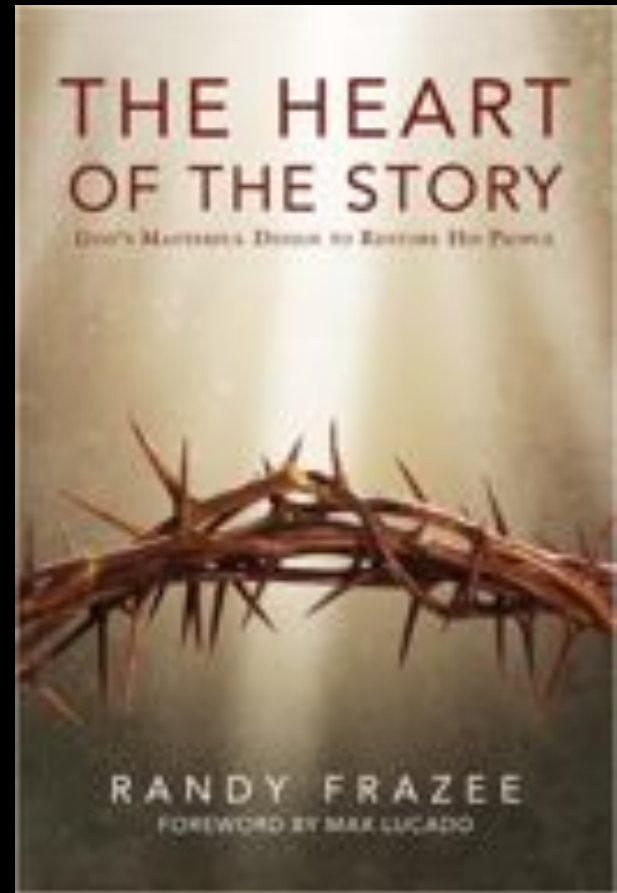


# The Heart of the Story

Chapter 4: Deliverance

October 12, 2011



“the Open”



# Underdogs

- *“No one loves underdogs—and roots for them to overcome impossible odds—more than God...God consistently chose the unlikeliest of people to play leading roles...”* (p.p. 51-52)

# What happened in Egypt?

- *“From a Lower Story perspective, it appeared that Pharaoh controlled the world of the Israelites.”* (p. 52)
- God is still working-
  - *“Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendents will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.”* (Genesis 15:13)

# In God's Time

- *“...the real plot of God's Story unfolds in ways that seem hidden (or even contrary) to our limited viewpoint or information. What seems like a long time for us is only a moment to our infinite timeless creator.” (p. 52)*

# In God's Time

- Where else do we see this?
  - The Advent of the Messiah
  - The return of Jesus
    - Mark 13:24-37
    - 2 Peter 3:1-13



# An Upper Story Proposal

- God reveals his plan...Moses searches for excuses.



# Skeletons in the Closet

- We all have some things in the closet we wish would just stay there.



# Why Moses?

- Is it “lucky breaks” or God’s Upper Story being fulfilled?
- *“So our guy Moses stammers and can’t talk well. He has no leadership experience or communication skills. And he is wanted for murder charges in the very place he’ll have to go to deliver God’s message!” (p. 54)*

# VS.

## **Lower Story Logic**

- Moses isn't qualified.
- He is weak
- He has too many things going against him
- He cannot speak well
- He is a murderer on the run from the law

## **Upper Story Understanding**

- Moses' weaknesses are the best conduit for God's strength.
- 1 Samuel 17:40-50
- 1 Corinthians 1:25-31
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- Romans 8:26

# Moses

- *“Moses was one of the unlikeliest people God could ever choose...”* (p. 55)
- *“Our job qualifications are a little different from God’s. While we may focus on externals—education, work experience, wealth, and charm—God looks on the inside.”* (p. 55)

# Our Vision is Clouded...

- *“The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”*  
1 Samuel 16:7b



# “...ten very ugly plagues”

- *“God wanted to display his power in an overwhelming and undeniable way. He also wanted to foreshadow more of his ultimate plan to restore fellowship with his children.” (p. 56)*
- Romans 9:17-18
- *“Even people who do not follow God are used by God to accomplish his Upper Story plan—even though they don’t often know it.” (p.56)*
  - Cyrus
  - Pontius Pilate

# The Plagues

- By looking at the first nine plagues in groups of three we can see some interesting things.
- 1. Blood (7:14-25)  
2. Frogs (8:1-15)  
3. Gnats (8:16-19)  
  
4. Flies (8:20-32)  
5. Animal Disease (9:1-7)  
6. Boils (9:8-12)  
  
7. Hail (9:13-35)  
8. Locusts (10:1-20)  
9. Darkness (10:21-27)

# The Plagues

- In each series the first and second plagues are announced to Pharaoh in advance. The third is given without previous warning.
- The series of 3 x 3 leads up to a climax in number 10—the number that is the symbol for completeness.
- Within the plagues themselves there is a progression, an increase in severity. The last three are especially severe and destructive.

# The Plagues

- The Egyptian magicians vie with Moses in duplicating the first two plagues. At the third they try but no longer succeed in their magic arts. They must confess, *“This is the finger of God.”*
- Beginning with the second group of plagues (4,5 & 6) a distinction is made between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The land of Goshen where the Israelites live is spared.

# The Plagues

- The first nine plagues deal with phenomena that have to do with nature.
- Since the Egyptians worshiped the powers of nature, what more effective way could God display his power over all things, which they looked upon as deities?
- The tenth plague was the plague of the firstborn. With this plague all the first-born were to be killed. But the angel was to “pass over” the homes of the Israelites.

# Passover...Jesus

- The Passover presents to us one of the most important Old Testament types of the Savior Jesus Christ. As we look at the directions for preparing the Passover meal, we see step by step how the entire ritual points to Christ, our Passover lamb.

# Passover...Jesus

- The Passover lamb was to be a year-old male. John the Baptist tells of the Messiah who was to be the *“Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29)
- In Corinthians, Paul says, *“For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.”* (1 Corinthians 5:7)

# Passover...Jesus

- God directed that this Passover lamb was to be “*without defect.*”
- Peter wrote that we were redeemed “*with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*” (1 Peter 1:19)

# Passover...Jesus

- The Passover lamb was to be slaughtered as a sacrifice.
- Paul reminded his people *“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”* (Ephesians 5:2)
- The writer of the book of Hebrews repeatedly refers to Christ as an *“offering”* and *“sacrifice”*. (Hebrews 10:5)

# Passover...Jesus

- *“Do not break any of the bones.”* This was direct foreshadowing of Jesus.
- At the death of Jesus, John tells us *“These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken”* (John 19:36)

# Passover...Jesus

- The Israelites were to *“take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses.”* God said, *“When I see the blood I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”*
- This points to the teaching that we are redeemed from the power of sin, death and Satan with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

# Passover...Jesus

- God tells the people that they are to remember the Passover for “*generations to come*”.
- Jesus says, “*do this in remembrance of me*” (Luke 22:19)
- We have been doing this for generations.

# The 10<sup>th</sup> Plague

- *“Ironically, the edict that Pharaoh unleashed on the Hebrew first born sons at the beginning of the story is unleashed on his people at the end of the story” (p. 56)*
- I would go further and say that on the cross, we see the ultimate manifestation of this plague as Jesus takes the plague of sin upon himself so that by his blood, God will “pass over” our sinfulness and see us as his righteous children.

# Who is the pharaoh in your life?

- *“Maybe you have a pharaoh in your life right now—it may be a person, a circumstance, or a conflicted situation. It may feel like this personal pharaoh is completely in charge of your life, enslaving you to its harsh demands. Do not loose heart. Don’t give up, no matter how the odds seem to be stacked against you.” (p. 57)*

# Who is the pharaoh in your life?

- *“Just remember, in the Lower Story it may appear as though Pharaoh is in control, but your plight has not surprised God as he reveals and enacts his Uppers Story in your life. He is completely in charge, fully in control.” (p.57)*

# If-?

- It is not a conditional matter! God loves you so much, he is not waiting for you to act, but has been perusing you. It is our sinful nature that causes us to turn our back on God's Upper Story and try to go our own way. He has sent his Spirit and works through the means of grace to soften our hearts and turn us to him.
- That you can count on!