

What is the picture of God you derive from Ex. 1-15?

To derive an adequate picture of God in these chapters it is important to first do a brief overview of God's activities in Exodus Chapters 1-15. Within these chapters, God becomes a whirlwind of activity after what appears to be a long silence. We begin this second book of the Pentateuch after the death of all of Joseph's brothers and that entire generation.

The first appearance of God's handiwork in this section of scripture appears in Chapter 1:20-21 where we see God treating Egyptian mid-wives kindly for sparing the lives of the Israelites' sons (He gives them families of their own). The Lord next appears in Chapter 2:24-25 as He hears the groaning of His people and remembers His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Following this, the Lord appears to Moses in the burning bush and instructs Moses on the task that He has planned for him to carry out. Within the following sections of this text, God's activities follow the standards He established at the burning bush.

In Exodus 14:4 God says, "I will gain glory for myself" ... "the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD". Was it God's plan to 'injure' the Egyptians through the plagues and destroy their army at the Red Sea? Or was it God's plan to create 'scenarios' for the Egyptians and Israelites, just as Joseph had done for his brothers in order to bring reconciliation to these people and recognition of who the true God is and how we are to serve and worship Him alone. Through the plagues, just as with the burning bush, God provides first hand experience in the necessity to worship him as being a God who controls all of nature. The worship of anything in the natural world, Frogs, Locusts, or the River - is foolishness. God desires in these chapters to bring good to His people and even to the Egyptian people by allowing them to see that He alone is worthy to be worshipped.

In Exodus 15:24-26 the Israelites seemed to miss the point that God was in control of nature and His miraculous signs were not meant for injury, but rather to show His goodness to the people. God made the water sweet and further encouraged His people by letting them know if they followed Him, He would keep them from illness. We can be comforted today to know that our God is always motivated by love and not wrath. That is the picture of God I see in these chapters of Exodus.