach*, "sent me" and "let my people go."

-*"Have not yet obeyed:"* the verb *shamah*, *to listen*. The word "yet" is interesting in that this is the second time Moses and Aaron had confronted Pharaoh, the first being in 5.1+ and after the incident of the rod turning into a serpent.

Vs. 17: "By this you shall know that I am the Lord." Compare with 5.2, "I do not know the Lord."

-Note the sequence of prepositions in the Hebrew text: "I will strike *in* the rod which is *in* my hand *on* the waters which are *in* the Nile and it shall be turned *into* blood."

Vs. 18: "Nile shall become *foul* (*ba'ash*):" this verb also connotes something odious as in Gen 34.30: "You have brought trouble on me by *making* me *odious* to the inhabitants of the land."

-*Loathe* (*la'ah*): fundamentally as "to be weary." "You restored your heritage as it *languished*"

[Ps 68.9].

Vs. 19: Another instance of the prophetic relationship between the Lord, Moses and Aaron. Aaron is to extend his rod over the Egyptian waters, rivers, *canals* (y'or; cf. vs. 15), *ponds* ('agam: 'He turns a desert into *pools* of water,' Ps 107.35) and "*pools* (miqwah: 'You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old *pool*,' Is 22.11).

-“Vessels:” the actual word is lacking in the Hebrew text.

Vs. 20: “Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded.” Cf. the prophetic relationship in vs. 1.

-Aaron “lifts up” his rod; compare with “Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt” in vs. 19.

-“Servants:” i.e., those belonging to Pharaoh; cf. the next verse mentions the “magicians” (and not the “wise men” of vs. 11) who were perhaps among the former.

Vs. 23: “Pharaoh turned and went into his house:” these two verbs of motion emphasize the (static) hardening of his heart in the previous verse.

-“He did not lay this to heart” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “he did not place his heart on this.”

Vs. 24: *Dug* (chaphar): compare the Egyptians’ inability to find water with Isaac’s numerous wells, one reference being Gen 26.22: “And he moved from there and *dug* another well.”

Vs. 25: “Seven days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile.” This is the only mention of “seven days” with regard to the ten plagues. The Hebrew text literally reads, “Seven days were full.”

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(Everything above this point has been corrected & added to the Lectio Page.)

## Chapter Eight

Vs. 1: As opposed to the English text, the Hebrew continues with 7.26 through vs. 29.

-“That they may *serve* (havad) me:” hearkens back to 3.12, 4.23 & 7.16.

Vs. 2: *Plague* (nagaph, verb): literally, “to smite.” “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you *dash* your foot against a stone” [Ps 91.12].

-*Country* (gevul): literally, “boundary,” “limit.” “And the *territory* of the Canaanites extended from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar” [Gen 10.19].

-*Frogs* (tsepharheah): only references in the Bible concerning this word with respect to this plague.

Vs. 3: *Swarm* (sharats): here with respect to frogs; cf. 1.2 concerning the Israelites, “But the

descendants of Israel were fruitful and *increased greatly*." This *sharats* of the frogs (literally, Hebrew text) goes "into the houses of your servants and *in* (b-) your people."

Vs. 4: Note the use of the preposition *in* (b-) as used in the previous verse: "*in* your people" and "*in* all your servants."

Vs. 5 (8.1, Hebrew): "Stretch out your hand with your *rod* (match; cf. 7.9)." I.e., this verse shows the prophetic relationship between the Lord, Moses and Aaron. The Hebrew text literally reads, "Stretch out your hand in your rod" as if the both were one and the same. -"Land ('erets) of Egypt." Compare with *gevul* of vs. 2, *country*.

Vs. 6: *Covered* (*kasah*): "And they (locusts) shall *cover* the face of the land" [10.5]. Vs. 3 describes this covering in terms of the frogs entering the Egyptians' homes.

Vs. 7: Here the Egyptian magicians wrought the same plague as Aaron in vs. 5. If this is so, then there can be a two-fold plague or an intensity of the first one.

Vs. 8: *Entreat* (*hatar*): in the sense of making supplication; also cf. vs. 9, 9.28 & 10.17 by Pharaoh. "And Isaac *prayed* to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren" [Gen 25.21].

Vs. 9: *Be pleased* (*pa'ar*): in the sense of declaring oneself; the only use of the verb in this kind of situation. *Pa'ar* alternately means "to be beautiful," "to adorn" as well as "to dig." In the previous verse Pharaoh asks Moses and Aaron to remove the frogs "from me and from my people." In the verse at hand, Moses responds that he will intercede "for you and for your servants and for your people."

Vs. 12: *Went out* (*yatsa'*)/*cried* (*tsahaq*): note the similar sounding verbs. The latter may be seen as contingent upon Moses and Aaron departure from Pharaoh's presence. -"As he had agreed with Pharaoh" reads in the Hebrew text, "which he had brought upon Pharaoh" or more literally, "on the thing of the frogs which he placed on Pharaoh."

Vs. 13: "And the Lord did according to the *word* (*devar*) of Moses." Compare with *thing* (*devar*) of the previous verse.

-The frogs then "died out of the houses and courtyards and out of the fields." The preposition *min-* is used (*from*). Compare with their entry: "and the frogs came up and covered the land" [vs. 6].

Vs. 14: "And the land *stank*" (*ba'ash*): "Because you *have made* us *offensive* in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants" [5.21].

Vs. 15: *Respite* (*reuachah*). The only other reference is Lam 3.56, "You did hear my plea, 'Do



not close your ear to my *cry* for help.” this noun is derived from the same verbal root as “breath,” “spirit.”

-“Hardened (kavad) his heart:” cf. 7.14.

Vs. 16: Here the rod in Aaron’s hand—through the bidding of the Lord/Moses to strike the “dust (haphar) of the earth.” “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the *ground* (‘adamah)” [Gen 2.7].

-The result is *gnats* or *ken*. The only other reference to this word is Ps 105.31, “He spoke, and there came swarms of flies and *gnats* throughout their country.”

Vs. 17: These gnats came “on man and beast.” The Hebrew text uses the preposition b-, literally, “in.”

Vs. 18: “The magicians tried by their secret arts” reads in the Hebrew text, “The magicians did thus...”

Vs. 19: “*Finger* (‘etsbah) of God:” “The two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the *finger* of God” [31.18]. Compare “finger” with “hand of God,” “For by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt” [13.18].

Vs. 20: “*Rise up early* (shakam) in the morning:” compare with 9.13, “*Rise up early* in the morning and stand before Pharaoh.”

-“*Wait for* (yatsav) Pharaoh:” in the sense of taking one’s stand or position. “Fear not, *stand firm*, and see the salvation of the Lord” [14.13].

-In this instance, the Lord speaks to Moses directly as opposed through Moses to Aaron.

21: Two uses of the verb shalach: “If you *will* not *let* my people go” and “I *will send* swarms of flies.”

-*Swarms of flies* (harov): two other references besides this term in the situation at hand, Pss 78.45 & 105.31.

-“*Ground* (‘adamah) on which they stand” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “also on the ground which they (are) upon it.”

Vs. 22: *Set apart* (pala’): alternately, “to be wonderful.” For another use of this verb, “and smite Egypt with all the *wonders* which I will do in it” [3.20].

-“*Land* (‘erts) of Goshen:” compare with *ground* or ‘adamah in the previous verse. Another reference concerning Goshen is 9.26, “Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail.”

-“In the midst of the *earth* (‘erts).” Reference to the earth as a whole; compare with “land of Goshen” or two uses of the same noun.

Vs. 23: *Division* (peduth): from the verbal root padah, *to loose, redeem*. For a use of the noun, "He has sent *redemption* to his people" [111.9].

-Such a division/redemption is a *sign* or 'oth. "I will multiply my *signs* and wonders in the land of Egypt" [7.3].

Vs. 24: "*Great* (kaved) swarms of flies:" from the verbal root kavad, *to be heavy*. "Let *heavier* work be laid upon the men that they may labor it it" [5.9].

Vs. 25: In this verse Pharaoh tells Moses and Aaron to "sacrifice within the land" or Egypt. Compare with 3.18 (and other places), "three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God."

Vs. 26: *Offerings abominable* (tohevah, singular): the word "offerings" is implied in this word. For another reference with the same sense, "Because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an *abomination* to the Egyptians" [Gen 43.32].

-*"Will they not stone* (saqal) us:" "But he *shall be stoned* or shot; whether beast of man, he shall not live" [19.13].

Vs. 27: "As he will command us." Future tense indicating that the Israelites are to make a three days' journey into the wilderness. These words imply a certain question as to nature of the sacrifice to be performed there.

Vs. 28: "Only you *shall not go very far away* (rachaq)." Two uses of this verb. Perhaps Pharaoh had the now familiar request of a three days journey in mind which is a short time away.

-*Make entreaty* (hatar): cf. vs. 8, "*Entreat* the Lord to take away the frogs."

Vs. 29: *Go out* (yatsa'): cf. 8.12, "So Moses and Aaron *went out* from Pharaoh," that is, after speaking with him concerning the plague of frogs. Such a departure is bound up with Moses saying that he will *pray* (hatar, cf. last verse) for Pharaoh; i.e., he cannot do this within the confines of Pharaoh's court. This is also stressed in vs. 30.

-*Deal falsely* (talal): "Or can you *deceive* him, as one *deceives* a man" [Job 13.9]?

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## Chapter Nine

Vs. 1: "Go in to Pharaoh." A command by the Lord to Moses (doesn't include Aaron). Towards the end of the last chapter note the re-entry of Moses after he left Pharaoh to pray for him. No interval of time is given between that incident and the current one. The verse at hand repeats the refrain, "Let my people go," as found at the beginning of Chapter Eight.

Vs. 2: *Hold* (chazaq): with respect to the Israelites. Compare with another use in 4.21, “But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.”

Vs. 3: “Hand will fall:” the Hebrew text has “to be” instead of “to fall.” This fifth plague (which is probably anthrax) will affect cattle, horses, asses, camels, herds and flocks. Note that it follows upon the plague of flies which transmit this disease. Such a plague will be “very severe (kaved).” “There came great swarms of flies” [8.24].

Vs. 4: *Will make a distinction* (palah): also in 11.7; a verb which implies separation. “But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself” [Ps 4.3].

-“Nothing shall die of all that belongs to the people of Israel” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “Not will die from all the sons of Israel a thing (davar).” “Surely the thing is known” [2.14].

Vs. 5: “The Lord set a time (mohed):” “He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel” [1 Sam 13.8]. This term alternately means *assembly*: “Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts” [Is 33.20]!

Vs. 6: *Thing* (devar): cf. previous verse.

-Cattle: the only animals mentioned that died; compare with vs. 3 which includes horses, asses, camels, herds and flocks.

Vs. 8: The sixth plague consisting of boils.

-“Handfuls of ashes:” literally, “the fill of your hands (chaphnaym).” “Who has gathered the wind in his fists” [Prov 30.4]?

-Ashes (pyach): the only reference (also vs. 10) in the Bible.

-Kiln (kivshan): or a furnace for smelting metal. “The smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace” [Gen 19.28].

-Throw (zaraq): i.e., the ashes. This verb fundamentally means “to scatter” and can refer to the sprinkling of water. “Because the water for impurity was not thrown upon him” [Num 19.13].

Vs. 9: *Fine dust* (‘avaq): from a verbal root meaning “to make small.” “His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you” [Ezk 26.10]. For an interesting use of the verbal root, cf. Gen 32.25: “Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled (i.e., raised the dust) with him.”

-Boils (shichyn): “And when there is in the skin of one’s body a boil that has healed” [Lev 13.18].

-Sores (‘avahbuoth): the only use of this term in the Bible as well as the next two verses.

-Vs. 12: “But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh.” Compare with vs. 7, “But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.”

Vs. 13: The Lord speaks from here through vs. 19.

-“*Rise up early* (shakam) in the morning:” cf. 8.20.

-“God of the Hebrews: cf. 9.1.

Vs. 14: “All my *plagues* (magepah):” note the personal pronoun, the plagues as belonging to the Lord. This is the only use of the noun concerning the ten plagues. It alternately means *slaughter* as in 1 Sam 4.17, “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great *slaughter* among the people.”

-“*Upon* (‘el, literally, ‘to’) your heart.” Note the close connection between Pharaoh’s heart and “all my plagues.” Compared with use of ‘el, the preposition b- (literally, ‘in’) is used with reference to “servants” and “people.” Also b- is used concerning God’s position “none like me *in* all the earth.”

Vs. 15: “*I could have put forth* (shalach) my hand.” Compare this use of the verb with vs. 13 and other places, “*Let* my people go.”

-*Pestilence* (dever): from the verbal root davar, *to speak*. “Lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword” [5.3]. “O death, where are your *plagues*” [Hos 13.14]?

-*Cut off* (kachad): fundamentally implying disowning or denying. “...and the Jebusites, and I *blot* them out” [32.23]. Also, “In one month I *destroyed* the three shepherds” [Zech 11.8].

Vs. 16: “*Have I let you live* (hamad):” fundamentally, “to stand” (as to continue in existence). “But if the slave *survives* a day or two, he is not to be punished” [21.21].

-“*My name be declared* (saphar):” in the sense of to inscribe something. “Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and *telling* all your wondrous deeds” [Ps 26.7].

-“*In all the earth* (‘erts):” compare with the previous verse, “you would have been cut off from the *earth*.”

Vs. 17: *Exalting yourself* (salal): fundamentally as “to cast up;” the only use of this verb in the Bible. “*Lift up* a song to him who rides upon the clouds” [Ps 68.4]. This verse in the Hebrew literally reads, “Cast up a highway for him who rides through the deserts.”

-“*Against* (b-) my people.” Note the preposition prefixed to “people” which literally reads, “*in* my people.”

Vs. 18: “*Very heavy* (kaved: as in vs. 3, ‘very severe’) *hail*.” For another reference to the noun barad, “Behold, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong; like a storm of *hail*, a destroying tempest” [Is 28.2]. The verb fundamentally means “to sprinkle (with spots);” from it derives another noun, “leopard.”

-*Founded* (yasad): in reference to the origin of Egypt. “The Lord by wisdom *founded* the earth” [Prov 3.19].

Vs. 19: *Now* (hatah). The previous verse concludes with this word, "until *now*."

-“All that you have” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “all which is to you.”

-*Safe shelter* (huz): the verb is used here fundamentally meaning “to flee.” “Raise a standard toward Zion, *flee for safety*, stay not” [Jer 4.6].

Vs. 20: “He who feared the *word* (devar) of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh.” Here is the first reference to those Egyptians who possibly were sympathetic to the Israelites or even converts to their faith. Compare with 1.17, “The midwives feared God.”

-*Servants/slaves*: the same term heved.

Vs. 21: “But he who did not regard the *word* (devar) of the Lord” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “who did not place his heart to the word of the Lord.”

Vs. 22: Here the Lord speaks to Moses as opposed to through him to Aaron. Compare with 8.5 where the Lord speaks to Aaron through Moses, “Stretch out your hand with your rod over the rivers (etc).”

-“*Throughout* (b-) the land of Egypt:” the preposition “in” is used in the Hebrew text.

Vs. 23: “The Lord *sent* (natan).” This verb fundamentally means “to give.” Three things are to come from the sky:

1) *Thunder* (qol): fundamentally as “voice.” For another use, cf. 19.16: “On the morning of the third day there were *thunders* and lighnings and a thick cloud upon the mountain.”

2) *Hail* (barad): cf. vs. 18. Note that later in the verse at hand “the Lord rained down *hail*,” i.e., it seems to be singled out as a particularly harsh punishment.

3) *Fire* ('esh). “Because the Lord descended upon it in *fire* [19.18].”

Vs.24: *Flashing continuously* (laqach): verb is used in the hithpael. It fundamentally means “to take,” “to receive.” The only other reference is Ezk 1.4, “and fire *flashing forth continuously*.”

-As noted in the last verse (#3), hail is particularly fearsome; here it is “very *heavy* (kaved; cf. vss. 3 & 18).”

-“Since it (Egypt) became a nation.” Compare with vs. 18 also with reference to hail, “Such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.”

Vs. 25: The devastation of hail is indicated by the verb nakah (*to strike down*). This verb is also used with regard to the water (7.20) and dust of the earth (8.16). The hail also “*shattered* (shavar) every tree.” “For he *shatters* the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron” [Ps 107.16].

Vs. 26: Goshen: cf. 8.22 with reference to the plague of flies which did not affect “my people.”

Vs. 27: *I have sinned* (chata'): the first admission by Pharaoh of his hardness of heart, yet he

“sinned again” [vs. 34]. Also cf. 10.16, “I have *sinned* against the Lord your God and against you.”

-“The Lord is *in the right* (tsadyq, adjective).”

-“I and my people are *in the wrong* (rashah, adjective):” alternately, “evil.” Note the inclusion of “my people” whereas the real problem lies with Pharaoh.

Vs. 28: “*Entreat* (hatar) the Lord:” cf. 8.8. In both instances Pharaoh’s request for divine intervention reflects the mediating role of Moses (and Aaron).

-“*Stay* (hamad) no longer:” in the sense of abide; cf. vs. 16.

Vs. 29: “As soon as I have gone out of the city.” These words seem to reflect the necessity of Moses to leave the presence of Egyptian authority or power to stop the plague of hail.

-“*Stretch out* (paras) my hands:” connotes a sense of dispersion. “When you *spread forth* your hands, I will hide my eyes from you” [Is 1.15]. Compare use of this verb with natah as in 7.5, “And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I *stretch forth* my hand upon Egypt.”

Vs. 30: “You (Pharaoh and his servants) do not yet fear the Lord God.” I.e., they have not yet attained the reverence as shown by the midwives as in 1.17. Also, “Then he who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his slaves and his cattle flee into the houses.”

Vs. 33: “So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh.” Compare with vs. 29, “As soon as I have gone out of the city.”

Vs. 34: “He (Pharaoh) sinned yet again.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “He increased to sin.”

Vs. 35: “As the Lord had spoken through Moses.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “As the Lord had spoken in the hand of Moses.”

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## Chapter Ten

Vs. 1: “For I have *hardened* his heart and the heart (singular) of his servants.” Here the verb is kavad and action is effected by the Lord. Compare with 9.35, “So the heart of Pharaoh was *hardened*” where the verb is chazaq.

-“*Signs* (’oth) of mine *among* (betok; also as ‘in the center’) them.” As in 7.8 and elsewhere, “But I will *harden* (qashah) Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my *signs* and wonders.”

Vs. 2: *Tell* (saphar): “so that my name *may be declared* throughout all the earth.”

-“In the hearing of your son’s son.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “in the ears...” Technically speaking, Moses’ son is Gershom (cf. 2.22) but “son’s son” can apply to future generations of the Israelites. Gershom is not heard of again as a person; Moses’ identification with his people is more important than this blood relationship.

-“*Made sport* (halal) of (b-, literally, ‘in’) the Egyptians:” “And Balaam said to the ass, ‘Because you *have made sport* of me” [Num 22.29]. This verb alternately means “to vex,” “to glean,” “to satisfy thirst.”

-“That you may know that I am the Lord.” Compare with 9.30 (similar words) addressed to Pharaoh and his servants.

Vs. 3: “So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh.” I.e., to follow the Lord’s command in vs. 1. Such “going in” may apply to returning to the city in 9.33 as well as Pharaoh’s court.

-“God of the Hebrews:” cf. 9.13, etc.

-*Humble yourself* (hanah): “Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we *might humble ourselves* before our God” [Ezra 8.21].

Vs. 4: *Locusts* (‘arbeh, singular), the eighth plague. “He gave their crops to the caterpillar and the fruit of their labor to the *locust*” [Ps 78.46].

-“Into your country” (gevul or ‘border’): “Behold, I will plague all your *country* with frogs” [8.2].

Vs. 5: “*Face* (hayn) of the land:” literally, “eye.” “Behold, a people has come out of Egypt; they cover the *face* of the earth” [Num 22.5].

-“Every tree of your which grows *in* the field.” The Hebrew text has the preposition min (*from*).

Vs. 6: “Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.” That is, Moses; no mention is made of Aaron who “went in to Pharaoh” [vs. 3].

Vs. 7: *Snare* (moqesh): “For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you” [23.33].

Also, “The cords of Sheol entangled me, the *snare*s of death confronted me” [Ps 18.5].

-*Servants* (heved)/*serve* (havad): a noun derived from the verb.

-“That Egypt *is ruined*” (‘avad): fundamentally, “to perish.” “Why is the land *ruined* and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through” [Jer 9.12]?

Vs. 8: “Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh.” The implication is that they were compelled to return as opposed to previous instances.

Vs. 9: In response to Pharaoh’s question (“But who are to go?”), Moses says (not Aaron) that they will depart with their young, old, sons, daughters, flocks and herds.

-“We must hold a *feast*.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “because a *feast* of the Lord is to us.” Chag is the term used here; first time in reference to the sacrifice Moses previously requested.

“On the seventh day there shall be a *feast* to the Lord” [17.6]. For another use, “Bind the *festal procession* with branches, up to the horns of the altar” [Ps 118.27]!

Vs. 10: *Little ones* (taph). “Meanwhile all the men of Judah stood before the Lord with their *little ones*, their wives and their children” [2 Chron 20.13]. This term is not mentioned in the previous verse.

-“You have some evil purpose in mind.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “Evil before your faces.”

Vs. 11: “For that is what you *desire* (baqash):” alternately as “to seek.” “What are you *seeking*” [Gen 27.15]?

-“They *were driven out* (garash) from Pharaoh’s presence.” “With a strong hand he (the Lord) *will drive them out* of his land” [6.1].

Vs. 12: “*Stretch out* (natah) your hand over the land of Egypt.” Here the Lord bids Moses, not Aaron, as (for example) in 7.19 (shalach), 8.5 & 16, 10.12.

-Two uses of the preposition hal (*on, upon*): “*over* the land of Egypt” and “that they (locusts) may come *upon* the land.”

Vs. 13: “The Lord *brought* (nahag) an east wind.” The basic meaning is “to pant;” alternately as “to drive.” “And the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he *drives* furiously” [2 Kg 9.20].

-“*East wind* (ruach):” “And the Lord *drove* (halak) the sea back by a strong east *wind* all night” [14.21].

-“*Upon* (b-, literally as ‘in’) the land.”

-“*Had brought* (nasa’) the locusts:” the fundamental meaning is “to lift up;” compare with nahag in this same verse.

Vs. 14: “Locusts came up *over* all the *land* (‘erts) of Egypt.” Here the preposition hal is used. Compare with “locusts...*settled* (nuach) *on* (b-, literally as ‘in’) the whole country (gevil; cf. vs. 4) of Egypt.” The verb nuach implies being at rest, remaining. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and *rested* the seventh day” [20.11]

-*Dense swarm* or kaved me’od, “exceedingly heavy.”

Vs. 15: *Covered* (kasah): as with the frogs, 8.6.

-*Face* (hayn): literally “eye,” as in vs. 5.

-“*Land was darkened* (chashak):” “*Let their eyes be darkened* so that they cannot see” [Ps 69.23].

Vs. 16: *I have sinned* (chata’): cf. 9.27. In the verse at hand, Pharaoh adds “and against you.”

Vs. 17: “*Forgive my sin*” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “*raise my sin.*”



“-This *death* (maweth):” the only plague (locusts) which Pharaoh associates with death, although the last plague will result in the death of Egypt’s first-born.

Vs. 18: “So he (Moses) went out and *entreated* (hatar; also in the previous verse) the Lord.” Yet another reference to Moses having exited Pharaoh’s presence, as though being there were a defilement which prevented him from making supplication. Note that vs. 16 has both Moses and Aaron being summoned in haste, although Pharaoh does not ask Aaron to pray for him.

Vs. 19: “West *wind* (ruach):” compare with the “east wind” of vs. 13 which brought the locusts. The Hebrew literally reads “wind sea.” The Lord’s act of turning this wind suggests reversing its direction.

-*Drove* (taqah): implies striking of hands; from this word “trumpet” is derived. “And I *will fasten* him like a peg in a sure place” [Is 22.23].

Vs. 21: The ninth plague, *darkness* (choshek); cf. vs. 15 where the verb is used concerning the locusts. “And there was the cloud and the *darkness*” [14.20]. Such a darkness is to be *felt* or *mush*. “They have hands but *do not feel*; feet, but do not walk” [Ps 115.7].

Vs. 22: “*Thick* (‘aphelah) darkness:” the only use of this adjective in addition to Is 8.22, “And they will be thrust into *thick* darkness.”

Vs. 23: In contrast to this thick darkness the Israelites had *light* (‘or) where they dwelt. Cf. 9.26, “Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail.” This contrast between darkness and light is reminiscent of the opening verses of Genesis.

Vs. 24: Pharaoh tells Moses that the Israelites may depart (i.e., *children* or taph; cf. vs. 10) to serve the Lord but leave behind their flocks and herds so that they might not have these animals as sacrifices (cf. the next verse).

Vs. 25: “You must let us have” reads in the Hebrew text, “Give in our hands.”

-“Sacrifices and *burnt offerings* (holah):” or that which is laid upon an altar. “He (Abraham) cut the wood for the *burnt offering*” [Gen 22.3].

-“That we may *sacrifice* (hasah):” the verb “to make” is used here.

Vs. 26: *Cattle* (miqnah): literally, “possession.” “And the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of *cattle*” [Gen 46.32].

-*Hoof* (parsah): “Tearing off even their *hoofs*” [Zech 11.16]. Such cattle are “to *serve* (havad; note several times earlier with regard to the Israelites themselves) the Lord our God.” Havad is also used in the verse at hand with respect to the Israelites who do not yet know how to perform the sacrifice.

Vs. 28: "Get away from me" literally reads, "Go from on me" indicating how much Moses wore on Pharaoh's nerves.

-*Take heed* (shamar): alternately as "to keep watch," "to observe." "Give heed to him (an angel) and hearken to his voice [23.21].

Vs. 29: "I will not see your face again." Compare with 12.31, "And he (Pharaoh) summoned Moses and Aaron by night."

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## Chapter Eleven

Vs. 1: "*He will drive you out* (garash):" "With a strong hand *he will drive them out* of his land."

Vs. 2: "Speak in the hearing of the people" literally reads, "in the ears of the people."

-*Jewelry* (kely) of silver and of gold:" literally, "utensil." Presumably such items were later used for making the golden calf, 32.2 ("rings of gold").

Vs. 3: *Favor* (chen): "I will give this people *favor* in the sight of the Egyptians" [3.21].

-Moses being "very great in the land of Egypt" is comparable to Joseph.

Vs. 4: "Midnight:" "At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt" [12.29].

-*"I will go forth in the midst of* (betok) Egypt:" "That I may show these signs of mine *among them*" 10.1].

Vs. 5: *First-born* (bekor). Compare with 4.22, "Israel is my *first-born* son."

Vs. 6: "*Great cry* (tsehaqah)." Compare with 3.7, "I have heard their *cry* because of their taskmasters."

Vs. 7: "Not a dog shall *growl* (charats):" literally, "cut his teeth." The alternate meaning is "to decree:" "For the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will make a full end as *decreed*, in the midst of all the earth" [Is 10.23].

-*"The Lord makes a distinction* (palah):" "But the Lord *will make a distinction* between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt" [9.4].

Vs. 8: "All these your servants" seem to pertain to the Egyptians.

-*"All the people who follow you"* literally reads, "All the people who are in your feet."

-*"Hot* (chory) anger:" "The *fierce* anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah" [Is 7.4].

Vs. 9: *Wonders* (mopeth). First used in 4.21, "See that you do all the *miracles* which I have put

in your power.”

Vs. 10: In the previous verse the Lord says “that my wonders may be multiplied.” Here Moses and Aaron “did all these wonders before Pharaoh.”

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## Chapter Twelve

Vs. 1: This chapter marks a switch from the ten plagues of the past few chapters as well as an account of Israel’s oppression in a foreign land. “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt.” Such are the words of this new chapter, words which occurred many times previously in Exodus. It is as though such speaking needs to be sustained or continued into a new phase of the drama.

Vs. 2: “This *month* (chodesh):” or Nisan (March-April). The noun is derived from a verbal root meaning “to be new.” The noun also means the *new moon* as in 1 Sam 20.5, “Behold, tomorrow is the *new moon*, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king.”

-*First/beginning* (ro’sh/ri’shon): the same verbal root but with different nuances.

Vs. 3: “*Congregation* (hedah) of Israel:” first time this term is mentioned. For its use with a similar word (qahal, *assembly*), cf. vs. 6: “When the whole *assembly* of the *congregation* of Israel shall kill their lambs.” Use of hedah suggests that the Israelites had been organized into a religious group within Egypt for some time.

-*Lamb* (seh): refers to either a sheep or a goat. “But where is the *lamb* for a burnt offering” [Gen 22.7]?

-“*Fathers’ houses*:” “Take a census of all the *congregation* (hedah) of Israel...by fathers’ houses” [Num 1.2].

Vs. 4: *Neighbor* (shaken): or one who dwells nearby. “As when Sodom and Gomorrah and their *neighbor* cities were overthrown” [Jer 49.18].

-“*Next* (qarov) to his house:” from a verbal root meaning “to drawn near,” “to approach.”

“You shall give his inheritance to his kinsman that is *next* to him of his family” [Num 27.11].

-“*Number of persons* (nephesh):” literally, “souls.” For another use, “Only you shall not eat flesh with its *life*” [Gen 9.4].

-*You shall make its count* (kasas): the only use of this verb in the Old Testament.

Vs. 5: *Without blemish* (tamym): in the sense of being whole. “Noah was a righteous man, *blameless* in his generation” [Gen 6.9].

-*Male* (zakar): from the verbal root “to remember” as in 2.24, “And God remembered his covenant with Abraham.” For a reference with the noun, “*Male* and female he created them”

[Gen1.27].

-*Sheep* (keves): more properly, a lamb; compare with seh of vs. 3. "One young bull, one ram, one male *lamb* a year old, for a burnt offering" [Num 7.15].

-*Goats* (hez): "He shall bring as his offering a *goat*, a male without blemish" [Lev 4.23].

Vs. 6: "And you shall *keep* (mishmereth, noun) it." The Hebrew text literally reads, "And let it be to you to a *guard*." "Let an omer of it *be kept* throughout your generations" [17.32]. For another use, "And their *charge* was to be the ark" [Num 3.31].

-*Whole assembly* (qahal) of the *congregation* (hedah) of Israel." Cf. vs. 3 above.

-*Shall kill* (shachat) their lambs (literally, 'it'):" a verb applying to animals. "Then Abraham put forth his hand and took the knife to *slay* his son" [Gen 22.10].

-*In the evening*" reads in the Hebrew text, "between evenings."

Vs. 7: "Shall take some of the blood" literally reads, "Shall take from the blood."

-*Doorposts* (mezuzah): "And you shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates" [Dt 6.9].

-*Lintels* (mashqoph): the only other two references with this term are vss. 22 & 23. The verbal root means "to look down upon."

Vs. 8: "That night:" a festival celebrated during the full moon.

-*Roasted* (tsely 'esh): literally, "roasted (in) fire;" cf. next verse. The only other reference is 1 Sam 2.15, "Give meat for the priest to *roast*."

-*Unleavened bread* (matsah): literally, "what is sweet" (i.e., unfermented). "It shall be eaten *unleavened* in a holy place" [Lev 6.16].

-*Bitter herbs* (merorym): from a verbal root meaning "to be bitter." Apart from a similar dietary directive in Num 9.11, the only other reference to this word is Lam 3.15, "He has filled me with *bitterness*, he has sated me with wormwood."

Vs. 10: The previous verse says that the lamb is to be roasted; the verse at hand says any remainder is to be *burned* or saraph (from which 'seraphim' is derived), a verb which connotes total consumption. For another use, "Come, let us make bricks and *burn* them *thoroughly*" [Gen 11.3]. Note that in the verse at hand, such burning must be done before sunrise.

Vs. 11: The Lord commands three ways to eat the lamb:

1) "*Loins* (matnaym) girded:" "You did bring us into the net; you did lay affliction on our *loins*" [Ps 66.11].

2) "*Sandals* (nahal) on your feet:" "Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my *shoe*" [Ps 90.8].

3) "*Staff* (maqel) in hand:" literally, a "twig," "sucker." "I see a *rod* of almond" [Jer 1.11]. Compare this word with *match* used elsewhere in Exodus (as 4.2).

-*In haste* (chaphzon):" from a verbal root meaning "to take fright," "to be hasty." "I had said

in my *alarm*, 'I am driven far from your sight'" [Ps 31.22].

-“It is the Lord’s *Passover* (pesach).” The Hebrew text literally reads, “It is the Passover *to* (l-) the Lord.” The first use of this important term; vs. 27 speaks of it terms of “sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover.” Cf. vs. 13, “I will *pass over* (pasach) you.” Such a Passover hearkens back to that “distinction” made in 11.7.

Vs. 12: “I will *pass* (havar) *through* (b-, literally ‘in’) the land of Egypt that night.” Compare with pasach of the next verse (*pass over*).

-*First-born* (bekor): alternately as “first-fruits.” “...like a *first-ripe* fig before summer” [Is 28.4].

-“All the gods of Egypt.” Upon them the Lord will pass judgment which differs from smiting the first-born of man and beast yet may include these gods who fall under the same fate.

Vs. 13: *Sign* (’oth) which here is blood. “This shall be the *sign* for you, that I have sent you” [3.12].

-*Plague* (negeph): first use of this word which may be compared with magephah (same verbal root) as in 9.14, “For this time I will send all my *plagues* upon your heart.” For another reference to the word at hand, “that there be no *plague* among them when you number them” [30.12].

-“*Shall fall upon you*” (shachat): more properly, “to destroy.” Cf. vs. 6, “the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel *shall kill* their lambs in the evening.”

-*To destroy*: literally, “to destruction” or mashchyth also in vs. 23; the verbal root can also mean “to spread out (with oil).”

Vs. 14: “This day.” The “day” to be commemorated as Passover takes place at night.

-Note four times when the preposition l- (literally, “to”) is prefixed to words: “to you,” “to a remembrance,” “to the Lord” and “to generations.”

-*Memorial* (zikaron; also 17.14): from the verbal root zakar (*to remember*). “Stones of remembrance” [28.12].

-“*Shall keep* (chagag) it as a *feast* (chag) to the Lord.” The verb fundamentally means “to dance;” the noun is derived from this verbal root: “We must hold a *feast* to the Lord” [10.9].

For the verb, cf. 5.1, “that *they may hold a feast* to me in the wilderness.”

-*Generations* (dor): “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you...for all future generations” [Gen 9.12].

-“*You shall observe* (it) as an *ordinance*.” the verb chagag again, here coupled with chuqah as in 13.10, “You shall therefore keep this *ordinance* at its appointed time from year to year.”

Vs. 15: “Unleavened bread:” first mentioned in vs. 8 as applied to the Passover. It is to be extended over seven days, this number having special significance, most like as symbolic of perfection; cf. 13.6 & 23.15 for two other references. Such an observance is part of that “memorial” of the previous verse.

-*Leaven* (chamets): from a verbal root meaning “to be sour.” A related term (chomets) is found

in Rt 2.14, "Dip your morsel in the *wine*." Leaven causes bread to rise; for seven days the Israelites are to eat "flat" bread.

-In the verse at hand, the "rising" of leaven is associated with banishment: "that *person* (nephesh or 'soul') shall be cut off (karath) from Israel." A similar sentiment is found in Lev 7.27, "Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people." In other contexts, karath refers to the making ("cutting") of a covenant, for example, 24.8.

Vs. 16: "First day" or when Israel is to hold a "holy assembly (miqra')." The seventh day is to conclude with a similar gathering. In addition to its use twice in this verse, the only other references using miqra' are Is 1.13 & 4.5. It is from the verbal root "to call." Compare with qahal, vs. 6.

-Both the first and seventh days are to be free of *work* (mela'kah) which is more akin to service. "But one day when he went into the house to do his *work*" [Gen 39.11]. Compare with the "hard service (havodah)" of 1.14.

-*Everyone* (nephesh): as in vs. 15; here it may literally read, "all soul."

Vs. 17: *Observe* (shamar): in the sense of keeping guard or preserving. "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go" [Gen 28.15]. This verb is often used with respect to the Torah and divine commandments: "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep your word" [Ps 119.67].

-*Feast of unleavened bread* (matsoth): plural of matsah as in vs. 8.

-*"On this very (hetsem) day:"* used instead of the pronoun "itself;" from the verbal root meaning "to bind fast," "to become strong." "On the *very same* day Noah and his sons...entered the ark" [Gen 7.13].

-*Hosts* (tsava', singular): "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their *hosts*" [6.26]. Here the Lord says "I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt" where the past tense is used, almost as though the deed were already accomplished.

-*Observe* (shamar): second use of this verb in the same verse, here with reference to "this day."

-The rest of this verb parallels that of vs. 14, "throughout your generations as an ordinance forever."

Vs. 19: *Leaven* (sa'ar): compare with chamets in vs. 15. It derives from an unused verbal root meaning "to boil up," "to ferment." There are only four other references to this word: 12.19, 13.7, Lev 2.11 and Dt 16.4.

-Another use of the verb karath (*to cut off*) and the noun nephesh (*person... 'soul'*) as in vs. 15.

-*"Congregation* (hedah) of Israel:" "Tell all the *congregation* of Israel."

-*Stranger* (ger): "I have been a *sojourner* in a foreign land" [2.22].

-*Native* ('ezrah): from a verbal root meaning "to shoot forth" (as from domestic soil). "You shall do no work, either the *native* or the *stranger* (ger) who sojourns among you" [Lev 16.29].

Vs. 21: *Elders* (zaqen, singular): as used in 3.16 & 18 and 4.29.

-“*Select* (mashak) lambs for yourselves.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “Take hold of (in the sense of pulling out) and take lambs for yourselves.” This is the same verbal root from which “Moses” is derived; cf. 2.10.

-*Families* (mishpachah, singular): can also refer to a tribe. “These are the *families* of Reuben” [6.14].

-*Kill* (shachat): cf. vs. 6.

-*Passover lamb* (pasach): the Hebrew text lacks “lamb.” “It is the Lord’s *Passover*.”

Vs. 22: *Bunch of hyssop*. The first word is ‘agudah. It can have military connotations: “And the Benjaminites gathered themselves together behind Abner and became one *band*” [2 Sam 2.25]. The second word is ‘ezov. It is used for sacred purifications as in Lev 14.4, “The priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed...*hyssop*” [Lev 14.4].

-*Dip* (taval): “And the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he *dipped* his finger in the blood” [Lev 9.9].

-*Basin* (saph): “Lo, I am about to make Jerusalem a *cup* of reeling to all the peoples round about” [Zech 12.2].

-*Lintel* (mashqoph ) and *doorposts* (mezuzah): cf. vss. 7 & 23.

Vs. 23: “The Lord *will pass through* (havar):” cf. vs. 2.

-“*To slay* (nagaph) the Egyptians.” For another use of this verb, cf. 8.2 “I will *plague* all your country with frogs.”

-*Pass over* (pasach): as in vs. 13; compare with havar in the verse at hand.

-*Destroyer* (mashchyth): from the verbal root mashach (cf. vs. 13). This being can be associated with an angel of death as in Is 37.36: “And the angel of the Lord went forth and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians” [Is 37.36].

Vs. 24: *To observe* (shamar): as in vs. 17 with respect to “this day.” In the verse at hand, it refers to “this *rite* (davar),” the only use of this term in such a context; from the verbal root davar (*to speak*).

-The rite is to be an *ordinance* or choq. For another use of this term, “Why have you not done all your *task* of making bricks as today as hitherto” [5.14]?

Vs. 25: “Land...as he has *promised* (davar).” The Hebrew literally reads, “Land...as he has spoken.” Cf. Gen 18.19, “So that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he *has promised* him.” Compare with the noun davar in the previous verse.

-“You *shall keep* (shamar) this *service* (havodah).” For the verb, cf. previous verse. For another use of the noun, cf. vs. 16.

Vs. 27: “The sacrifice of the Lord’s passover.” The Hebrew text has the preposition l- (*to*) prefixed to “Lord” which indicates a more direct and intimate connection between the two.

-“*Spared* (natsal) our houses.” “And I have come down *to deliver* them out of the hand of the

Egyptians" [3.8].

-*Bowed their heads* (qadad): in the sense of inclining oneself. "And Moses made haste *to bow his head* toward the earth and worshiped" [34.8].

Vs. 28: This verse has Israel on one hand and Moses and Aaron on the other following the Passover of the Lord. Note that they do this separately; also, action is in the past as though it had been accomplished.

Vs. 29: *Sat* (yashav): used twice, with respect to Pharaoh on his throne and with respect to prisoners in the dungeon. The Hebrew text literally reads, "sitting in the dungeon."

-*Dungeon* (beyth habor): literally, "house of the pit." For the second noun, "Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the *pits*" [Gen 37.20].

Vs. 30: "Great *cry* (tsehaqah) in Egypt." Note the singular referring to the country as a single unit which is intensified by the blackness of night. "And now, behold, the *cry* of the people of Israel has come to me" [3.9].

Vs. 31: "And he summoned Moses and Aaron by night." The Hebrew text has the preposition l- (*to*) prefixed to these two proper names which indicates Pharaoh's haste. Also note the phrase *by night* (layhah) which has two lameds as if to emphasize this haste along with the previous two.

-*Rise up* (qum): the same verb in the previous verse, "And Pharaoh *rose up* in the night."

32: "*Bless* (barak) me also." Words by Pharaoh to Moses and Aaron which are interesting in light of what just occurred and is about to occur. The why this is phrased may apply to Pharaoh's request at the moment or later when the Israelites make their sacrifices.

Vs. 33: "The Egyptians *were urgent* with the people." The verb here is chazaq as used in a different though related sense, 4.21: "But I *will harden* his heart so that he will not let the people go."

Vs. 34: *Dough* (baseq). Apart from this verse plus vss. 34 & 39, there are only two other references, 2 Sam 13.8 and Jer 7.18. This incident takes place at night, so probably the bread was prepared during this time, the normal time for use in the morning.

-*Leavened* (chamaz): from a verbal root meaning "to be sharp, "to act violently." "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is *leavened* and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them" [Am 4.5].

-*Kneading bowls* (mis'ereh). In addition to 8.3, the only other references to this word are Dt 28.5 & 17.

-*Mantles* (salmah, singular): "In my house there is neither bread nor *mantle*" [Is 3.7]. This word is found in the next verse as part of the items the Israelites asked of the Egyptians.



Vs. 35: *Jewelry* (kely): alternately as “vessel,” “utensil;” cf. 3.21-2 and 11.2-3. In the verse at hand the people “asked” for precious items from the Egyptians which vs. 36 and 3.22 earlier presents as *despoiling* the Egyptians (natsal; also vs. 36).

Vs. 37: Ramses, as noted in 1.11, a “store city” from which the Israelites most likely got additional supplies for their journey.

-Succoth, as noted in 13.20.

-“Six hundred thousand men” (etc.): cf. Num 1.17-46 for a census list of the tribes which left Egypt.

Vs. 38: “*Mixed* (herev) multitude:” the only used of the word in the Bible and from a verbal root alternately meaning “to pledge.” For a similar use: “But they *mingled* with the nations and learned to do as they did” [Ps 106.35]. One example of these other Hebrews may be found in Lev 24.10: “Now an Israelite woman’s son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel.”

-*Went up* (halah): as in 3.8, “and to *bring them up* out of that land to a good and broad land.” The first use of this word or in terms of “going up” or returning to the land from which the Israelites originally came. By way of contrast, he account of Joseph’s brothers in Genesis frequently mentions their “coming down” into Egypt.

Vs. 39: *Cakes* (huga), as baked on hot coals. “And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a *cake* baked on hot stones and a jar of water” [1 Kg 19.6]. In the verse at hand, the action occurs “out of Egypt” as opposed to being within that country.

-“*Thrust out* (garash) of Egypt:” “Afterwards *he will drive you away* completely” [11.1].

-*Tarry* (mahah): “But he *lingered*” [Gen 19.16].

-*Provisions* (tseydah): a noun related to “prey” or something caught. “And Joseph gave order to fill their bags...and to fill them with *provisions* for the journey” [Gen 42.25].

Vs. 40: *Time* (moshav): usually associated with dwelling, a verbal root from which this noun is derived. “Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city *to dwell in* (noun)” [Ps 107.4].

-*Dwelt* (yashav): the verbal root from which moshav is derived.

Vs. 41: “At the *end* (qets):” “At the *end* of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made” [Gen 8.6]. Along with this phrase the drama of the moment is emphasized by “on that *very* (hetsem) day.” “For on this *very* day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt” [vs. 17]. In this verse the Lord does the action. In the verse at hand, the people do the action.

Vs. 42: “Night of *watching* (misurym):” from the verbal root shamar as noted in vs. 17 and

elsewhere. The present verse has it with regard to both the Lord and the Israelites. Note the frequent use of the letter lamed in words as well as prepositions prefixed to terms which connote forward movement: “*night* (leyl) of watching *for* (l-) the Lord *to* (l-) bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same *night* (halaylah) is a night of watching *for* (l-) all the people of Israel *throughout* (l-) their generations.” I.e., the importance of night remains uniform regardless of future generations.

Vs. 43: “*Ordinance* (choq; cf. vs. 24) of the Passover.”

-*Foreigner* (nekar): “He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised...whether born in your house, or bought with your money from any *foreigner* who is not of your offspring” [Gen 17.12]. Mention of this term may apply to any stray Egyptian who will accompany the Israelites, not to mention those whom they will encounter outside Egypt. For the rite of circumcision, refer to the next verse and to which Gen 17.12 applies.

-The exclusive nature of eating the Passover applies not only to foreigners but to sojourners and hired servants (vss. 44-5).

Vs. 46: “In one house it shall be eaten.” That is, opposed to multiple houses, a kind of reflection upon the unity of Israel (after the above-noted exclusions of foreigners, etc.) and unity of God.

-“You shall not break a bone of it.” “Not a bone of him shall be broken” [Jn 19.36]: the verse at hand cited at Jesus’ death.

-“*Outside* (min) house:” the preposition “from” is used; also in conjunction with the “flesh” which literally reads, “from the flesh.” Yet another indication of the Passover’s exclusivity.

Vs. 47: “All the *congregation* (hedah; cf. vs. 3 and elsewhere) *shall keep* (hasah) it.” The common verb “to do,” “to make,” as found in the next verse; compare with shamar in vs. 25 and elsewhere.

Vs. 48: “That he *may come near* (qarav) and keep it.” A verb used concerning a *stranger* (ger) who *sojourns* (gur) among the Israelites. “I am a *stranger* and a sojourner among you” [Gen 23.4]. Note the motion from being a stranger to coming near to the Passover. For a reference using qarav, “Come and see what God has done” [Ps 66.5].

-“As a *native* (‘ezrah) of the land.” “That person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a *native* of the land” [vs. 19]. *Land* or ‘erets refers to the future land of Israel.

Vs. 49: “One *law* (torah):” the second mention of this important term in the Bible, the first being Gen 26.5: “Abraham...kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my *laws*.” In the verse at hand, the Hebrew text literally reads “law one” as in “day one” (etc., of creation) which conveys greater significance and gravity.

Vs. 50: Two uses of “did:” with respect to the people of Israel as well as Moses and Aaron.

The verb here is *hasah* noted in vs. 47 (“shall keep”) and may connote the same meaning.

Vs. 51: “On that very day.” Cf. vs. 41, “On that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.”

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### Chapter Thirteen

Vs. 1: “The Lord said to Moses.” The opening words of this chapter, a constant reminder of the mediating role of Moses with respect to Israel. The same applies to 14.1, for these are two crucial chapters recounting Israel’s miraculous departure from Egypt.

Vs. 2: *Consecrate* (*qadash*): the first use of this term in the Bible and signals numerous references in the rest of Exodus for various functions pertaining to sacrifice, etc. For example, the next use is 19.10: “Go to the people and *consecrate* them today and tomorrow.” From this verbal root is derived the adjective “holy.”

-“*Whatever is first to open the womb.*” The term used here is *peter* (a noun) and fundamentally means “fissure.” “Instead of every first-born *that opens the womb*” [Num 3.12].

-“*Among* (b-, ‘in’) the people of Israel.” Compare use of the same preposition with “both of man and of beast.”

Vs. 3: The previous verse has the Lord speaking to Moses, and the current one has Moses speaking to the people. This divine speaking is couched in terms of “*remember* (*zakar*) this day.” “And God heard their groaning, and God *remembered* his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob” [2.24]. In the verse at hand, Moses tells of such remembering as a past event.

-“*By strength* (*chozeq*) of hand.” “Have we not by our own *strength* taken Karnaim for ourselves” [Am 6.13]?

-“From this place.” The Hebrew text lacks “place.”

Vs. 4: “This day you are to go forth.” I.e., the Israelites are to leave Egypt. Compare with the previous verse (“the Lord brought you out from this place”) as well as the next verse (“When the Lord brings you into the land”).

Vs. 5: “And when the Lord brings you.” Action is in the future; compare with the note under vs. 4.

-“*You shall keep* (*havah*) this *service* (*havodah*):” cf. 12.25.

Vs. 6: *Feast* (*chag*): cf. 12.14.

Vs. 7: *Territory* (gevul): fundamentally, “boundary.” “He fixed the *bounds* of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God” [Dt 32.8]. Compare the notion of “territory” with the “land of the Canaanites (etc.),” previous verse.

Vs. 8: “Son:” singular; compare with the singular “your” as well as the equally singular “*that day*,” “for *me*” and “when *I* came out of Egypt.”

Vs. 9: *Sign* (’oth): as in 12.13 with respect to “blood.” This ’oth is to be placed “on your hand” and “as a *memorial* (zikaron) between your eyes.” Cf. vs. 3 for another noun from the same verbal root. Compare with 12.14, only the one at hand is more intimate, on one’s forehead. -The law or Torah is to be in “your mouth” or following the physical analogy, just below the eyes or location of the “memorial.”

Vs. 10: *Ordinance* (choq; 12.43) and *appointed time* (muhadah). “These were the cities *designated* (noun) for all the people of Israel” [Josh 20.9].

Vs. 12: *Firstlings* (seger): from a verbal root meaning “to eject,” “to cast forth,” here used with respect to male cattle. “He will also bless...the *increase* of your cattle” [Dt 7.13].

Vs. 13: *Redeem* (padah): in the sense of paying a price; also as setting free or delivering from danger. “I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked and *redeem* you from the grasp of the ruthless” [Jer 15.21]. The verb applies to animals; the same applies to the “first-born of man.”

Vs. 14: *In time to come* (machar): also, “tomorrow.” “Let us eat and drink, for *tomorrow* we die” [Is 22.13]. In the verse at hand, the words spoken through vs. 16 are to be addressed to the next generation.

-“What does this mean?” The Hebrew text lacks the verb.

Vs. 15: *Stubbornly refused* (qashah): as in 7.3, “But I *will harden* Pharaoh’s heart.”

-*First-born* (bekor): compare with peter with respect to cattle as in vs. 2.

Vs. 16: *Mark* (’oth): as in vs. 9. Here ’oth is to be “on your *frontlets*” (totaphoth). This word applies to scrolls with sentences written on them as in Dt 6.8, “And they shall be as *frontlets* between your eyes.”

Vs. 17: A contrast between Pharaoh *letting* the people go (shalach) and God *leading* (nachah) them. “You *have led* in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed” [15.13]. The verse at hand speaks of the action as already accomplished.

-*Repent* (nacham): in the sense of grieving; also means “to comfort.” “And the Lord *was sorry* that he had made man on the earth” [Gen 6.6]. In the verse at hand the form of this verb

(yinachem) resembles that of nachah, nacham.

Vs. 18: *Led around* (savav): compare with nachah in the previous verse. "And *led* me round on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east" [Ezk 47.2].

-*Wilderness* (midbar): first mentioned in 3.18 with respect to the place Israel is to go in order to offer sacrifice to the Lord.

-*Went up* (halah): as in 3.8, "to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land."

-*Equipped for battle* (chamash): in the sense of being brave or valiant. "But all the men of valor among you shall pass over *armed* before your brethren and shall help them" [Jos 4.14].

Vs. 19: "Bones of Joseph:" "Then Joseph took an oath of the sons of Israel saying, 'God will visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here'" [Gen 50.25]. These words which conclude the Book of Genesis are similar to those in the verse at hand:

-*Solemnly swore* (shavah): the verb is used twice.

-*Will visit* (paqad): the verb is used twice. "And when they heard that the Lord *had visited* the people of Israel" [4.31].

Vs. 21: "And the Lord went before them." I.e., the upward notion of halah as in vs. 18 may be implied.

-*"Pillar of cloud"* (hamud hanan): first use of this term which plays an important part in this chapter. It is also used with respect to various aspects of the divine tabernacle as in Chapter 38. Compare hamud with another term (matsevah) in Gen 28.18, "Jacob...set it up for a *pillar* and poured oil on the top of it." "The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the *cloud* covered it six days" [24.16].

-*Pillar of fire* (hamud 'esh): "And in the morning watch the Lord in the *pillar of fire* and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians" [14.24].

Vs. 22: "*Did not depart*" (mush): "It cannot *move* from its place" [Is 46.7]. This verb is found in 10.21 but with another meaning, "A darkness *to be felt*."

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## Chapter Fourteen

Vs. 1: "Then the Lord said to Moses:" cf. the first verse of Chapter 13.

Vs. 2: In vs. 1 we have *said* (davar) or the Lord to Moses; in vs. 2 we have davar with respect to Moses to the people.

Vs. 3: *Entangled* (buk): two other uses of this verb are Est 3.15 and Jl 1.18. For the former, "But the city *was perplexed*."

-*Shut in* (sagar): "...while they are standing guard, *let them shut* and bar the doors" [Neh 7.3].

Vs. 4: The last mention of the Lord *hardening* (chazaq) Pharaoh's heart was 11.10.

-*I will get glory* (kavad): the verbal root meaning "to be heavy." Compare another use of this verb in the context of the verse at hand, "For I *have hardened* his heart" [10.1].

-*Over* (b-, 'in') Pharaoh." The preposition prefixed to the proper noun (as well as 'host') can indicate a more resounding victory by the Lord.

-The short sentence "And they did so" emphasizes the single-minded intent of the Egyptians.

Vs. 5: "The *mind* (lev) of Pharaoh:" more fundamentally as "heart." The verse also adds "his servants." "And in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your *mind*" [1 Sam 9.19].

-*Servants/serving* (heved/havad): the former is derived from the latter.

Vs. 6: *Made ready* ('asar): literally, "to bind" which fits in well with the (horses) chariot. "No, we *will only bind* you and give you into their hands" [Jdg 15.13].

-*His army:*" the Hebrew text literally reads "people."

-*His army/with him* (hamu/himu): note the play on words.

Vs. 7: *Chariots* (rekev): "And there went up with him both *chariots* and horsemen; it was a very great company" [Gen 50.9]. Here the Pharaoh under whom Joseph ruled is instrumental if bring the Israelites to Egypt in contrast to the Pharaoh of Exodus. The verse at hand has both "picked chariots" and "other chariots."

Vs. 8: *Pursued* (radaph): as in vs. 4. There the Lord says that he will "get glory" which is a direct result of Pharaoh's mind having been changed, vs. 5. "Abram...*went in pursuit* as far as Dan" [Gen 14.14].

-*Defiantly* (ramah): the Hebrew text literally reads "In a lofty hand."

Vs. 9: *Overtook* (nasag): "And Laban *overtook* Jacob" [Gen 31.25]. For another use of this verb, "But if he cannot *afford* two turtledoves" [Lev 5.11].

Vs. 10: "The people of Israel lifted up their eyes." An expression of alarm coupled with sudden awareness of the situation. "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him" [Gen 18.2].

-*Marching* (nasah): connotes a sense of removing or plucking. "We are *setting out* for the place of which the Lord said" [Num 10.29].

-*Cried out* (tsahaq): "Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and *cried* to Pharaoh" [5.15].

Vs. 11: "And they said to Moses." Compare with the "cried out" of the previous verse, that is,

to the Lord.

-*Graves* (qerev, singular): from the verbal root “to draw near” as used in the previous verse (“When Pharaoh drew near”).

Vs. 12: Two uses of the verb *davar* (*to speak*). Also note *midbar* (*wilderness*), from this verbal root.

Vs. 13: *Stand firm* (*natsav*): in the sense of remaining in one place. “At your right hand *stands* the queen in gold of Ophir” [Ps 45.9].

-“*Salvation* (*yeshuah*) of the Lord.” It is fulfilled in 15.2, “The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my *salvation*.”

-“You shall never see *again*” (*had had-holam*). Note the two uses of *had* as if to emphasize the finality of what will occur shortly.

Vs. 14: “The Lord will fight *for* (l-, ‘to’) you.” Not the two *lamed*s: *lakam* (*to fight*) and the preposition prefixed to the pronoun.

-*To be still* (*charash*): fundamentally as “to cut into,” “to plow.” “He will rejoice over you with gladness, he *will renew* (‘will be silent’) you in his love” [Zeph 3.17].

Vs. 15: *Cry* (*tsahaq*): cf. vs.10.

-*Go forward* (*nasah*): the same verb used in vs.1, “Egyptians *marching* after them.”

Vs. 16: This verse begins with the proper pronoun, “you,” as if to emphasize a certain casualness as to Moses lifting his rod, almost an afterthought in light of divine omnipotence.

-*Rod* (*match*): first mentioned in 4.2 which turned into a serpent, only in the verse at hand it will change the sea into dry land.

-“*Over* (*hal*) the sea.” The preposition *hal* is used (*on*) as if Moses placed his rod upon the water.

-*Divide* (*baqah*): connotes more a cleaving, a breaking forth. “When they grasped you with the hand, you broke and *tore* all their shoulders” [Ezk 29.7].

-*Dry ground* (*yabashah*): “Then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on *dry ground*’” [Jos 4.22].

-“*Through* (*betok*) the sea:” or “in the midst of the sea.”

Vs. 17: *Harden* (*chazaq*): as in vs. 4 and elsewhere. Note that “heart” is singular and pertains to the plural Egyptians. This hardening may be contrasted with the “dry ground” of the previous verse, a beneficial hardening, so to speak.

-*I have gotten glory* (*kavad*): as predicted by the Lord in vs. 4; also the verse includes his host, chariots and horsemen.

Vs. 18: Here the Egyptians will know that the Lord *got glory* (*kavad*) as in the previous verse.

Since the Egyptians utterly perished in the Red Sea (vs. 30), perhaps their realization of this glory occurred at the moment of death.

Vs. 19: "*Angel* (mal'ak) of God." The last mention of angel in Exodus is 3.2 with respect to Moses and the burning bush. There is no explicit mention of an angel concerning Israel's departure from Egypt until now.

-*Went before* (nasah): compare with vs. 10 ("marching," i.e., the Egyptians) and vs. 15 ("go forward," i.e., the Israelites).

-*Host* (machaneh) of Israel:" first use of this term with respect to the Israelites; also found in the next verse. Compare with 12.51, "On that very day the Lord brought the people of Israel out of Egypt by their *hosts* (tsava')." Also compare with the Egyptian *host* (cheyl), vs. 17. The word at hand can alternately mean "camp:" "When the *camp* is to set out" [Num 4.5].

-*Pillar* (hamud) of cloud:" as in 13.21. Note that it is not the "pillar of fire" which did the *moving* or nasah, second use of this verb in the same verse.

-This pillar also *stood* (hamad) behind the Israelites; the verbal root from which hamud is derived.

Vs. 20: *Cloud* (hanan): as in 13.21. Note that hanan is used without reference to the cloud.

-*Darkness* (choshek): as in 10.21, "That there may be *darkness* over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt." Also, "And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the *darkness*" [Dt 5.23].

-*And the night passed.*" The Hebrew text literally reads, "And it lit up the night." That is to say, both the cloud and darkness which seemed endowed with a certain luminosity.

Vs. 21: Compare with vs. 16, "Lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it." I.e., no mention of a rod in the verse at hand.

-*Stretched out* (natah): the verbal root from which mateh (*rod*) is derived as in vs.16.

-*East wind* (ruach):" "And the Lord brought an east *wind* upon the land all that day and all that night" with respect to the plague of locusts, 10.13.

-*Drove back* (halak): with respect to the sea; the common verb "to go" is used here.

-*Dry land* (charbah): connotes a sense of desolation: "And I will lay your cities *waste* (noun)" [Lev 26.21]. Compare with yabashah of vs. 16.

-*Divided* (baqah): cf. vs. 16.

Vs. 22: *In the midst* (betok): as in vs. 16.

-*Wall* (chomah): "Behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar and bronze *walls* against the whole land" [Jer 1.18].

Vs. 23: *Pursued* (radaph): "The Egyptians *pursued* them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army" [vs. 9].

-*Midst* (tok): similar to betok as in vs. 22, only with the preposition b- ('in') missing.



Vs. 24: “*Morning watch*” (‘ashmurah): from the verbal root shamar as in 12.47. “So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the *middle watch*” [Judg 7.19].

-*Looked down* (shaqaph): fundamentally meaning “to lay planks.” “For evil *looms* out of the north, and great destruction” [Jer 6.1]. Both the pillar of cloud and of fire are mentioned with respect to the Lord, as though he were situated on top of them. This is reminiscent of the Lord on top of Jacob’s ladder, “And behold, the Lord stood above it” [Gen 28.13].

-*Discomforted* (hamam): fundamentally “to put into motion,” “to impel.” “Flash forth the lightning and scatter them, send out your arrows and *rout* them” [Ps 144.6]!

Vs. 25: *Clogging* (‘asar): literally, “binding.” “So he *made ready* his chariot and took his army with him” [vs. 6].

-*Drove* (nahag): fundamentally, “to pant.” “Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, and he *led* his flock to the west side of the wilderness” [3.1].

-*Heavily* (keveduth): the only use of this word in the Bible; from the verbal root kavad (*to be heavy*).

-“The Lord *was fighting for them*” (nilcham laham). This can be taken as a play on words.

-“*Against* (b-, ‘in’) the Egyptians.” Note that it is the Egyptians themselves who say this of themselves.

Vs. 26: *Stretch out* (natah): cf. vss. 16 and 21. As in the latter, it is Moses hand (not his rod) which the Lord commands to stretch out.

-*Upon* (hal): with respect to the sea, the Egyptians, chariots and horsemen; i.e., for emphasis.

Vs. 27: *Wanted flow* (‘eytan) or “strength.” “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an *ever-flowing* stream” [Am 5.24]. This divine event occurred during the night (‘when morning appeared’). Note the importance of dawn as in departure at dawn of the unknown man who wrestled with Jacob, “Let me go, for the day is breaking” [Gen 32.26].

-*Routed* (nahar): literally, “to shake off.” “But *overthrew* Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever” [Ps 136.15].

-“*In the midst* (betok) of the sea:” cf. vs. 22.

-It seems that first the water returned to its normal level after which the Egyptians fled into the sea.

Vs. 28: “And all the *host* (chayl) of Pharaoh.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “and to all the host of Pharaoh.” For this term, cf. vs. 19; compare with machaneh (also vs. 19), same translated word.

-“Not so much as one of them remained.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “not was left in them even one.”

Vs. 29: “*In the midst* (betok) of the sea.” Yet another use of this term to emphasize the divine miracle wrought on Israel’s behalf.

Vs. 30: “The Lord *saved* (yashah) Israel:” the verbal root for “Jesus.” “*Save* me from all my pursuers and deliver me” [Ps 7.1].

Vs. 31: “The great *work* (hayad):” the same noun used for “hand.” Compare with “from the hand of the Egyptians” in the previous verse.

-*Saw/feared* (ra’ah/yare’): the two forms used in this verse resemble each other closely, almost as though they were interchangeable.

-“And they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.” Compare with 4.31, “And the people believed,” pure and simple.