Treasures From Exodus

Volume One

Dr. Rod Malloon
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR READERS ON THE TREASURES FROM SCRIPTURE BOOKS

* Brother Mattoon, I am reading your book Treasures From Judges. I am completely blessed by your writings. Your outlines are excellent and the material is above reproach; the illustrations are well chosen. I do pray that God’s richest blessings will continue upon you and your ministry.

Dr. Lee Roberson, Chancellor, Tennessee Temple University, Chattanooga, Tennessee

* Dr. Mattoon has given to the Christian world a very practical, powerful, and prudent filled book. This book will serve as a text in Christian colleges and seminaries. This book is very readable for the common person who has no background in understanding Genesis. This book is a goldmine for Sunday School teachers and Christian workers.

**Dr. J. Arnold Fair, Pastor, Faith Baptist Church, Angola, Indiana**

* This book is filled with what the title suggests, "Treasures". It's not only a good commentary on Genesis, but also a great reference book on Old Testament customs and people. A great book for topical seed sermons. The quality of the book is excellent. Treasures From Judges is beautifully done. It is practical, straightforward and even tackling some of today’s more difficult issues. Well done, Rod.

** Dr. Greg McLaughlin, Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church Huntsville, Alabama**

* Treasures From Genesis by Dr. Rod Mattoon should be in the library of every young preacher. The outlines are excellent and provide a valuable source for sermon material.

** Dr. Sylvester Matthews*

* The pages of this book are packed with research and information that will feed any pastor’s people. It is not hard to use and is very readable and useable. It is first class in its publishing and layout. It’s structure is well thought out and the result is a book that invites your attention. The features most helpful to me are the illustrative charts, the alliterated outlines and the subject index in the back of the book.

** Pastor Mark Thrift, Parkwood Baptist Church, Houston, Texas**

* After perusing this volume of Genesis, I was made aware of the fact that this book is not just a book about Genesis and how to interpret it, but it is a book filled with a treasure of knowledge rarely found in one volume. The tools you have provided will allow anyone studying this book to find information at his or her fingertips that will enrich his knowledge of God’s Word and the subject at hand.. The index information you printed in the book is also easy to find and especially helpful when looking for a specific topic in the book.

** Dr. Ron Allen**

* The books are some of the best material I’ve read and studied. They fed me. It has been a joy and blessing to study these books. Thanks.

*Pastor Mike Oldham, Sanford, North Carolina*
Dedication
This book is dedicated to
Evangelist Tom Hayes
Saluda, North Carolina

Evangelist Tom Hayes has been an ardent student and preacher of the Word of God for many decades. His messages are filled with rich, great truths of Scripture and practical applications for the Christian life. I love to hear him preach and glean much from his messages.

Tom has faithfully served the Lord Jesus Christ and is a godly example of one whose goal is to truly glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

He has not only been a blessing to hundreds of churches over the years, but also has been a blessing to the Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute near Hendersonville, North Carolina since 1996. Tom is a part of their faculty. Presently this fine school is training around 200 men for the ministry. I would highly recommend Tom for any church seeking a speaker for a revival or Bible conference. Thank you Tom for the example you have been to those who are watching your life.
Thank You

Lincoln Land Baptist Church

It has been again a wonderful delight and joy to be able to bring these studies to you. I want to express my gratitude and love to my wonderful church family for their love, encouragement, spiritual maturity, sacrifice, and vision in allowing our church to have this ministry and letting the world share in the pulpit ministry of Lincoln Land Baptist Church, and in the hours of research and preparation that go behind each message. Thousands upon thousands of dollars have been spent to produce this material for preachers all over the world and to ship the books to foreign countries. If you ever get the chance, come and meet these wonderful Christians. They are precious people that want our church to be used of God for His glory!

Lincoln Land Baptist Church is an Independent, Fundamental Baptist Church in Springfield, Illinois, which is the capital of the great state of Illinois. This church has had a rich heritage of pastors that have fed the church on evangelistic, expository Bible preaching since it was begun in 1965. In August of 2005, we celebrated our 40th birthday.

Since 1999, the book ministry of this church has grown beyond whatever we dreamed as over 6000 preachers are now using these books in their studies and 200 Bible colleges or institutes are using them in their curriculums or by their students in their private studies. The books are also being sent to prison libraries across the country to assist inmates with their walk with the Lord while they serve their time. We are also providing the books for soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan who have been saved and desire to learn more about the Bible. What a blessing, but what a responsibility too. For this reason, we strive to be as accurate, thorough, and practical in our research and presentation of Scripture and Christian history.

Since August of 1971, I have had a thirst to learn the Word and preach its truths. What a wonderful journey it has been to dig for delightful diamonds of truth in the Scriptures these past 36 years. I hope this 22nd book on Treasures from Exodus will enlighten, encourage, energize and enrich you and bring you closer to our wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
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This is the 22nd book in the Treasures from Scripture Series.
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Verses come from the 1769 edition of the King James Version.
Chapter 1
The Paranoid Pharaoh
Exodus 1:1-14

The opening books of the Bible are filled with illustrations of the great doctrines of our faith which are set forth in the New Testament.

* Romans 15:4 - For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Because of this truth, the study of the Old Testament is vital for understanding the New Testament. Preachers mistakenly say, “There is nothing in the Old Testament for us.” On the contrary, it is a wonderful treasure chest of truths waiting to be discovered. I love the Old Testament! It is also the Word of God.

We now enter the hallway of the book of Exodus, one of the most exciting books in the Bible. Its forty chapters and 1213 verses are inspired by the Holy Spirit of God who moved Moses to pen the words of this book. Within its pages we will find the overall truths.
1. An Enslaved People are Saved   Ch. 1-12
   a. God develops His man... Moses.  ch. 1-4
   b. God displays His might.  ch. 5-11
   c. God declares His mind  ch. 12
2. A Saved People are Separated  Ch. 13-18
3. A Separated People are Sanctified  Ch. 19-40

The events of this book will cover a period of about 145 years. Exodus continues the account begun in Genesis, although there has been a lapse of 3 ½ centuries between the books. The word “exodus” means “the way out” and is about Israel’s departure from Egypt after 430 years
of residency. They arrived in Egypt in the first place when Joseph was sold as a slave in Egypt and eventually became Pharaoh’s prime minister. Joseph was used by God to deliver the nation through a famine. Joseph brought the family to Egypt to care for them.

One of the key players in Exodus is Moses. His name pops up around 720 times. Moses’ life had three main periods. 
1. Forty years in Pharaoh’s palace.
2. Forty years in the desert of Midian. It was here that the Lord gave Moses a B.D. degree which is the “Backside of the Desert” degree.
3. Forty years in the wilderness leading the nation of Israel.

D.L. Moody said that Moses spent forty years thinking he was somebody; forty years learning he was a nobody; forty years discovering what God can do with a nobody.

A number of symbolic pictures or types are in the book of Exodus.
* Moses- a type of Jesus Christ who delivers from bondage.
* Egypt- a type of this world and a picture of our condition without God.
* Pharaoh- a type of Satan. He defied the Lord and was an enemy of God’s people.
* Israel in Egypt- a type of man, enslaved by sin and in need of a redeemer.
* The Passover Night- a picture of the security of the believer beneath the blood of the lamb.

Exodus is the Old Testament book of “Redemption.” There are several, great redemption books in the Bible. The foundation of redemption is seen in this book. The foregleam of redemption is viewed in the book of Hosea as Hosea redeems his wife. The fact of our redemption is evident in the Gospel of John. The force of redemption is displayed in the wonderful book of Romans. The future of our redemption is placed on the table for us to see in the book of Revelation. Redemption is the theme that flows through the chapters of Exodus.
1. The Need of Redemption is in chapters 1-6. (bondage, enslavement)
2. The Might of the Redeemer is in chapters 7-11. (displayed by plagues)
3. The Character of Redemption is in chapters 12-18. (purchased by the blood)
4. The Duty of the Redeemed is in chapters 19-24. (obedience)
5. The Provisions made for the Failures of the Redeemed is in chapters 25-40. (seen in the Tabernacle and services)
There are some interesting contrasts between Genesis and Exodus.

**Genesis**

1. The history of a family.
2. Abraham’s descendant’s are few in number.
3. The Hebrews are honored and welcomed in Egypt.
4. Pharaoh said, “God hath showed thee all this.”
5. A lamb is promised.
6. The entry of Israel into Egypt.
7. It ends with Joseph in a coffin.

**Exodus**

1. The history of a nation. This book is called the birthday book of Israel.
2. There are several million descendants now.
3. They are feared, hated, and persecuted by Pharaoh.
4. Pharaoh said, “I know not the Lord.”
5. A lamb is slain.
6. The exodus of Israel from Egypt.
7. It closes with the glory of the Lord filling the Tabernacle.

**When did Exodus take place?** A clue is found in 1 Kings 6.

* 1 Kings 6:1 - And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord. The Temple was built 480 years after the Exodus. The Temple was built around 966 B.C. putting the Exodus at 1445 B.C. The ruler at this time was believed to be Amenhotep II.

**The book of Exodus also gives us a glimpse of what will take place in the future as history will repeat itself.**

* The suffering of Abraham’s descendants will be ever worse in the Tribulation period described in the book of Revelation.
* A greater tyrant than Pharaoh will rise up to chasten God’s people.
* A more determined effort will be made to cut them off from being a nation.
* Plagues even more horrendous than those sent upon the land of Pharaoh will yet be poured out upon the world from the vials of God’s wrath.
* God shall again send forth two witnesses empowered by Him to show forth mighty signs and wonders, but their testimony will be rejected as Moses and Aaron of old.
* A remnant of Israel will be sustained by God in the wilderness.
Chapter 1...The Paranoid Pharaoh...1:1-14

* God will deliver His people again as He did before in the Old Testament.

**Why did God allow His people to stay in Egypt so long?** God’s people were in Egypt for a total of 430 years, of which, 400 years were years of oppression. Notice these verses.

* Genesis 15:13- And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;

* Exodus 12:40- Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

* Acts 7:6 - And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

The first thirty years after they arrived evidently went well under Joseph’s influence. Things went well for God’s people until Joseph was somewhere in his seventies. Then matters take a turn for the worse. A new Pharaoh came into power which did not know anything about Joseph. He may have been a foreign conqueror. Notice Exodus 1:6-8.

* Exodus 1:6-8 ...And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. [7] And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. [8] Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

If Joseph died before the new king took power, then he would be dying in his seventies, not at the age of 110. However, the Bible translation textual notes from the NET Bible provide an answer to this problem. I could be wrong, but I think Joseph was alive when this new Pharaoh took power. Here are the translation notes from the NET Bible on this verse: “The text simply uses the vav (ֵ) consecutive with the past tense statement, "and Joseph died." While this construction shows sequence with the preceding verse (vs.5), **it does not require that the death follow directly the report of that verse.** In fact, readers know from the record in Genesis that the death of Joseph occurred after a good number of years. **The statement assumes the passage of time in the natural course of events.**"

Exodus 1:6 is making a general statement that Joseph eventually died, his brothers, and his generation. Based on the findings of Hebrew scholars working on the NET Bible, verse 6 does not necessarily mean that Joseph was dead when the new king took power. When the new king
took power, he did not know anything about Joseph or what he had done many years earlier. Joseph was a stranger to him. For this reason I believe he may have been a foreign conquering king. I believe Joseph was still alive when matters got worse for the children of Israel after the first 30 year and he lived somewhere around 30 years more during these initial difficult times until he died at the age of 110. This would help clear up a lot of confusion between the 400 years and the 430 years in the above verses. They were in Egypt for 430 years, but they were afflicted for 400 years (Genesis 15:13; Exodus 12:40; Acts 7:6).

The four hundred and thirty years were the number of years from the time Jacob entered Egypt until Israel escaped at the Exodus and can be seen from:
(1) The clear statement of the Hebrew text in this passage;
(2) God's prediction to Abraham that his descendants (seed) would be a stranger in a foreign land, serve the foreigners, and be afflicted by them "four hundred years" (Gen 15:13);
(3) The multiplication from seventy to over two million is easiest to reconcile within this time structure.
(4) Concerning the 430 year total, the Septuagint and Samaritan texts added the words "and in the land of Canaan" to the Hebrew text, thus making the total sojourn in Egypt only 215 years. This figure is allegedly supported by the genealogy of Moses and Aaron in Exodus 6:16-20 and the Pauline statement in Galatians 3:17.

* Galatians 3:17- And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

So which number is it? It is a mistake to suppose that the genealogy of Moses was intended to be complete. One only needs to consult the genealogy of Joshua (1 Chronicles 7:22-27) to see that there were many deliberate omissions of generations in Moses and Aaron's genealogy, for Joshua's genealogy has ten generations covering the same time span as Moses' four generations!

With respect to Paul's 430 years in Galatians 3:17, it is important to notice that "the law" came "430 years later" as "an addition" to "the promises ... spoken to Abraham and to his seed." The starting point for the 430 years in Paul's thinking would seem to be when Jacob received the last of those repeated patriarchal promises (Gen 46:2; 47:27) as he arrived in Egypt. For this reason, I believe this is why the total amount of years was 430 years, not 215.
So the question again is “Why so long?”

1. The Lord was preparing Israel for an inheritance. The rigid treatment of the workers toughened them up physically.
2. The bitterness of Egypt would make them appreciate the land of milk and honey.
3. God gave His people time to multiply so they could take over Canaan.
4. The time for God to deal in judgment with the Amorites was not fully ripe in the days of Abraham. Their iniquities had not reached God’s boundary.

*Genesis 15:16- But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

With all this background on the book, let’s now dig in to a very wonderful book in the Bible. May you enjoy the luster of its precious jewels.

I. THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO EGYPT  1:1-5

>Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob. [2] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, [3] Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, [4] Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [5] And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already.

The word “Now” means “And.” It is a joining word that links Genesis to Exodus. G.Campbell Morgan said, “In the book of Exodus, nothing is commenced and nothing is finished.” The book is part of the wonderful chain of books in the Pentateuch.

The first line mentions the names of the children of Israel. The name of the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible is Shemot, the word for "Names," drawn from the beginning of the book. The inclusion of the names at this point, form a literary connection to the book of Genesis. It indicates that the Israelites living in bondage had retained a knowledge of their ancestry, and with it, a knowledge of God's promise. Verse five mentions seventy souls from the loins of Jacob. From one man and his twelve sons came an entire nation. Wow!
II. THE PASSING OF JOSEPH  1:6

And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

Joseph, all his brothers, and his generation died. Again we are reminded of death.

* Hebrews 9:27- And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: Are you ready for death when it comes your way?

III. THE PROSPERING OF GOD’S PEOPLE  1:7

And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

God’s hand of blessing was upon His people. The census at Sinai (Numbers 1) showed 603,000 males, 20 years and older. If they represented about ¼ of the total population, which is a conservative estimate, then the Israelites numbered as many as two to three million people. They were “fruitful” just like fruit trees. They also “increased abundantly” which comes from the Hebrew word sharats {shaw-rats’}. It means “to swarm like bees or fish.” They increased in strength and might.

IV. A PROBLEM DEVELOPS  1:8

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

A new king comes into power that does not know anything about Joseph. Acts 7:18 says this was “another king of a different kind.” In the Greek language there are two words for “another.” The word allos means “another of the same kind.” Then there is the word heteros means “another of a different kind” used in Acts 7:18.

The new king was from a different people, race, or dynasty. There is a dispute of whether he was from Egypt or a foreigner. History tells us that about this time the “Hyksos” invaders took over in Egypt. They were Semites, probably from Assyria. They were also shepherds. The Egyptians could not stand them and they were eventually driven out. The timing of this is disputed too.

If this new king was a foreign king, he warned his own people (not the Egyptians) that the presence of so many Jews was a threat to their own rule; so they decided to deal vigorously with the Israelites. Since
Joseph had been the savior of Egypt, it is unlikely that an Egyptian king would not know him. This is why it is believed he was a foreign king.

From verse eight, we find some vital lessons. We are reminded of our responsibility to teach God’s Word to each generation. A Bible knowledge test was given to five classes of seniors. Most of them failed miserably. Some thought Sodom and Gomorrah were lovers. They thought that the Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luther, and John. Eve was believed to be created from an apple. Sixty percent did not know what the identity of the Trinity. They thought the epistles were the wives of the apostles.

**Beloved, neglect of God’s Word leads to ignorance and the forgetfulness of the next generation.** Ignorance of the Word leads to sinful living and terrible choices that scar a person’s life. When men do not know Jesus Christ, as the king did not know Joseph, they will have difficulty in discerning situations correctly and making proper deductions of them. What God calls good, they will call evil. What God condemns, they will commend and justify. What God forbids, they will require and what God requires, they will forbid. The prophet Hosea spoke of the peril of ignorance in spiritual matters.

*Hosea 4:6*  My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Israel lacked spiritual knowledge in Hosea’s day, and it ruined them. It ruined their character and brought Divine judgment upon them. They eventually went into captivity and for several thousand years the Jews had no national status. All because they lacked in spiritual knowledge. The time of the Judges faced this ignorance too.

*Judges 2:10*  And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. We are facing this same problem in America. Parents and their kids are growing up, not knowing the Lord.

We are also reminded that the bondage in Egypt is but a picture of the sinner’s spiritual bondage to this world. The Jews went down to Egypt and lived in the best of the land, but this luxury later turned into trial and suffering. How like the path of the lost sinner today. Sin promises pleasure and freedom, but it eventually brings sorrow and bondage.
V. THE PERSECUTION OF THE PHARAOH 1:9-14

A. The Perception 1:9

And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:

This new king feels very insecure and is worried.

B. The Presumption 1:10

Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. The king presumes that Israel will join their enemies, a presumption that is going to create huge problems for Egypt. Our presumptions can get us into trouble too. Assuming what people are and what they think leads to error in judgment and harm to others. You can end up misjudging people. Let me say that assuming you can go to Heaven by your works, memberships, or not having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will lead to an eternal disaster for you.

Pharaoh was not comfortable living with the Israelites, nor comfortable without them. They did not want them to leave the land. These were the concerns of the Egyptians. This explains why a shrewd policy of population control was required. They wanted to keep Israel enslaved. They did not want them to become too numerous and escape.

C. The Plan 1:11-14

Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12] But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. [13] And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: [14] And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor.

Israel is afflicted by taskmasters. They were enslaved to build treasure cities. Ancient records indicate that these cities were
built in 1290 B.C., which is why some scholars believe the exodus occurred early in the 13th century. Looking at other evidence, however, other scholars believe the Hebrews left Egypt in 1446 B.C. How could they build two cities 150 years after they left? These scholars suggest that Rameses II, the Pharaoh in 1290 B.C., did not build the cities of Pithom and Rameses. Instead, he renamed two cities that actually had been built 150 years previously. It was a common practice for an Egyptian ruler to make improvements on a city and then take credit for building it, thus wiping out all records of previous founders.

These two places were in the land of Goshen and being situated near a border that was liable to invasion, they were fortified cities. Pithom lay on the eastern Pelusiac branch of the Nile, about twelve Roman miles from Heliopolis, and Raamses, called by the Septuagint Heroopolis, lay between the same branch of the Nile and the Bitter Lakes. These two fortified cities were situated, therefore, in the same valley. The fortifications, which Pharaoh commanded to be built around both, had probably the same common object, of obstructing the entrance into Egypt, which this valley furnished the enemy from Asia.

The affliction, as bad as it was, led to Israel's growth. They multiplied and grew which means they "swarmed," but this is the effect that trials can have in our lives if we respond to them properly. The plan of affliction backfired in the Pharaoh's face. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. Where Satan's tool tries to rule, God overrules.

A beekeeper once told F.B. Meyer how some of the young bees are nurtured to ensure their healthy development. The queen lays each egg in a six-sided cell which is filled with enough pollen and honey to feed upon until it reaches a certain stage of maturity. The top is then sealed with a capsule of wax. When the occupant has exhausted its supply of nourishment, the time has come for the tiny creature to be released from its confinement, but what wrestling and straining it endures to get through that wax seal. The opening is so narrow that in the agony of the exit, the bee rubs off the membrane that encases its wings. Thus, when it finally does emerge, it is able to fly!

The man telling F.B. Meyer the story said that one time a moth got into the hive and devoured the wax capsules. As a result, the young bees crawled out without any effort or trouble, but they couldn't fly. Soon the mature insects, seeing the pitiful, unproductive state of the new arrivals, instinctively proceeded to sting them to death. Beloved, God uses our trials to strengthen us whether we realize it or not.
*Psalm 119:67- Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*  
*Psalm 119:71- It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

As the Jews multiplied, the Pharaoh increased the pressure. They made them serve with rigor. The word translated 'rigor' is a very rare one. It is derived from a root which means 'to break in pieces, to crush, to be severe, harsh or cruel.' Israel's slavery was inhumane. They were treated in the same beastly manner as the war prisoners of the Nazis and Communists. Under this cruel, forced labor, the Israelite slaves built for Pharaoh treasure or storage cities for food supplies and weapons for the army.

Their lives were bitter with hard bondage in making brick. Ruins of great brick buildings are found in all parts of Egypt. The use of crude brick, baked in the sun, was universal in upper and lower Egypt, both for public and private buildings; all but the temples themselves were of crude brick. Parties of these brick-makers are seen depicted on the ancient monuments with "taskmasters," some standing, others in a sitting posture beside the laborers, with their uplifted sticks in their hands.

Concerning their oppression in Egypt, is this not a description of a life without Christ? Sin breaks us into pieces and has a cruel, crushing effect on our lives. The sweetness of sin soon sours and has a bitter taste as many become enslaved in addictions. It is true that sin does bring pleasure for a season, but that season is mighty short; and after it is over, bitterness sets in on a very long or permanent basis unless one comes to Christ for cleansing from sin.

We first make our own habits, then our habits make us. Sinners often think that godly people lack freedom to do as they please because the godly do not indulge in evil habits, but it is the sinner, not the godly, who lacks freedom. The Egyptians burdened God's people with harshness and cruelty. Sin does the same thing, robbing us of joy and draining our strength away.
Chapter 2
The Assault of Satan
Exodus 1:15-22

As we jump into this passage, we find a new Pharaoh has come upon the scene in Egypt that knew not Joseph. Rumblings of war were coming from the North. Pharaoh was concerned about the huge population of Israel that dwelled in northern Egypt. He feared they might possibly form an alliance with their enemies so he began to afflict them. Not a very smart thing to do!

The purpose of his affliction was to demoralize and exhaust God’s people. Isn’t this what Satan wants to do to us? Satan wants to discourage us into ineffectiveness and he is pretty good about doing this. The plan of Pharaoh blew up in his face because the Jews multiplied into greater numbers. Our trials will either strengthen us or shake us; they will build or break us, increase our faith or diminish it. Satan makes an all-out assault on God’s people in this next section. Notice verse fifteen.

I. THE PLOT OF PHARAOH 1:15-16

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: [16] And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live.

With Plan A failing, Satan motivates Pharaoh to implement Plan B. He commands the Hebrew midwives to kill the baby boys at childbirth on the stools. Infanticide is nothing new. It is still practiced today in abortion mills. The women mentioned were accountable to Pharaoh. They were overseer midwives who were in charge of the nurses that assisted in the childbirth process. It seems probable that given the number of the Israelites in the passage, these two
women could not have been the only Hebrew midwives, but they may have been over the midwives. Moreover, the Septuagint and Vulgate do not take "Hebrew" as an adjective, but as a genitive after the construct, yielding the translation here as "midwives of or over the Hebrews." This leaves open the possibility that these women were not Hebrews. This would solve the question of how the king ever expected Hebrew midwives to kill Hebrew children and yet, the two women have Hebrew names.

The two women were Shiphrah and Puah. They were most likely Egyptian women who were given Hebrew names of honor or they were actual Hebrew slaves. They are rightly named because their actions reflect their character and personalities. Shiphrah means “fairness, clearness of sky, or beauty.” Her response to the treachery of the king was beautiful, holy, and just. Puah means “splendid or to sparkle.” Her response to the king’s wickedness was splendid. She sparkled like a radiant star and over 3700 years later, they both still continue to shine as the memory of their character and courage are set in the concrete of God’s Word. What an honor for them! We don’t know the names of the Pharaoh’s for sure, but God made sure we would know about these two girls. The motto of their lives was “We ought to obey God, rather than men.” May we too, live our lives in such a way that we will please the Lord and be honored by Him.

The “stools” are stones or special seats in which the women crouched to give birth to their babies. Some scholars believe that the stool was a stone trough in which they received and washed the infant as soon as it was born. Pharaoh’s intentions seem to keep this plan a secret or concealed. Such a horrendous sin, however, will always come out into the open. His plan is exposed and opposed as we will see in a moment. The instructions must have been temporary or selective, otherwise the decree from the king would have ended the slave population of Hebrews.

This plan of the Egyptian Pharaoh reveals two key insights.

1. Insight 1- The Egyptians are sowing an awful seed which will wreak havoc on this nation many years later as every house of the Egyptians without the blood on the door posts will be visited by death as the first born will be slain by the Death Angel. The king is sowing the death of children and will reap it.

* Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
* Sowing and Reaping in the Bible

The law of sowing and reaping is seen all throughout the Bible. Here are a number of examples of people who reaped what they sowed and the situations that surrounded the reaping.

1. Deception-
   A. The Superior- Jacob sowed deception with his father and reaped deception from his father-n-law. A father was deceived, and now another guardian does the deceiving.
   B. The Son- Jacob deceived Isaac in regards to his most favorite son, Esau, and Jacob was deceived in regards to his favorite son, Joseph, later in his life. He thought Joseph had been killed.
   C. The Switch- Jacob, the younger son, impersonates the elder son to deceive his father. Now, the elder daughter impersonates the younger daughter to deceive Jacob. The roles are reversed.
   D. The Skins- Jacob deceived Isaac by covering his hands and neck with goat skins (27:16). Jacob’s sons later deceive him by dipping Joseph’s coat in the blood of goats (37:31).

2. Deadly stones- Saul stood by at the stoning of Stephen. He reaped stoning when he was stoned by the Jews at Lystra. Acts 14:19
3. Dangling- Haman constructed a gallows for Mordecai and reaped his intentions by hanging on those same gallows himself. Esther 7:10
4. Disease- The prophet was put in the stocks by King Asa. Asa reaped his actions by being punished by God with disease of the feet. 2 Chronicles 16:10; 1 Kings 15:23
5. Dogs- The dogs licked Naboth’s blood after King Ahab had him slain (1 Kings 21:19). When Ahab died, the dogs licked his blood. 1 Kings 22:38
6. Disjoining- Adoni-bezek cut the thumbs and toes off of conquered kings. He reaped this same treatment in his life. Judges 1:6,7
7. Division- Korah created division in the nation of Israel and reaped division when God divided the earth to swallow him up. Num. 16
8. Drowning- A Pharaoh commanded that the Hebrew baby boys be drowned. A Pharaoh was drowned by the Lord in the Red Sea. Exodus 1:22; 14:28

2. Insight 2- This act of Pharaoh is one of the main assaults by Satan upon the Seed of the Woman. The river of blood flows all throughout the history of God’s people in an attempt by Satan to exterminate them.
*Genesis 3:15-* And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Since the prophecy of Genesis 3:15, Satan has done all in his power to destroy the Messianic line and prevent the birth and life of Jesus Christ. He has done this by weather, the will of evil men, the worship of idols, and by the Wicked One himself. In Genesis 6, based on the Hebrew meaning of the words “sons of God,” the Human Race was corrupted by fallen angels which is the meaning of this phrase. In Genesis 50, a famine jeopardized the existence of God’s people. Here in Exodus 1, the destruction of the male line in Israel is at stake. In Exodus 14, the whole nation is pursued by the army of Pharaoh and is in danger of being massacred.

**After David’s family tree was singled out in 2 Samuel 7, it became the focus of the assaults.** The first assault came when a good king of Judah named Jehosaphat, started rubbing shoulders with the wrong crowd, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. They were the most wicked couple to ever rule in Israel. The purpose of this relationship was a war alliance (2 Chronicles 18). Jehosaphat had lots of goodies to protect since he had prospered so much. Through this union, Jehosaphat’s son, Jehoram, married Athaliah, Ahab and Jezebel’s daughter. This marriage was part of Satan’s design to introduce idolatry into Judah so that the wicked Athaliah might do for Judah what Jezebel did for Israel. The southern kingdom of Judah would be corrupted just like the northern kingdom of Israel. Satan’s scheme worked morally and politically. The influence of Athaliah and her parents affected Jehoram.

* 2 Chronicles 21:6- And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Satan used Jehoram to kill all his brothers. Jehoram reaped what he sowed. The Arabians and disease killed all his sons except the youngest one, Ahaziah, who reigned after Jehoram died. He was a wicked king that followed the evil counsel of his ungodly mother. After Ahaziah was killed by Jehu, wicked Athaliah wanted to be queen and rule the land. She killed all the royal seed except one.

* 2 Chronicles 22:10- But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.
Satan used Athaliah to assault the Messianic line again. God in His grace protected baby Joash. He was rescued by his Aunt Jehoshabeath and was hidden for six years in the Temple. Faithfulness to God’s Word was in the balance for six years. In the seventh year of Joash, the Levites, under the leadership of Jehoida the priest, anointed him king and overthrew wicked Athaliah. God’s people dedicated themselves to the Lord.

Another assault of Satan was when Israel was under Babylonian captivity. Wicked Haman was the tool of Satan to attempt the destruction of the entire nation of Israel within the Persian Empire (Esther 3 & 6). God used Esther and Mordecai to deliver His people.

In Matthew 2, Herod sought to kill baby Jesus by ordering the death of babies two years old and younger. In Matthew 4, Satan’s temptation to Jesus was “Cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the Temple.” Time and again, as we can see, Satan was out to destroy the Son of God and His entrance into this world.

II. THE PROTECTION OF THE PAPOOSE 1:17-21

The command of Pharaoh was “Kill the baby boys!” The midwives, however, feared someone more than the king. Notice three responses to this event.

A. The Response of the Midwives- 1:17

.... “But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.”

The midwives feared the God of Heaven more than the god of the world at that time...the Pharaoh of Egypt. The Pharaoh was considered as god at this time in history. He had the power of life and death in Egypt, yet, these women had a greater fear of the Lord. Good for them. If they were Egyptian women, perhaps the witness of the Hebrew women influenced them. The lesson they teach us is we should be more concerned about what God thinks than what men think. Our priorities should be a concern for God’s opinion, being His companion, and having more communion with Him.
B. The Response of the Pharaoh 1:18-19

...“And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? [19] And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.”

Pharaoh wants to know what’s going on, “What are you girls doing? Why are you keeping these babies alive?” Their answer was, “The Hebrew women are lively or vigorous. They have their babies too fast!” It is common knowledge that women who are involved in hard labor outdoors tend to be healthy and strong and give birth quickly to their children. They recover quickly too. The Hebrew women were slaves that underwent hard labor each day.

C. The Response of God 1:20-21

Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. [21] And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.

God blesses the midwives because of their attitude toward God and life itself. He blesses them with their own families, possibly taking Hebrew husbands. They had sown the preservation of families and reaped the blessing of their own families. These women were determined to obey God’s law over the king’s. Others contend that the Pharaoh built houses for the Hebrews that were having children, not the midwives, but this opinion doesn’t seem to make sense to me.

Anytime the laws of men contradict the laws of God, God’s laws must be obeyed. This is why it is so important to know God’s Word. We find this truth of obedience to God’s Word all throughout the Bible. Saul ordered David’s death, but Jonathan refuses to heed it. Mordecai refused to revere wicked Haman. The three Hebrews would not bend, bow, or budge in worshiping the idol. Daniel prayed in spite of the king’s law that forbade prayer to anyone but him. The apostles were forbidden to preach, but did it anyway (Acts 4:18).
III. THE PUBLIC PROCLAMATION  1:22

And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

The steps of sin always digress. When the king’s method failed, another one was contrived that was worse than the first. He went from oppression of the people to murder. One cruelty led to another. The reason people become addicted is because the steps of sin digress. The thrill of the sin in the beginning does not satisfy after a while. What seemed liked fun, is not as much fun any more. Something with more thrills is sought to satisfy the flesh. The person gets deeper and deeper into a sinful lifestyle to quench his thirst for satisfaction until one day, he cannot get out. The downward spiral of drug addiction, alcoholism, pornography, adultery, sexual immorality, homosexuality, gambling, stealing, etc. is steep, swift, costly, and destructive. As a person becomes entrenched in sin, he tends to become bolder in his lifestyle, proclaiming his evil without hesitation or shame.

Pharaoh made a public proclamation to his people, “Kill the boys and spare the girls.” Since the Egyptians regarded the Nile River as a manifestation of deity, perhaps Pharaoh was making obedience to his command an act of worship for the Egyptians. This plan evidently failed too. Unwanted children were constantly devoured by wild beasts and exposure to the elements. In Syria, children were offered to idols. In Rome, if the father did not want his baby, it was killed.

The order of Pharaoh is reversed today. In China and India, girls tend to be abandoned, aborted, or killed after birth and the boys are spared. Women’s liberation organizations celebrate the abortion policies of these countries, yet in so doing, they deny the rights of millions of female babies that are slaughtered by abortion or infanticide. The wisdom of this world is foolish and contradictory. For this reason, we are to beware of adopting this kind of reasoning for our own lives. In doing so, we set a precedent for destruction. Beware of the assaults of Satan in your own life.
Chapter 3
God is Working
Behind the Scenes
Exodus 2:1-10

Things look pretty grim for God’s people. The Pharaoh has afflicted the people with hardship, inflicted them with pain, and depicted them as traitors who may join their enemies. But for every problem, God has a solution. For every trial, He has a triumph at hand. For every crisis, God has a solution. Do you believe this? If not, how can we expect a lost sinner to believe it? We must be people of faith and have an ever-trusting dependence and faith in the Lord. The reason we are not dependent is we have become independent of Him because we do not take time to pray, worship, or fellowship with the Lord.

God’s solution for Israel’s problem was found in a man named Moses. Moses is among the heroes of the Old Testament. He was a prophet, priest, and king in one person. He is one of the few characters in Scripture whose life is sketched from infancy to death.

A look at Moses’ life presents a series of striking contrasts.

* Moses was the child of a slave and the son of a queen.
* He was born in a hut, and lived in a palace.
* He inherited poverty, yet, enjoyed unlimited wealth.
* Moses was the leader of armies, yet a keeper of flocks.
* This man was the mightiest of warriors and the meekest of men.
* He was educated in the court of the king and dwelt in the desert.
* Moses had the wisdom of Egypt and the faith of a child.
* He was fitted for the city but wandered in the wilderness.
* This man was tempted with the pleasures of sin and he endured the hardships of virtue.
* Moses was backward in speech, yet talked with God.
* He was a fugitive from Pharaoh and an ambassador of Heaven.
* Moses was the giver of the law and the forerunner of grace.

As we look into Exodus chapter two, we find a brief account of the infancy of Moses. The first ten verses give us an account of four important arrivals which reveal that God is working behind the scenes.

I. THE ARRIVAL OF MOSES 2:1-3

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. [2] And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. [3] And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

Moses was born in the midst of turmoil, trouble, trials, and tribulation. The name of his parents is not given here but we are told later they were Jochebed and Amram. The Bible says that they saw that Moses was a “goodly child” which means “beautiful and well-favored.” Jochebed hid Moses for three months when other babies were being killed. She was able to do this because she may have not had a midwife to help her in the birth of Moses. They hid Moses because of their faith in the Lord.

* Hebrews 11:23- By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

Moses did not come from the most popular or prominent tribe of Israel. The prominent tribes of the Israelites at this time were such tribes as Reuben, Judah, Joseph, and Benjamin. However, littleness or obscurity is not a hindrance to being used of God. Gideon complained that he was the least in his father's house (Judges 6:15), but that did not stop God from using him. David was the last of eight sons and was considered so insignificant that he was not even called to the meeting when Samuel came to look for a king among David's brothers. That which keeps us from effectively serving God is not our lack of fame, but our lack of faith. Beloved, if God wants us to be known, He will take care of it in a very effective way.

* Joshua 3:7- And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

* Psalm 75:6-7... For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from
the west, nor from the south. [7] But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Our concern as Christians and servants of the Lord is to be about our faith in the Lord and not our fame among men. Take care of the faith part and God will take care of the fame part. God often causes obscure folk to be mighty in His service in order that He might better get the glory.

When we look at the parents of Moses, we find they were going hand-in-hand together in faith. We should too! Jesus should be first in your home. They faced their problems head-on by faith. They overcame their fear of the king and trusted in God’s protection and preservation of their child. We too, are to confront our problems by faith. Their lives demonstrated characteristics of genuine faith. In fact, faith does a number of things.

A. Faith Sees

They saw a proper child. Those who have faith see what others do not. When Jehoshaphat was being attacked by multitudes of Moabites, and Ammonites, matters looked helpless, but Jehoshaphat depended upon the Lord. He realized that God was working behind the scenes.

* 2 Chronicles 20:12... O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

Faith sees the Lord and focuses upon Him. This is the challenge of Scripture.

* Hebrews 12:2 - Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

* Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

B. Faith Acts

They acted to save Moses’ life. They were convinced God had a special purpose for him. Faith produces courage and confidence to swallow up our fears. How? We do this by focusing our lives on the Lord. Moses’ parents took an ark of bulrushes or papyrus plants to save Moses’ life. Why were they doing this now after three months? Babies cry and it would be difficult to conceal Moses as he
grew.

The Egyptians used these papyrus plants to make very light and swift boats. It had a triangular stalk about the thickness of a finger, which grew to the height of ten feet; and from this, the lighter Nile boats were made. The peeling of the plant was used for sails, mattresses, mats, sandals, and other articles, but chiefly for the preparation of paper. They daubed the ark of the bulrushes with slime and pitch. The “slime” is probably the mud, of which bricks were usually made in Egypt, and which in this case was used to bind the stalks of the papyrus into a compact mass, and perhaps also to make the surface of the ark smooth for the infant. The pitch was bitumen, a tar-like substance that would waterproof the ark. This same material was used to embalm the dead and now was used to protect and spare the life of a baby.

C. Faith Risks

Moses was put among the reeds or flags in the shallow waters of the Nile River. The word "flags" is translated from a word which refers to a smaller species of papyrus. This was a smart place to place the ark, for the "flags" would protect the ark from drifting downstream with the current. The current is mild in these reeds and they would offer protection and keep it stationary. The brink of the river was the lip of the river.

Hold the phone for a minute here! Think about this plan. What has been happening at the river? Babies have been drowned by the people. This baby was taken to the last spot which carnal reasoning would have suggested. The place of death becomes the place of life, deliverance, and freedom. Pharaoh’s command was to put the boy babies in the river and technically, the mother of Moses did this.

Beloved, we have eternal life because someone died for us. At the cross, the place of death, there is life, deliverance, and freedom from the bondage of sin when we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though Moses was brought to the place of death, he was secure in the ark. The word “ark” is the same word for Noah’s ark. It is a picture of Christ. We are secure in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*John 6:37- All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
II. THE ARRIVAL OF HER MAJESTY 2:4-6

And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. [5] And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. [6] And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

Miriam watched what would happen to the ark, standing at a distance so she would not be noticed or create suspicion. The Nile was regarded as sacred, and its water as health-giving and fructifying. The daughter of the king himself came to bathe at the river and the little ark was noticed by the princess. It is possible that the bathing habits of the princess were known, but even if this is true, God was still working behind the scenes on their behalf. He does this for you too!

*Jeremiah 10:23- O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We are not able to completely plan our own course. Life is full of surprises and unexpected events that leave us out of control.

*Romans 8:28- And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The princess was in the right place at the right time and responded the right way toward baby Moses. The tears of Moses melted her heart and she had compassion upon him. The blessing of God was upon this little baby’s life. The princess defied her father’s edict to kill the Hebrew baby boy, and took the child for herself into the palace of the Pharaoh. God was getting the last laugh with this tyrant king.

III. THE ARRIVAL OF MIRIAM 2:7-8

Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? [8] And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

Miriam has been watching all this time. She approaches the princess and asked, “Shall I get a wet-nurse for you?” The Lord continues to work behind the scenes as the Princess consents to Miriam’s suggestion. Miriam retrieves her mother as the wet-nurse for
Moses. God again has another laugh as the mother of Moses is paid for caring for her child. The king’s daughter will pay money from the king’s treasury to defy his own commandment! The Lord has a great sense of humor.

* Job 5:13 - *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*

**IV. THE ARRIVAL OF THE MOTHER  2:9-10**

*And Pharaoh’s daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. [10] And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.*

The so-called wisdom of Pharaoh is turned into foolishness. The king’s daughter delivers the child that he is trying to kill by his own command. The Egyptian treasury is paying the mother to care for her own baby. Pharaoh was compelled to give room and board, proper training and education to the person who is going to accomplish the exact thing that he was trying to prevent....the freedom of the Hebrew slaves and the defeat of Egypt. The Lord is more or less saying, “In your face Pharaoh! You will see who is the boss around here and who is the real God!”

God often works through those that the world considers to be foolish in order to bring to foolishness what the world considers wise. All throughout history this pattern is seen as the plan’s of God’s enemies backfire in their faces.

* In 1525, the Bishop of London purchased as many of Tyndale’s New Testament translations that he could find for the purpose of keeping them out of the people’s hands and destroying them. Tyndale used this money to correct his translation mistakes and print more New Testaments.
* Haman set out to destroy Mordecai and the Jews by Persian law. His plan backfired and he was hung on the gallows and Persian law enabled the Jews to legally destroy their enemies.
* The accusers of Daniel that set out to destroy him were killed by the same lions that did not harm Daniel in their den.
* Voltaire set out to exterminate the Bible, yet, after his death, the Geneva Bible Society purchased and used his home to print and warehouse Bibles.
* The radio station of Nazi Germany is now used by Trans-World Radio to preach the Gospel.

* 1 Corinthians 1:26-28... For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: [27] But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; [28] And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: Why does God do this? Notice, “That NO flesh glory in His presence” (vs.29).

The princess named the baby “Moses” which means “to draw forth or pull out.” His name was a forecast of his own life. God would pull him out of Egypt. He would be used to pull his people out of Egypt and out of the Red Sea. God’s hand was working in Moses’ life. These were difficult times, dangerous, discouraging, distressing, and depressing circumstances. Yet, God was still working behind the scenes. He used a daughter of Egypt, of Levi, of Jochabed, and of Pharaoh to deliver Moses.

You may be going through the ringer right now. Realize this that the Lord is working behind the scenes. If you will just look for His hand of blessing, you will see it. Don’t let your problems cloud your vision. God is working to help you to grow in your faith and be a better servant of Christ. If you do not know the Lord, He is working to bring you to a point where you will trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

The camel is one of the ugliest, most stubborn and dangerous of all the so-called tame animals. It is also one of the most useful animals. It is used as food, a desert "freight car" and "passenger bus." Many people drink camel’s milk. When the camel is too old and feeble to continue carrying loads and passengers, it is butchered. The meat is eaten, and the skin is tanned to make beautiful leather.

The camel can kick sideways as well as forward and backward, and it has a very nasty bite. The camel can turn its head full around and stare its rider in the face. It can stretch its long, goosy neck around and bite at the flies that are nibbling its tail. It can drop its head between the two front legs and look backward with an upside-down face. Ugly, but very useful, is the camel. Like the camel, our problems tend to be ugly, but useful. They can strengthen our relationship with the Lord and our patience. What God wants us to realize is that no matter what we are facing, He is working behind the scenes.
Chapter 4
Lessons from Moses’ Failures

Exodus 2:11-14

God has been working behind the scenes on Moses’ behalf. The princess of Egypt finds him in a little ark on the Nile River. The king who issued the death decree to have him destroyed is now financing his care, training, and education. God loves to prove who is in charge. He delights in revealing the foolishness of the “so called” wisdom and schemes of this world in order to show that His way is best. Blessings come from the back-fired plans of Satan. The hand of the Lord is upon His future deliverer. The baby is a man who is about to enter into the second stage of his life... the pruning and training stage for God’s service. We begin this section looking at a serious blunder of Moses.

I. THE BURDEN OF MOSES AND ISRAEL 2:11

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

When Moses was grown, he went out unto his people. The word “grown” comes from the Hebrew word gadal {gaw-dal'} which not only means grown up, it also means “promoted, powerful, important, or praised.” He was a popular man and well educated by the Egyptians who were no dummies at all. Moses was educated in the great Temple of the Sun which was the outstanding university of the day.

We underrate what the Egyptians knew and accomplished. Their knowledge of astronomy was phenomenal. They knew the exact distance to the sun. They worked on the theory that the earth was round and not flat. They knew a great deal about chemistry which is evidenced by the way they were able to embalm the dead. We have no process to equal it
today. Their workmanship and ability with colors were fantastic. Their colors are brighter than any we have today. I am confident that our paint companies would give anything if they knew the formulas used for color by the Egyptians. They are bright, beautiful, and startling after four thousand years. In addition to all of their other accomplishments, the Egyptians also had a tremendous library. Moses, we are told, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. The training of Moses was the best education in the world at that time. He would have learned three languages: Egyptian, Akkadian, and Hebrew.

Moses was at the top of his game, yet concerned about his own people. He looked on their burdens. This word “look” is not a casual glance. It comes from the Hebrew word ra'ah {raw-aw'} which means “to inspect, to look intently, to gaze on with emotional involvement.” The word “spied” comes from this same word. Moses was studying what was happening. He was obviously concerned about what was going on. The fact that he was a Hebrew was not a secret that was kept from him. Hebrews 11 gives insights about his attitude and decisions.

* Hebrews 11:24-27...By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; [25] Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; [26] Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. [27] By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. The word “esteeming” in verse 26 means “careful thought, not quick to make a decision.” He was more concerned about eternal riches than earthly ones.

Baron Justinian von Weltz renounced his title, estates, and income and went out as a missionary to what was then Dutch Guiana. Today his body lies there in a lonely grave. He is forgotten by the world, but for sure, he is not forgotten by God. As he was preparing to go into missionary service, he said, “What is it to me to bear the title ‘well-born’ when I am born again in Christ? What is it to me to have the title ‘lord’ when I desire to be the servant of Christ? What is it to be called ‘your grace’ when I have need of God’s grace? All of these vanities I will away with and all else I will lay at the feet of my dear Lord Jesus.” The Baron had his priorities right and he is a challenge to us to what is really important and who is important in our life.

Moses had the same attitude in his own heart. He refused the title of “prince” and heir to the throne of Egypt. He did not sacrifice his
future on the altar of the immediate. His attitude was not a “living for NOW” attitude or “get all the gusto you can out of life.” He chose to suffer affliction with his own people than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He did this by faith. Moses knew that sin’s sweetness soon sours. I’m sure he was a witness to the devastation caused by wicked living since Egypt was a very carnal society.

The shortness of sin’s satisfaction is the catalyst today for the abuse of drugs, alcohol, and rampant immorality. King David bitterly learned the fact that sin’s pleasures don’t last very long. He watched the baby of Bathsheba die. Later on, he experienced the rebellion of Absalom and trauma in his home. His sin was short-lived in pleasure but long-lived in consequence.

Moses was burdened about the burden of his people. One day, while looking in upon his people, he saw an Egyptian that was smiting or beating a Hebrew. Taskmasters were armed with long rods made of tough pliable wood from Syria that were used to beat the backs of slaves. The treatment and abuse infuriated Moses and inflamed his zeal and passion for defending the oppressed and abused. Moses is commonly known for his meekness. He also had an angry side to him that he usually kept under control. We have two examples of his anger.

1. **The Golden Calf Incident:** He threw down the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.

   * Exodus 32:19- And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

2. **The Smitten Rock at Meribah:** In anger, Moses smote the rock twice instead of speaking to it. The consequence of this action is God forbade him to enter the Promised Land.

   * Numbers 20:10-11... And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. In his anger and zeal, Moses made some serious blunders. Don’t we do the same thing too sometimes?
II. THE BLUNDERERS OF MOSES  2:12-13

And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. [13] And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

Moses’ blunders were in his actions and his attitudes.

A. The Blunder in His Actions

When he feels no one is looking, Moses slays the Egyptian and buries him in the sand. He makes the dreadful mistake of murdering this man, even though the man may have deserved it. Anger and bitterness tend to cloud our judgment and can lead to murder.

* Hebrews 12:15 - Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Moses looked this way and that way, but he failed to look up. He failed to get direction from God. We usually don’t do this when we lose control of our temper. This was the root of the failure of Moses. It is the root of our failures too. We should be asking questions like, “What does the Lord want me to do? What does the Bible say about this matter?” Your life will be filled with blunders if you do not get under God’s authority.

B. The Blunder in His Attitude

Moses’ emotions or heart got ahead of his head. His zeal was an unpurified zeal. Moses thought he could help and deliver his people by his own power, prestige, and position. His actions, however were premature and not in God’s timing. God had predicted that His people would be in the land of Egypt as slaves for 400 years, so Moses’ actions were forty years premature. He needed more training in the solitude of the desert and the people needed more training in the brick kilns. God is not in a hurry, but neither will He leave His people in affliction one moment longer than necessary. Deliverance comes in His time and by His power.
Zephaniah 4:6- Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

There are several lessons we can learn from untempered, uncontrolled zeal.

* Zeal that is Out of Control
1. It leads to hasty actions: It is uncontrolled, impulsive, and impatient.
2. It makes one unfit for God’s service: It relies too much upon self and takes matters in one’s own hands without the leading of the Lord. The key words of verse 11-12, looked and saw, reveal this truth. Moses walked by sight. Nothing is mentioned about getting direction from God at this point in his life.
3. The hasty actions of uncontrolled zeal retard accomplishments rather than furthering God’s purposes. It makes a mess.

The fact that Moses looked both ways revealed his conscience was not clear. When a person is unsure of God’s will or of their actions, usually they are apprehensive of the opinions of others. When we know God’s will, there is conviction and certainty. There is an unconcern for the opinions of men because the Lord is leading. Moses had his eyes on men and not God at this time.

* Proverbs 29:25- The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

Another lesson from the blunders or failures of Moses is that spiritual ends are not achieved by carnal means. His scheme led to sin, not deliverance. It’s never right, to do wrong, in order to do right. Sensual, worldly, carnal methods that contradict Bible principles are not to be used to reach people for Christ. They grieve the Holy Spirit and create confusion.

Moses also reminds us of the fact that when you conceal your sin, you will eventually get caught as we will now see. It will come out into the open eventually. Moses was spotted and confronted about his crime.
III. THE BROADCAST OF MOSES’ SIN  2:13-14

And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? [14] And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

The day after the murder, Moses encountered two Hebrews that were in the act of fighting. Moses wondered what could be so important as to cause brothers to strive with one another. He offered a mild rebuke. They asked, “Wasn’t the killing of the Egyptian enough?” We are reminded here that suffering usually unites people, but it can also create stress and strife as these two men struggle over some issue. We especially need to rely upon the Lord in these times. We hurt others when we smite them whether it is with our tongue, our hands, our looks, contention, or strife.

* Ephesians 4:31-32... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: [32] And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Moses’ authority is challenged. Who made you a prince? This is a common attitude and practice today. People do not want to be responsible or accountable for their actions and will challenge those who confront them about their actions. Beloved, you are responsible. You are accountable. Your Creator does have authority over you. As a Christian, you do not belong to yourself. You have been bought with a price.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19- What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

A man needs no great authority for the giving of a friendly reproof. The offenders, however, considered the reproof of Moses as an attempt upon their lives. The wrong-doers unjustifiably accused Moses of wanting to kill them. This is another typical reaction of an un-repenting sinner toward those who would rebuke or arrest him. He tries to make the rebuker as evil as possible and to focus on this supposed evil instead of on the sin of the criminal.

This attitude is seen in our society in the attack in court by the criminals upon the arresting officer. Unfortunately, our society is so naïve morally and spiritually that they give honor to the criminal's attack. All
that Moses was trying to do was help. He was their friend, yet, his actions were misunderstood, opposed, and rejected. How many times does this happen when we try to win others to Christ or help other people? Thank God for the friends that try to help you. Moses’ crime is exposed and fear haunts him because of his deed. Moses’ blunder teaches several other lessons at this point. A wise man will learn from the mistakes of others. Let’s note some lessons from Moses.

* Important Lessons from Moses

* Lesson 1- Hiding the wrong does not erase it.

Moses tried to literally cover up his sin and it failed. It almost always does fail. The natural tendency of men is to hide what they have done wrong. Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves with fig leaves and hide from God. Cain tried to bury Abel, but Abel’s blood cried from the ground to the Lord. The cardinal law of the Bible is sin cannot be covered by men.

* Numbers 32:23- But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.

* Ecclesiastes 12:14- For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

* Luke 12:2- For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

* Proverbs 28:13- He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Moses did not prosper because he tried to cover his sin.

* Lesson 2- Timing is as important as action.

Moses failed because he got ahead of God. He pushed his way into leadership prematurely. The result was rejection. No one followed him. Whoops! Ouch! God’s timing is important. Jesus responded more than once, “My time is not yet come.” God’s work must be done God’s way in God’s time. As a pastor, you need to be in the Word, in prayer, and sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading in your life. The problem in this situation is the nation of Israel is not ready for deliverance. Moses is not ready either for he has lessons that he needs to learn in the desert. Both the nation and Moses have forty years to go before they are ready to exit Egypt and attend the University of the Sinai Desert.

* Lesson 3- Spiritual leadership is God appointed, not self assumed.

Moses had a great resume. He was a leader and physically attractive. Yet, one cannot lead God’s people unless one is a consistent
follower of the Lord. Are you following the Lord? If not, you should not be pastoring or teaching the Word.

Portia, a beautiful, wealthy heiress, is the heroine of Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*. She had many suitors of noble birth who wanted to marry her, but her father decreed that her husband would be chosen by a certain test. She would belong to the one who chose the right chest out of three that were prepared by the father.

One chest was of gold and inscribed with “Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.” On the inside was a skull. The second chest was made of silver, engraved with the words, “Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.” On the inside was a picture of a fool. The third chest or winning chest was made of lead and held Portia’s picture within it. It was engraved with the words, “Who chooseth me must give and hazard all that he hath.”

All the suitors but one chose the first two chests because the precious metals and inscriptions were so attractive. Bassanio, however, picked the chest of lead and got Portia’s hand in marriage, because he was willing to give everything he had for the sake of the one he loved. We should have this attitude toward the Lord. Are you like Moses and willing to forsake everything to follow Him?
Chapter 5
Lessons from a Desert University

Exodus 2:15-25

Moses has made some serious mistakes and blunders that we can learn from his experiences.

* Hiding your sin does not erase it. It will be exposed.
* God’s timing is as important as action. Getting ahead of the Lord creates a mess.
* Uncontrolled zeal leads to hasty, impatient action which takes matters into your own hands without the leading of the Lord.

Great men make mistakes, but they learn from their failures. They don’t go out and make the same mistakes over and over again. Despite Moses’ sin and failures, we see similarities in his life and the life of Christ. In fact, Moses is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in many ways. So far here is what we have seen.

* Moses, a type of Christ
1. Their births and infancy were under Gentile domain.
2. Edicts were issued at their births for the destruction of all male babies by the rulers of the land.
3. Both of them had peculiar beds. One had a basket in the bulrushes and the other had a feeding trough or manger in a stable.
4. Both Moses and Jesus were miraculously saved from death when they were children.
5. Moses and Jesus were raised in homes of men who were not their real fathers. They were both adopted.
6. Both of them left high and exalted positions to suffer with and for Israel. One left the throne of Egypt and the other the throne of Heaven.
7. Both Jesus and Moses refused a kingdom. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and Jesus refused the kingdom that the Devil offered Him.
8. Jesus and Moses were rejected by their brethren at their first advent.
9. Moses and Jesus were both Hebrews who spent time in Egypt while they were children. For Moses, Egypt was a place of rearing and for Jesus, it was a place of refuge.

10. Both of these men took Gentile brides. Jesus’ bride is the church composed of Jews and Gentiles.

As we continue to venture into this chapter, we will see how God begins to work in Moses’ life, molding and teaching him lessons from his sin and failures as he spends time at the University of the Sinai Desert.

I. THE BOUNTY ON MOSES 2:15

Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

The crime of Moses has been discovered and exposed. Pharaoh heard about it and sought to kill Moses. Moses fled from Egypt to the land of Midian. His life is full of strife and he flee to the land of strife which is the meaning of Midian. In Moses’ time the country of Midian was located generally to the south of Moab and down the eastern side of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. Later we will see Moses in the southern part of the Sinai peninsula, where Mount Horeb is, shepherding a flock belonging to the Midianites who became his in-laws. So the Midianite area also extended at that time into the southern part of the Sinai peninsula.

The circumstances were not ripe for Israel’s deliverance. The nation was not sufficiently humbled, nor increased in population to the point of God’s plan. Moses was not ready for the task at hand yet. Moses was rejected by his own people and now the Egyptians. The dream of deliverance seemed dead. The nightmare of his rejection was very real.

God is using the situation to prepare his servant for a great task. Beloved, rejection will make or break you. God may allow you to suffer rejection so you will seek His fellowship and comfort. He will use the rejection to teach you to draw strength and joy from Him. God will also use our rejection to remind us of how He feels when we reject Him.

Another lesson we will note here is sin leads to wandering. Sin creates instability, restlessness, and fear. It disrupts your home too. Imagine the pain and hurt of Moses’ parents, Miriam, Aaron, and friends upon hearing about what he has done. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds, for God is working behind the scenes.
II. THE BODYGUARD 2:16-20

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. [17] And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. [18] And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day? [19] And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. [20] And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.

Moses dwelled in the land of Midian. At this time the Midianites had not become bitter enemies as in Numbers 31. They were a group of tribes descending from Keturah and Abraham (Genesis 25). Keturah was Abraham's wife after the death of Sarah.

God provided Moses with a place of protection. He provides for us a hiding place in our days of distress too. The Lord is our sanctuary and security.

* Psalm 61:3- For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

A man whom many believe was the greatest American president is a good example. When he was 7 years of age, his family was forced out of their home, and he went to work. When he was 9, his mother died. He lost his job as a store clerk when he was 20. He wanted to go to law school, but he didn't have the education. At age 23 he went into debt to be a partner in a small store. Three years later the business partner died, and the resulting debt took years to repay. When he was 28, after courting a girl for four years, he asked her to marry him, and she turned him down. On his third try he was elected to Congress, at age 37, but then failed to be re-elected. His son died at 4 years of age. When this man was 45, he ran for the Senate and lost. At age 47 he ran for the vice-presidency and lost. But at age 51 he was elected president of the United States.

The man was Abraham Lincoln, a man who learned to face discouragement and failure, and move beyond it. Did you know that it was Abraham Lincoln who, in the midst of the Civil War, in 1863, established the annual celebration of Thanksgiving? Lincoln had learned how important it is to stop and thank God in the midst of great difficulties. The failures that he faced developed maturity, patience, and perseverance in his life.
God also provides for us a place of preparation to develop our maturity. He did this for Moses and he does this for us. Moses needed to learn important lessons and the Lord provided an atmosphere for him to learn. He needed to learn dependence upon God rather than independence which got him into trouble. He needed to rely on the Lord rather than upon himself. We are in need of learning these same lessons. *James 4:7- Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

*Romans 12:1- I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

*Psalm 37:5- Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

Moses also needed to learn to “want” as well as to “abound.” Those whom God intends to exalt, He first humbles. He uses the deserts of our lives to prepare us for greater service.

*Deuteronomy 32:10- He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.*

The word “desert” comes from a Hebrew verb dabar which means “to speak.” God is not absent or silent in our deserts or barren, lonely experiences. You may be in the desert of confinement, poor health, a broken romance or marriage, a failure at work, or the death of a loved one, but understand if you have the Lord you are NOT alone. It is in these times especially that He is trying to speak to us and see us through our trial. God led Moses, instructed him, and kept him as the apple of His eye. Notice Deuteronomy 8 which gives the purpose of the desert wanderings.

*Deuteronomy 8:2- And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

While sitting by a well, the daughters of a priest came to water their flocks. Reuel was an honorable man whose name means “friend of God.” Though from an honorable house, they learned to work. Idleness can be no one’s honor. These girls were also modest. They would not ask a stranger, an Egyptian to come home with them even though he was handsome and helpful until their father sent for him. Modesty is the ornament of a woman.
Shepherds waited until the seven girls had drawn enough water to fill the water troughs by the well, then they drove away the girls' flock and let their own flocks drink of the water in the troughs. This meant the girls would have to draw water for both their flock and the flocks of these rude shepherds. Moses put a stop to this. Shepherds tried to drive the flocks of these ladies away from the well, but Moses, an able warrior, stood against these bullies.

The word "stood" in verse seventeen means he "sprang to his feet." Moses was prompt to help. He had an inner conviction that would not let him sit and watch injustice take place. He had seen enough in Egypt. Once he saw it, he immediately sprang into action and came quickly to the aid of the girls. When the girls returned early, their father enquired why and they told him about Moses. Reuel or Jethro sent for Moses. This is the third time Moses tried to deliver others from harm in chapter two.

In the Bible, the number three is the number which stands for that which is solid, complete, and entire. Three lines are necessary to form a plane figure that has length, width, and height. Three is also the number of resurrection and new life. Moses has reached a turning point in his life. His life is beginning to get on solid ground and he is starting a new life. We have seen the bounty on Moses, the bodyguard, and now we will examine the blessings of God.

III. THE BLESSINGS OF GOD 2:21-22

And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. [22] And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

God's blessings involved several elements.

A. The Booth for Dwelling

Moses was content to dwell with the family of Jethro, giving his life some stability. The location of Midian provided Moses much protection, for it was far enough away from Egypt in Moses' day to protect him from the king of Egypt. Midian was an excellent refuge for Moses.

*Exodus 18:1- When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and
that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt;

B. The Bride

Zipporah becomes his bride. Her name means “sparrow or bird” and may possibly indicate a small, nervous person. Moses married Lady Bird.

C. The Birth of a Son

Moses has a son, Gershom which means “stranger from a strange land or foreigner.” The name that Moses gave his son may indicate how he feels at this time of his life. He may have a sense of loneliness. Yet, there is a big change in attitude when his second son is born. His second son is Eliezer which means “God is my help.” Did Moses learn from his mistakes? I believe he did.

1. He developed a servant’s attitude. At the well, he took the first steps of becoming a servant.
2. He developed a willingness to be obscure, dwelling in a barren desert, away from the limelight. He was also a shepherd which was considered the lowest rung on the ladder of the Egyptian social scale. God was developing humility in Moses’ life. In this desert, he gained valuable knowledge of the topography of the Sinai Peninsula which would come in handy later in his life.
3. Moses learned the ability to rest and rely upon God. The desert gave him time to think and reflect upon past mistakes and learn from them. Our problems arise when we make mistakes and fail to learn from them.

IV. THE BONDAGE IS UNBEARABLE 2:23-25

And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. [24] And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. [25] And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

The Lord’s people groan, sigh, and cry out to God for help. At last, they begin to think upon God under their burdens and return to Him from their idols.
*Ezekiel 20:8- But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.*

Notice the response of the Lord. God is mentioned five times in verses 23-25, which happens to be the number of grace in the Bible. He demonstrated grace to His people. He heard, remembered, looked upon, and had respect or took notice of them. The Lord knows the best time to act, doesn’t He? When you are in trouble, remember that God has a time schedule that you cannot see. No mention of Moses is made here. It is all GOD! Beloved, no matter what desert we are dwelling in... bad health, poverty, rejection, failure, or death, the Lord has lessons for us to learn and will lead us if we will let Him.

The Pharaoh who sought to execute Moses was gone. An obstacle to returning to Egypt was removed. A new king was now on the throne. While the new king was still hostile towards Israel and, as we will see later, not very receptive to Moses, yet Moses could have an audience with him—something he could not have had with the previous king who sought to kill Moses.

God was preparing the way of Moses for ministry and service. Moses did not realize he was going back to Egypt. I believe He thought that chapter of his life was over, but God had a different plan for Him. Sometimes the Lord will allow the death of a desire or dream in our lives, only to resurrect it later when we are ready or the timing is right. Moses wanted to deliver his people, but he and the people were not ready. As we will see in the next chapter, the time for deliverance is at hand.
Chapter 6
The Burning Bush
Exodus 3:1-10

Moses, for forty years, grew up in the royal family of Egypt. Knowing that he was a true Hebrew, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He was not going to live a lie. He set out to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, oppression, and slavery. His plan backfired and failed and he had to flee for his life in the desert of Midian where he has been shepherding flocks for Jethro for the forty years. Moses is now 80 years old as we pick up the opening curtain of chapter three.

I. AN AWESOME SITUATION 3:1-2

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. [2] And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

For four decades, Moses has been tending sheep. For almost 14,400 days or more, he has been attending the school of hard knocks, the Desert University...
* where rough edges are sanded off,
* where puffed up heads are popped and deflated,
* where big shots are shot down to reality,
* where people who think they are somebody realize they are nobody without God. You and I are nobodies saved by somebody who died for the sins of everybody so that anybody can be saved by putting their faith in Christ.

In the deserts of our lives, men, things, the world, yourself, and present circumstances are valued at what they are really worth. For
Moses, the hustle, bustle, and confusion of Egypt is not heard in the solitude of sand, snakes, scorpions, and stones. The crashes and clamor of the commercial world are not in the Midian desert. The sigh of ambition was not heard. The applause of the world does not tempt or tantalize in the wilderness. Instead, the companions of Moses were the stillness and whisper of a desert breeze and his conscience.

**Moses was “learned” in the wisdom of the Egyptians.** He attended the finest schools in the world at that time in history. The carnal colleges of the world cannot equip a man for divine service. Don’t misunderstand what I am saying here. I highly recommend that preachers get training in a good Bible college and seminary that actually teaches the Bible. Unfortunately, many of the Bible colleges today exist to build somebody’s church. Their Bible departments are a joke and when their men graduate, many are weak in the knowledge of Scripture and Bible study habits. Some have expressed to me their frustration over their ignorance of the Bible because the Bible department in their school was weak. That’s a tragedy!

**Beloved, the hand of man can never totally mold a vessel meet for the Master’s use.** The One who is to use the vessel can alone prepare it. It is God who knows what training we need. He knows our weaknesses and strengths and what lessons we need to learn to be effective servants of the Lord. This does not give us an excuse for not studying or getting an education. We need training and tools for the ministry to be good teachers and preachers of the Word of God. In Moses’ life, God used several teachers in this desert school to teach him some vital lessons.

1. Dr. Obscurity- He taught Moses, a former somebody, how to cope with being a nobody. He put him in charge of the sheep.
2. Dr. Time- He helped Moses to learn how to wait as he waited forty years in the wilderness.
3. Dr. Solitude- He educated Moses in silence. The desert is a quiet place, encouraging thought, mediation, reflection, and a dependence upon God.
4. Dr. Discomfort- He used harsh circumstances of the Midian desert to strengthen Moses physically and spiritually. He used forty years of desert harshness to toughen the hide of Moses for what was ahead of him. He was making sure that the future leaders would be as tough as the people that he would lead out of Egypt.
Now school is out! It’s time for Moses to graduate from the Desert University. As this story unfolds, we will see what Moses has learned. At this point let me ask, “Are you in a desert university? Is your life barren, lonely, dry, painful, and parched? Do you feel like you have been put on the shelf or hung out to dry?” The Lord may have allowed this in your life and may be trying to teach you some valuable lessons.

**There are three ways you can respond to your wilderness.**

A. **I don’t need it.** This is a reaction of fear and pride. You may feel that anyone but you should have to pass through desert trials. You may feel, “Why must I suffer?”

B. **I’m tired of it.** This response comes after a good deal of fatigue or anxiety.

C. **I accept it.** This response promotes the greatest degree of learning. If you are in a wilderness situation, turn your life over to the Lord’s control.

Moses was on the backside of the desert. The word “backside” means “the west side.” Directions at this time were based upon the East, the rising of the sun. The East would be the “forward” direction. This part of the Sinai Peninsula had pasturage and water for grazing sheep. The Mount Horeb area was an especially good place to shepherd a flock at certain times of the year. Those of us raised in the rich farm lands of the great state of Illinois think of the Sinai peninsula as a barren waste land, but it was not all wilderness. Some parts of the peninsula, particularly the Mount Horeb area (Mount Horeb was the chain of mountains in the south, and Mount Sinai the main mountain of the chain), were good pasture lands.

In certain seasons of the year the best pasturage in the Sinaiitic Peninsula is to be found on the slopes of the highest mountains. There you will find the most fertile valleys, in which even fruit-trees grow. Water abounds in this district, consequently it is the resort of all the Bedouins when the lower countries are dried up. These facts about the Mount Horeb area help us not only to understand why Moses was shepherding his flock there, but also why a few years later Israel encamped there for some time. God knows where the best places for us are located to provide for our needs. If we are careful to follow His leading, we will find that our needs will be adequately taken care of.

The mountain of God was called Horeb or Sinai. Tradition says this is known today as the mountain Jebel Musa at the southwest end of the
peninsula. It is 7363 feet high. Mount Sinai was the place where Elijah was commissioned. Important events took place in the mountains of the Bible.


* **Mt. Seir: Opposition & Bitterness** - Esau’s descendants never forgave Jacob descendants.

* **Mt. Carmel: Decision** - Who is on the Lord’s side? Choose you this day whom you will serve?

* **Mt. Sinai: The Mount of law and grace** - The Ten Commandments were given here and also the pattern of the Tabernacle which was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

  God wanted to speak to Moses and it was here, the angel of the Lord (an Old Testament appearance of Christ) speaks to Moses from a burning bush. The story of Moses and the burning bush is brushed aside by most because we are so familiar with it. It is one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. Digging, however, into this story reveals great treasures, truths, and insights.

  We see here that God used a small, burning bush to get Moses’ attention and reveal Himself. The Lord wanted to see how sensitive Moses was toward the insignificant, small things of life before He entrusted with him larger things. He does the same thing with us too!

  * **Luke 16:10** - He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

  **This burning bush reminds us that in the midst of common place situations, God will often get our attention by causing an uncommon event to occur.** We call them coincidences. They are God’s way of tapping us on the shoulder. Is there a burning bush in your life right now? Is the Lord attempting to get your attention so He can speak to you and give you direction in your life? Is the Lord trying to get your attention with financial problems, bad health, demotion, failure, or a person in your path? Instead of God trying to GET your attention, why don’t you GIVE Him your attention each day. Make yourself available to the Lord every day. Spend time in God’s Word and prayer.

  This bush was believed to be the wild, common acacia thorn bush. It reminds us that God uses little things to do His work. In the Bible we find that He used the jawbone of an ass, a sling shot and stone, and a little
boy’s lunch to accomplish His will. He will use you too if you are yielded to Him.

The burning bush reminds us also of several groups of people.
1. The bush reminds us of Moses. This bush was an earthly bush with a heavenly fire. God wanted Moses to be a burning bush for Him. The Lord would help him to glow with His presence in his life. He will do this for you too.

2. The bush reminds us of Israel. The Hebrews were suffering in the iron furnace of Egypt, but the flames did not consume them. In their fiery trials, the Lord was in their midst. This truth is reviewed again in the book of Daniel. The Lord was with the three Hebrews that were thrown into the fiery furnace. They were not consumed. As the fires of persecution have raged against Israel throughout history, they have not been destroyed whether it was under the power of Babylon, Persia, Rome, or Adolph Hitler. God’s people continue to endure.

* Isaiah 43:2- When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3. The bush reminds us of Jesus Christ. The fire was a manifestation of God’s power and glory, just like the Shekinah glory. God is a consuming fire.

* Hebrews 12:29- For our God is a consuming fire.

How can the Lord reveal Himself without consuming? How can He, who is of pure eyes, not look upon iniquity? How can the Lord look at mankind in any other way but judgment? The answer is in Romans 5.

* Romans 5:21- That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The answer is the grace of God.

The Holy One of God, His only begotten Son was made a curse for us. The word “bush” is from the Hebrew word cenah {sen-eh’} which means “a thorny bush.” Thorns are a reminder of the curse from man’s sin. In place of the curse entered our substitute. Jesus became a curse for us. His head was adorned with a crown of thorns. A fitting emblem for the curse of sin.

* Galatians 3:13- Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
The price for sin is death. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself. The flames of God’s wrath and holiness engulfed Him on the cross, but could not consume Him, just like the bush. The Root out of a dry ground did not perish. The humble bush did not possess neither beauty nor comeliness, yet became the temporary abode of God. The same truth holds for Jesus.

* Isaiah 53:2 - For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

4. The bush reminds us of the Church. The Church has been persecuted, but not destroyed. It has been knocked down, but not knocked out. Because God was present, what had been ordinary became holy ground and set apart for distinct use. The place for sheep and goats was transformed into holy ground by God’s presence and set apart for His use. When a person trusts Christ as Savior, God takes the ordinary and sets it apart for His purpose and glory. He dwells within the forgiven sinner. The child of the devil becomes a child of God through faith in Christ. The adversary of God becomes an ambassador of Christ.

How do we glorify Him? How do we let our light shine for Christ? The bush teaches this truth! The bush was the fuel for the fire, yet the supply for the fire was continually being renewed. We too, are to renew our desire and commitment to serve Christ each day. The desire to serve the Lord comes from yielding to the Holy Spirit each day. If we are to serve, to give out, then we must renew our strength within daily by drawing our power from the Lord. If we don’t, we’ll run out of gas spiritually speaking.

* 2 Corinthians 4:16- For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
* Ephesians 5:18- And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

II. THE ATTENTION OF MOSES 3:3

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

The “turning aside” to see the bush becomes a turning point in Moses’ life. He will never be the same again because he is about to meet the Lord he has heard about all of his life. Moses’ curiosity has been aroused by the burning bush of God’s presence. May
we too, turn in the Lord’s direction in our lives. God help us all to be curious about the things of God and not sin. May our curiosity drive us to the Word in search of answers to our questions.

III. THE AVAILABILITY OF MOSES  3:4

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

God calls out to Moses and he responds with a message of availability, “Here I am!” Abraham, Jacob, and Samuel responded the same way and the Lord used them greatly. The greatest of abilities is dependability and availability. Both of them are linked together. Dependable people have first made themselves available. Availability says, “I am your servant and at your disposal.” Availability says, “Your needs are a priority in my life.” Availability proclaims, “I will put others first before myself.” Availability expresses the desire to be used and to accomplish the requested task. It looks for opportunities to serve. As Christians, we are to be available to God. His will is to be our priority. We are to look for opportunities to serve Him and do His will. Are you available to the Lord?

IV. THE APPROACH TOWARD GOD  3:5

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moses was on holy ground and needed to take off his shoes. There was to be a change in the walk and attitude of Moses for he was in the presence of God. You know, when I remove my shoes, I am more careful where I step. I am more watchful of where I am going, looking for things like rocks or glass that may hurt me. I slow down a little bit. This same principle should apply for us in our spiritual walk. Because the Holy Spirit indwells us, there should be a change in our daily living. We ought to slow down the pace of our lives and give God time to speak to us. We should be cautious of sin that can hurt our testimony and walk for Christ.

*Psalm 46:10- Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
*Ephesians 5:15* - See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. The word “circumspectly” means “carefully, accurately.”

The shoes were removed as an act of reverence. Slaves or servants in that day did not wear shoes. God wanted Moses to have an attitude of reverence and worship for the One he was standing before. A true attitude of worship leads to service.

Shoes are a reminder of self activity, of hurrying and scurrying about. **God’s primary concern is not our activity or doing. He is more concerned about our being what HE wants us to be.** This is illustrated in Luke 10.

*Luke 10:38-42...* Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. [40] But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. [41] And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: [42] But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

In Luke 10, we find that Martha was concerned about doing and Mary was focused on being. Service is important but it is a natural by-product of being what God wants us to be. Doing comes from being. This is the reason why it is important to spend time with the Lord and grow in faith and in the Word. If you don’t do this, you spiritually dry up. Commitment starts in the heart. If God doesn’t have your heart, He doesn’t have you.

**V. THE ALARM OF MOSES  3:6**

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God. He is now facing the One He failed in Egypt and is afraid. God’s intention was not to frighten Moses, but to restore him to service. God is in the business of restoring failures. When people fail miserably, they sometimes think they are useless and worthless. This is the reason why some folks will not be saved or get right with the Lord. God has a
way of showing up to restore us and call us back into His service if we are willing. When that time comes, there are four responses Christians can make toward God’s call to us.

1. **We can RUN ahead before we are sent.** Moses at the age of 40 tried this.

2. **We can RETREAT after we have failed.** Moses fled to the desert. Insecurity drives us there.

3. **We can RESIST when we are called.** We can offer excuses for our sin. Some folks will not surrender even after a failure and they are miserable for the rest of their lives.

4. **We can REMAIN available while we wait and respond obediently when called.** This is a spiritually mature response. We should continue to prepare ourselves while waiting for the next opportunity to arise. Which way are you responding to the Lord’s call in your life?

**VI. THE ATTENTIVENESS OF THE LORD 3:7-8**

*And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*

The message of the Lord in verse seven and eight probably was thrilling to hear to Moses. Deliverance was coming! It was a message of good tidings. That is what the Gospel is, the good news of redemption. The pattern here is the pattern of God’s deliverance of mankind. Notice the pattern.

**A. The Prompting vs. 7**

*God said, “I have seen the affliction of my people.”* The Lord saw our affliction from our sins. Sin ruins lives. God also heard the cries by reason of the taskmasters. Sin is a hard taskmaster. We were slaves of sin before we were saved. The Lord also knew their sorrows. Sin’s sweetness soon sours. It robs us of our joy.
B. The Personal Intervention  vs. 8

The Lord said He would come to deliver them. This is a foreshadow of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ when He came down to earth to deliver us from the penalty of our sins by dying on the cross and rising again. Jesus came down from the glory place to the gory place, from the throne of Heaven to the throngs of hostile crowds, from the praise of adoring angels to the pessimism and persecution of an angry mob. Why?

C. The Purpose  vs. 8

God’s purpose was to bring them up out of the land of bondage, slavery, and affliction unto a good land. Jesus died to deliver us from sin so we might have eternal life in Heaven. He delivered us, brought us up and out of sin’s bondage so that we might also have life and have it more abundantly. His motivation is He loves us. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance.

VII. THE ASSIGNMENT  3:9-10

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. [10] Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

The greatest test of Moses’ life comes at this point. This was the third crisis in his life. The first was at his birth, the second was when he refused the privileges of being a prince of Egypt and the third was when he was called to make an important decision demanding total commitment. He had to be totally yielded for this assignment. Moses is about to learn what he could not accomplish by force, he could accomplish by faith.

One of the hardest things anyone can do is go back to the place and the people where he failed. God is asking Moses to do this. Let me ask, “Is He asking you to do the same thing? Are there people or even a church that you need to return to and seek their forgiveness for your offensive actions or sin?” If so, then do it! Paul stressed this principle
repeatedly.
* Acts 24:16- And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

When Moses attempted to deliver His people earlier, he was asking God to be on his side. God is now asking Moses to be on His side. We want God on our side when really we should be on His. Notice that the Lord promised deliverance from Egypt and entrance into the new land. He commissions Moses to accomplish the first task of going to Pharaoh and confronting him about releasing the Jews. God knew that Moses would not enter into the Promised Land. Beloved, God knows your future. Entrust it to His care.

John “Tex” Teixeria spent his life as a fisherman in the channels of the Hawaiian Islands. On a deceptively calm night in 1967, Tex guided his 40-foot fishing boat toward the beach of an otherwise inaccessible canyon on the north side of Molokai. He had agreed to allow some friends to go ashore, using the fishing vessel’s small skiff, for some wild pig hunting while he and the rest of the crew did some night fishing.

Returning to the rendezvous spot early the next morning, the men found that conditions had changed. Huge waves ripped through the channel and crashed into the boat, nearly capsizing it and (unbeknownst to the crew) fatally weakening it. The fate of the small skiff full of hunters waiting on the shoreline was immediately apparent. Its bottom had been torn off by the rugged lava rocks.

With great difficulty, a tow line was brought to the shivering hunters who, while holding on to inflated plastic tarps, and an ice chest filled with their kill, were dragged by the boat’s winch through the surf to the vessel. When all the men were safely on board, the huge craft gunned away from the island. Exhausted after fishing all night and the adventure of the morning, Tex went below deck to sleep. A few hours later he was awakened by his panicked friends. The boat was sinking.

By the time Tex got to the deck, there was nothing he could do except order everyone into the water. Without the skiff, the eight men on board the fishing vessel had only life jackets and inner tubes to keep them afloat. Bobbing in the water, Tex remembered the ice chests full of freshly slaughtered game and fish. He knew that sharks would be in the area within minutes, so he encouraged the men to paddle as fast as they could away from the sunken boat.

All eight of the men knew they were in big trouble. The currents in the channel were sweeping them into the open ocean. But as night
Chapter 6...The Burning Bush....3:1-10

approached it seemed that their salvation was near. Bouncing up and down in the inky sea, the men thought they could make out the lights of a boat in the distance. Two of the men decided to swim toward the lights. It turned out that they weren’t boat lights at all. They were the airplane warning lights on the top of Koko Head, a far-distant mountain. The two men were never seen again.

By morning the situation had worsened. One of the inner tubes was losing air. The men had no food or water. The planes that passed overhead could not see them bobbing in the middle of the Pacific. It was then that Tex decided to call a prayer meeting. No one objected. With all hope gone, the group of tough, self-sufficient sailors had only one place to turn. They huddled together in their life jackets and inner tubes and, with loud cries, pleaded for God to intervene.

The moment the last man finished his prayer, Tex looked up. “A stick!” he cried out. The stick was standing vertically out of the water. It appeared to be a fishing buoy or a marker of some kind. If they could get to it, Tex reasoned, someone might come along to check it and find them. At the very least, it might support the ones who were losing air in their inner tubes. Using all of their energy to fight the current, the men paddled toward the stick. Suddenly the stick began to move rapidly in their direction. The six men stopped paddling, stunned and puzzled. Seconds later there was an incredible whoosh that seemed to pull the ocean out from under them. At the same moment, a monster emerged from the depths. It was a nuclear submarine. The hatch opened and the captain of the sub came to the observation deck as the men in the ocean screamed wildly. They had been rescued.

Huddled below deck and nursing hot coffee, the six tired survivors listened awestruck as the captain explained that it was against orders for him to surface his sub anywhere outside of Pearl Harbor and that he expected to face disciplinary action for what he had done. “But,” he explained softly, “something beyond my control told me to go to the surface. I can’t explain it. Something just told me to bring the sub up, right then and there. I did...and there you were.”

Beloved, just like Tex, we need to learn to trust our lives with the Lord and put our life in the hands of God in the good times as well as in the bad times. God knows your future. Learn to trust Him day by day. Never underestimate His power and ability to do the impossible.
Chapter 7

An Attack of Anxiety

Exodus 3:10-22

From the flames of a burning bush, God has spoken to Moses who has spent 40 years learning to unlearn what he learned in Egypt. Moses got out of Egypt, but God was still trying to get Egypt out of Moses. Egypt is a picture of the world’s values and beliefs. It says, “You are your own boss. Do your own thing. Everything depends upon you. Strive for power, success, look good, and make a good impression.”

Moses has been learning and will continue to learn that these things are neither true nor the most important things in life. He still, however, has a way to go, yet, and so do we. God’s greatest work after saving us is getting the philosophy of Egypt out of us and flushing from our lives worldly, carnal, selfish living.

The Lord has seen the affliction of His people who are slaves in Egypt. He notified Moses, “I am going to do something about it. I’m going to deliver them.” Now comes the catch, “I’m going to use you Moses to do it.” Imagine the following words in the language of a T.V. game show host, “Moses, you have hit the jackpot! You win the daily double! You have won a free vacation to luxurious Egypt, headquarters of world slavery and oppression! There in Egypt, you will enjoy a personal visit with the Pharaoh of Egypt himself and will experience his anger and death threats! For further adventure and excitement, you will be God’s personal representative for leading the exodus of three million Hebrews out of the hands of the Egyptian army. Isn’t that exciting Moses? What do you think about that?” If you were Moses, how would you respond? Put your toes in his sandals. How does Moses respond? Let’s look.
I. THE ANXIETY OF MOSES  3:10-11

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. [11] And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Moses at the age of 80 was not as eager as Moses at the age of 40. The solitude of the desert sobered him. Keeping sheep tamed Moses. Moses changed a great deal in forty years. His humility here reveals some of the big changes that occurred in his thinking from forty years earlier when he tried to deliver Israel on his own.

* Then he was full of self-confidence, now he is full of self-doubt.
* Then it was who I am, now it is who am I?
* Then he thought he was somebody; now he thinks he is a nobody.
* Then he had all the answers; now all he has are questions.
* Then he was courageous; now he is timid.
* Then he was speeding; now he is stalling.
* Then he thought he could conquer; now he thinks he will be conquered.
* Then he was willing but not ready; now he is ready but not willing.

Forty years in the desert as a shepherd had indeed changed the attitude of Moses. Moses has an anxiety attack and he starts producing excuses. He feels totally inadequate for the task at hand. He feels he is lacking in ability. His excuse to God's call is the first of five excuses he offers to the Lord.

"I'm not qualified!" is a common excuses that is used today. "I'm unable to do it!" is another one. Moses says, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Hebrews out of the land?" This statement reveals key insights. What Moses failed to understand here was the fact that when God calls, He always guarantees. He furnishes that which is needed to accomplish His will. Verse twelve reveals this truth.

II. THE ASSURANCE OF THE LORD  3:12

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

God’s response to the anxiety attack and apprehensions of Moses was, "I will be with thee." By the way, He will be
with you too.

*Hebrews 13:5- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

*Matthew 28:20- Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Moses is about to learn the lesson that God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Beloved, if God calls you to a task, big or small, He will equip you, encourage you, and accompany you. If the Lord impresses you to preach, be a missionary, witness to your neighbor, friends, or relatives, He will equip you for the task.

Moses had to learn the lesson that God's work is to be done by God's power, not man's. The Lord gives direction, desire, and power. We are His instruments. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Moses thought that since he was the instrument, all depended upon him rather than God. Everything doesn't depend on us, thank God. I never cease to be amazed at what GOD DOES in our church.

God didn't say to Moses, "This is what I want you to do, now do it!" Instead, the Lord said, "I'm going to do this, but I want to use you to do it." Beloved, Christians are not working for the Lord; the Lord is working IN us to accomplish His will. God's work is dependent upon His working in our lives. We are His vessels. The answers to our excuses of inability, "I can't do it. I'm not qualified" are found in Hebrew 13 and Philippians 4.

*Hebrews 13:20-21... Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, [21] Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. *Philippians 4:13-I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Are you allowing the Lord to work through you? Are you yielded, obedient, or available to Him? If not, what is your petty excuse?

Notice carefully that God told Moses that he was to "bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Note it was only "out" not "unto." The Lord had earlier promised that He, God, would "bring them up out of that land unto a good land" (Exodus 3:8), and He would later repeat this promise in verse 17. Here we want to especially note that Moses was only to bring the children of Israel "out" of Egypt. Nothing is
said about Moses bringing them "unto" Canaan, for the extent of Moses' command was limited to "OUT."

There is a hidden treasure of truth here. Moses represents the law of God. God’s law cannot save us and get us to Heaven. It will not bring us into the heavenly land. It can point out what is wrong and help take us out of the Egyptian lifestyle, but it will not save us and give us victory.

The person who would lead Israel into the Promised Land of blessing was Joshua. Fittingly, Joshua's name is the Hebrew equivalent of the name... Jesus. All of this is a wonderful picture of what Christ does for us. It is Jesus (grace), not Moses (law), who helps us to live the victorious Christian life in the Promised Land. That victory begins with our salvation given to us by the grace of God. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit indwells us and enables us to live the victorious Christian life.

III. THE ANXIETY ABOUT ANSWERS 3:13

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

Excuse number two of Moses was, "What shall I say? What is my message?" Moses is afraid of looking foolish if he can’t answer their questions. He is afraid that he will not have all the answers. The same excuses are offered today for the lack of service to Christ: "I don’t know what to say. I don’t know the answers." Moses’ first concern was "Who am I?" Now his second concern is "Who are You?" Moses is concerned here about God's name. He was concerned about telling them the identity of the One who sent him on his mission.

* Psalm 9:10 - And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.
IV. THE ANSWER FROM GOD  3:14-15

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. [15] And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

God’s answer to Moses’ question about His identity is wrapped up in one answer. “I AM sent me unto you.” The two words “I AM” contain a treasure chest of truth. I AM reveals God as the Self-Existent One. He always exists, in the past, the present, and the future. This word for “I Am,” hayah {haw-yaw}, contains each tense of the verb “to be.” I was, I am, and I shall always continue to be. This truth is taught in Hebrews 13.

* Hebrews 13:8- Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal “I AM.”

* John 8:58- Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.
* John 11:25- Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
* John 15:1- I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
* Revelation 1:8- I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

God said, “I AM that I AM.” God had the ability to become to His people whatever their needs required. God was declaring “I will be to you whatever you need. I am everywhere all the time, within, without, before, behind, above, beneath, past, present, and future.” That was the message. I was, I am, I shall be in charge of all things. All I can say right here is “Glory!” What a truth!

* Psalm 8:1 - O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
* If in darkness, Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”
* If you need righteousness, Jesus said, “I am the Lord of righteousness.”
* If you are spiritually, emotionally hungry, Christ said, “I am the Bread of Life.”
* If you are defenseless and need care, the Lord said, “I am the Good
Shepherd.”
* If you need peace, our Savior said, “I am the Prince of Peace.”
* If you need salvation, Jesus made it clear, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”
* If you need security, Jesus said, “I am the door.”

Everything that God is, His being and attributes, are wrapped up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Colossians 2:9-10... For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. [10] And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

The Lord Jesus Christ is the great “I AM.” This has been veiled in the English translations of the Bible. They have obscured the "I AM" relationship with Christ by doing such things as adding the word "he" and by ignoring the order of the Greek words in some of the texts. Some notable examples of this problem are in the following verses.

1. John 4:26- Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Here in Christ's experience with the woman at the well, He plainly identifies Himself as "I AM" though the English translation obscures it. The woman made reference to the Messiah in verse 25, and Jesus in response to her said that He was the Messiah. In verse 26 of the Greek text, Jesus said to her, "I am who am speaking to you.” The obscuring of the "I AM" emphasis here is done by inserting "he" and by an unwarranted separating of "I" from "am."

2. John 6:20- But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

This passage is about Christ coming to the disciples in the midst of the Sea of Galilee during a storm. They did not know who He was and were afraid according to verse 19, but He calmed their fears by saying in the Greek text, "I am; fear not." This is a very powerful statement. The disciples missed the significance of it, but so did the English translators. They completely obscure the "I am" reference by leaving out the "am" and translating, "It is I; be not afraid."

3. John 8:24- I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Again the adding of the "he" to the text by the translators obscures the significance of Christ's statement. He plainly said He is the "I am" and that if you do not believe that fact, the consequences are eternal judgment. It is a personal witness to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. John 8:28- Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself;
but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Like the verse above, Christ also plainly states that He is the "I am." The "he" is in italics in the English translations and, therefore, does not belong in the text. Take out the "he" and the "I am" emphasis is more clearly seen as it should be.

5. John 18:6- As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

The most powerful demonstration of the "I AM" identity of Christ which is obscured by the translators is found in John 18. The scene takes place at the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. The Lord asked the arresters "Whom seek ye?" They told Him they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth. Then our English versions say that Christ answered, "I am he," but the word "he" is in italics. It is not in the Greek text. To insert it veils the identity and impact of the name "I AM." This is especially noted in verse six which says, "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." If you take out the inserted and italicized "he," you have the powerful effect of the Divine name "I AM." When Jesus said, "I AM," all his arresters fell to the ground, but the arresters, so blind in their sin, got up off the ground and continued to arrest Him. This demonstrates the blinding effect of sin.

God in the flesh, lived, died, arose from the grave, and is coming again. This is our message. Christ is all you need. Your spiritual growth is not by addiction, but by nutrition. You grow from the inside out. Nothing needs to be added to the Lord Jesus. He is the fulness of God. You will grow in grace when you let Him work in your life, change you, mold you, and make you.

V. TH ASSIGNMENT 3:16-17

Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: [17] And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

God's assignment for Moses was to deliver to His people a very specific, definite message that the Lord has "visited" them. The word "visit" is from the Hebrew word paqad (paw-kad').
The verb *paqad* has traditionally been rendered "to visit." This only partially communicates the point or meaning of the word. It is a very powerful word. **When God "visited" someone, it meant that He intervened in their lives to change their circumstances or their destiny.** When He visited the Amalekites, He destroyed them. When He visited Sarah, He provided the long awaited child. *Paqad* refers to God's active involvement in human affairs for blessing or for cursing. Here it would mean that God had begun to act to deliver the Israelites from bondage and give them the blessings of the covenant. He was working behind the scenes already even though they were not aware of it. He does the same thing for us too. What a comfort for us.

*Isaiah 65:24* - *And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

VI. THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ALMIGHTY 3:18-22

The Lord affirms several things in this portion of Scripture.

A. Respect for Moses 3:18

*And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.*

God affirmed that they would listen to Moses. One important reason it was necessary to go three days' journey to worship Jehovah instead of worshiping Him right in the land is that "the Israelites could not offer their proper sacrificial animals in the presence of the Egyptians without the risk of provoking a burst of religious opposition, since among the animals some of them were regarded sacred by the Egyptians and under no circumstances to be killed. The fanaticism of the Egyptians on such occasions led to wars, tumults, and massacres."
B. The Resistance & Refusal of Pharaoh  3:19

And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

God said to Moses, “I am sure that Pharaoh will not let you go! He is not going to give you the time of day, except by my hand.” God in His foreknowledge knew that Pharaoh would have a hard heart when Moses confronted him. The Lord knows the future. God, however, did not harden Pharaoh’s heart at the beginning of the confrontation, as we will see later in the book of Exodus in chapters 7-11.

Pharaoh will harden his own heart at first. God is holy and not the author of sin. If God made Pharaoh to sin and resist God’s command, and then judged him for it, then God would be unjust. He isn’t! As the plagues progress in chapters 7-11, the Lord on occasion, hardened Pharaoh as an act of judgment. This means that He gave Pharaoh courage to continue his own resistance toward God. Yet later, the Lord gave Pharaoh more opportunities to change his mind and repent.

The Lord knew the choices that Pharaoh would make and Pharaoh’s hardness and bitterness would play a role in God’s plan for the deliverance of His people. Let me make it clear that God did not initially make Pharaoh hard-hearted. Pharaoh chose to be this way on his own. The Lord knew he would have this attitude in his heart and used the king to fulfill His will.

C. The Ruin & Rout of Egypt  3:20a

And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof:

God promises to solve the problem of the king’s resistance. A firm hand would be needed to deal with the king and God promised to show His hand to Pharaoh.

D. The Release from Egypt  3:20b

“....and after that he will let you go.”
E. The Reward & Recompense for Israel  3:21-22

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: [22] But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

God promised His people several things.

1. Favor instead of disgust and disdain.
2. Fullness instead of destitution.
3. Funding instead of being defrauded.

The women would “borrow” from their neighbors. The word “borrow” carries the idea of collecting or demanding back wages (for several hundred years of work). They are not going to borrow these things with the intent of paying them back. They are going to ask for what they rightly earned. God was going to care for His people through their enemies.

* Proverbs 16:7- When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

The blessings of the Lord can be used or abused. Later, in Exodus 32, we find that His blessings will be abused to form a golden calf idol. In Exodus 35, they will be used for the construction of the Tabernacle. How do you use God’s blessings in your life? Are you grateful for what the Lord has done for you and given you?

The nursing aides for an 89-year-old man planned a surprise party for him. This active and alert retired doctor had his leg amputated two years earlier. It had been a struggle to adjust to living his life with only one leg, spending most of his time in a wheelchair. Family, friends and volunteers filled the brightly decorated room.

He looked at the group and signaled a sweet six-year-old girl, the grandchild of one of his aides, to come over to him. He reached out and put his arm around her. He introduced her and announced, "She is my mascot!" He went on to tell the group assembled that he would never forget the first time she visited him. She came in, looked at him and his folded up pant leg in the wheelchair, and in her charming voice asked, "Where is your prosthesis?" He was astounded she knew the word. She showed him her prosthesis and told him her story.
When she was three years old, a man broke into her home, killed her 17-month-old brother and, with a machete, cut off her leg. He said this young girl taught him not to complain and to be grateful for the 88 years during which he had two legs. Are you grateful for what God has given you and done for you?

God is pleased with gratitude. He gets so little of it.
Chapter 8

The Sign of the Stick & the Snake

Exodus 4:1-5

A family was awakened by their smoke detector in the middle of the night to discover that their house was on fire. The father ran into the upstairs bedroom of his children and carried his eighteen-month-old baby in his arms while dragging his four-year-old son by the hand. They were halfway down the stairs when the little boy remembered that he had left his teddy bear in the bedroom, so he broke free from his father’s hand and ran back to the bedroom to retrieve it. In the furore and confusion, the father didn’t notice that his son wasn’t with him until he got outside. By now the little boy was trapped by the flames and smoke in his second-story bedroom. Smoke swirled around him and he coughed and cried out from the upstairs window, “Daddy, Daddy! Help me!” His father yelled from below, “Jump out of the window, Andy! I’ll catch you!” In the darkness and smoke, the little boy yelled back, “But Daddy! I can’t see you!” Daddy shouted back, “That’s okay, son. I can see you! Jump!”

It’s jumping time for Moses. God has informed Moses that He is going to deliver the Hebrews and that Moses is going to be His instrument, His man, in the deliverance of His people. Moses had an anxiety attack and began to offer a series of excuses to the Lord about God’s calling on his life. More or less he is saying, “Lord, I can’t see you!” God tells him, “I can see you through the smoke so go ahead and jump!” God has promised to meet his needs and give him victory, yet, he is still struggling with doubt and disbelief. Sound familiar? We do the same thing too sometimes, don’t we? In verse one of this chapter, Moses offers the third of five excuses. Let’s take a look.
I. THE CONCERN ABOUT CREDENTIALS 4:1

And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.

Moses tells the Lord, “Your people won’t believe me or obey me.” Moses is out and out contradicting God here. He is saying in essence, “Lord, your word is not true.” God, however, said they would obey him.

*Exodus 3:18a- And they shall hearken to thy voice:....

Moses was a sensitive person. He has tasted the bitter dish of rejection and doesn’t want to taste it again. He fears ridicule, a lack of prestige and acceptance. He doesn’t want to get egg on his face and be embarrassed. He is a worried, insecure man. Do you understand what he is feeling? We often build up events in our minds and then panic over what might go wrong.

Fear and worry tend to cloud our thinking and they create doubt in the promises of God. Worry makes us question God’s Word and makes us wonder if His Word works. When Moses was 40, he had considerable credentials. After 40 years in the desert, he had no credentials with the Egyptians. He was only a shepherd who was considered a nobody in Egypt. He had gone from a prince to a pauper in the eyes of the Egyptians. Authority was needed for Moses’ task, but he needed to determine whose authority was the most important, his or God’s. The same holds true for us. Are we going to run the show or trust God and let Him lead our lives?

There are several insights that we will note here. First of all, we will note the lesson of God’s grace. Moses was human just like you and me. He was timid, hesitant, fearful, unbelieving, and rebellious, yet God used this man in spite of his weaknesses. He was not the only one who had flaws. He used a belligerent Balaam to give one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament. He used a stubborn Samson to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

If the Lord were to wait for a perfect man to be used by Him, He would go on waiting until the end of time. His strength is made perfect in our weaknesses. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. Beloved, realize that God does want to use you for His glory and service. He knows you, your strengths and weaknesses, and He has a plan and purpose for your life if you are willing to follow it. You are
not a blob in a sea of faces. You are special to Him.

Another lesson Moses needed to learn was he needed to arrive at a balance in his life between self-confidence and God-confidence. Self-confidence says, “I can or can’t do this.” God-confidence says, “I can do all things through Christ.” Self-confidence relies on personal schemes, plans, or abilities. God-confidence relies on God’s power, faith, trust in His Word, and His abilities. God-confidence is keeping your chin up; self or over-confidence is sticking your neck out. What you don’t think you can do, the Lord can help you accomplish when you rely upon Him.

Moses also needed to learn the lesson of looking at life from God’s point of view. He failed to see what God was attempting to accomplish in his life in spite of his personal failures. Our failures and fears tend to blind us too.

II. THE CHECK-UP  4:2

And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

God responded to Moses’ concerns by giving him some object lessons to ease his worry, escalate his faith, and exhibit His power. The Lord asked, “What’s in your hand Moses?” He replied, “A rod.” The question was not asked to give God information He did not have. The Lord knows everything, and knew what was in Moses' hand. The question was asked to direct Moses' attention to what he had in his hand. If we are going to do anything for God, we must be willing to give to God what is in our hand. If we are stingy and unwilling, we will hinder God's work, and miss out on opportunities of serving and blessing others and being blessed by God.

The rod in Moses’ hand was his shepherd crook or staff which was normally about three to six feet long. It certainly was nothing special to look at, and Moses saw nothing special in it, but the Lord did. When it was yielded to God, it would do much for God. God would use this insignificant rod to perform miracles involving snakes, plagues, parting the Red Sea, and bringing forth water out of rock.

We make the mistake, many times, in appraising what is in our hands as insignificant. We think that our abilities, talents or gifts are of no value to the Lord, but they are very valuable. God's use of Moses' rod demonstrates that He can use insignificant things to do great work for
Him if they are yielded to His control. On the other hand, great abilities can be wasted if they are not surrendered to Christ. What are the ordinary things in your life — your voice, a pen, a hammer, a broom, a musical instrument?

The question "What is that in thine hand?" can also be a question of examination or probing. Do you have something in your hand that you should not have? Do you have something in your hand that will defile you, hurt you, cause trouble for yourself or others, and dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ? Are there drugs, alcohol, pornography, or another man’s wife in your hands?

III. THE COMMANDS 4:3-5

God gives several commands to Moses concerning the rod that he carried. The commands may have not made sense to Moses and were difficult to obey, yet, that is what Moses did. By so doing, he learned some important lessons that would help him for his coming task.

A. Cast the Rod on the Ground 4:3

*And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.*

Moses was to throw the rod on the ground. When he did this, it turned into a snake. He responded like most of us would, he ran. Obviously, it really was a snake! The fact that it became a snake is significant since the serpent was worshiped in Egypt.

The cobra was on the headdress of the Pharaoh of Egypt. The cobra was the emblem of the goddess Buto, patroness of Lower Egypt. The cobra, with its encircling wings and disc of the sun, represented the indissoluble union of Pharaoh and his two kingdoms. The War Crown of the Pharaoh had blue leather studded with gold, and was encircled by the Uraeus or cobra symbol. So the serpent was revered in this country, being honored by adorning the king’s crowns. It was then a symbol of Pharaoh. The fact that the rod turned to a snake is significant. When Moses ran from the snake, we are reminded of his flight from Egypt.

Another thought we will address here. When Moses let go of what he was grasping and let God do what He wanted to do, the Lord then took something that was ordinary and turned it into something that was extra-
ordinary. He took something that was dead and made it come alive. Does not the Lord do this for us? When we surrender our lives and abilities to the Lord, He takes those things and makes something extra-ordinary and alive out of them.

B. Catch the Snake  4:4-5

And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

God instructed Moses to pick up the snake. What! Run that by me again! God wanted Moses to pick up the snake and he was to pick it up by the tail, not the head. Moses courageously, obediently, and trustingly picked up the snake. It changed into his rod again when he did this. One message from this incident was Moses needed to return to Egypt, confront the Pharaoh, and God would restore him just as he restored the rod. There are a number of other lessons and insights that are found in this miracle that we will address.

The rod was a shepherd’s rod. It gave him support as he walked. It comforted him when he was weary. It defended him when he was in danger. The rod was the extension of the owner’s right arm. It was a symbol of strength, power, and authority. This rod of Moses was a symbol of God’s spoken Word. It was the extended activity of the mind of God and His will with men as we will soon see. The rod implied the authority of God. It had the power of, “Thus saith the Lord.” The rod of God today, the tool of His power, authority, and mind is the Word of God....the written Word and the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the rod comforted the shepherd, our Lord and the Bible comfort us. As the shepherd would use the rod to keep the sheep from dangerous situations and poisonous weeds, God’s Word and the Holy Spirit warn us of the dangers and destruction of sin and the poisonous philosophies of this world.

When Moses cast the rod to the ground, and ran from the serpent, we are reminded of Christians who cast the Bible down in their own lives and become fearful and defeated by the old serpent, Satan. Beloved, we are to put on God’s armor in our lives. Without it, we are powerless. We also need to understand that God’s commands are not to be feared. God
does what is best for us and what will bring honor and glory to Him. Another thought from this incident is shepherds were despised in Egypt. The rod of Moses would be a constant reminder of his despicableness to others, especially to the Egyptians. Paul reminded us that we would be rejected by this world too. As the Egyptians would be offended by the shepherd’s rod, this world takes offense at God’s Word. * 1 Corinthians 4:13 - Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

The rod was a symbol of foolishness to the Egyptians, yet, God used it as a tool of His authority. The Bible continues to be mocked today, yet it is the authority on life and eternal life. The Bible is the authority on creation, history, science, finances, health, marriage, child training, government, salvation, and future events. No matter who mocks it, it does not change because it is truth. Evolutionists can propagate their nonsense, but it does not change that fact that their Creator is God, whether they like it or not.

Another lesson from this story is the fact that taking the serpent by the tail was very dangerous. Usually you take a snake by its head. Doing what God wants us to do takes courage. Courage comes, however, from resting in Him and putting your confidence in the Lord. The lesson here is God’s ways do not always seem logical to us, yet, we are to trust Him by faith. We are not to question His Word, just obey it. All throughout the Bible we find verses that may seem illogical, yet, obedience to them brings blessings.

* Bless those who persecute you.
* Love your enemies.
* Increase by decreasing.
* Be the greatest by being the servant.
* Get by giving.
* Surrender to the Lord if you want freedom and victory.
* Strength comes through weakness.
* Exaltation comes through humility.
* The first place comes by being last.

The entire purpose of this miracle was that God would be manifested and glorified and that the people would understand that the Lord was about to do something very special for them. He knew what they were going through and was going to do something about it. He wanted to strengthen their faith and show them that He was truly watching over them.
Once upon a time a family of mice lived in a large piano. They loved their piano world and the music that often came to them, filling all the dark spaces with sound and harmony. At first the mice were impressed by it. They drew comfort and wonder from the thought that there was someone who made the music. Although this someone was invisible to them, he felt close to them. They loved to think about the Unseen Player whom they could not see.

Then one day a daring mouse climbed up part of the piano and returned in a very thoughtful mood. He had made a discovery which revealed how the music was made. Wires were the secret. He had found tightly stretched wires of graduated lengths which trembled and vibrated. Now the mice had to revise all their old beliefs. Only the most conservative mice could believe any longer in the Unseen Player.

Later, another mouse explorer returned from an expedition with yet a new discovery about the origins of the music. Hammers were the true secret! There were dozens of hammers that danced and leaped upon the wires! This was a more complicated theory, but it all went to show that they lived in a purely mechanical universe. The Unseen Player came to be thought of as a myth. Meanwhile .... the Unseen Player continued to play.

Beloved, no matter how scary life may get, God is watching over you and me. The illogical, contradictory, anti-Christ theories of men may endeavor to discredit God as the Creator and Savior of the universe, but those theories still do not change the fact that Jesus is God. Every knee will bow to Him one day.

*Psalm 34:15* - The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

*Philippians 2:8-11*... And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. [9] Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: [10] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; [11] And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Chapter 9
The Leprous Hand
Exodus 4:6-8

If a millionaire walked into your church today and said, “I want you to go to the mission field and preach the Gospel and tell others about the Lord. Your needs will be taken care of completely. You will lack for nothing.” Would you go? In essence, this is what happened to Moses at the burning bush. This mission was to lead Israel out of Egyptian bondage. God promised to meet every need he had. The great I AM would be to Moses what he needed.

The backside of the desert sobered Moses, but he was struggling in faith, courage, and obedience. He still had a lot of rough edges that needed to be knocked off. Don’t we need our rough edges knocked off too? Things like impatience, worry, fear, pride, greed, jealousy, selfishness, and anger need to be removed.

Moses offered one excuse after another in resistance to God’s call.

1. The excuse concerning ability.
   * Exodus 3:11- And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? God’s response was, “I’ll be with you.” He will be with us too.
   * Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

2. The excuse concerning answers.
   * Exodus 3:13- And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? God’s response to his question, “I AM. All that you need, I am and will be.”
   * Colossians 2:9-10... For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. [10] And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:
3. The excuse concerning authority.
* Exodus 4:1- And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. God responded with a series of signs or object lessons to confirm the authority of His message, mission, and to strengthen Moses’ faith. If Moses is to convince his own people, he has to be convinced first. If we are going to win others to Christ, we must be convinced about Heaven, Hell, and God’s power to save us.

The second object lesson that the Lord used to strengthen the faith of Moses was the sign of the leprous hand. Notice Exodus 4 again.
* Exodus 4:6-8 ... And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. [7] And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. [8] And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

This sign is also rich in insights and applications for you and me. The immediate lesson for Moses was to teach him about the power of God. God can inflict disease and deliver a person of it within a moment. The Lord was saying, “I can deliver Israel too! Moses, your words will have authority because of the power I will give you and because your message is my message.”

The reason why the message of Jesus Christ has power and authority is because it is God’s message, God’s Word, and God’s Spirit who works in the hearts of sinners. Men have resisted the Bible throughout history. They have tried to bury it, burn it, banish it, butcher it, and blaspheme it from existence, but the Word of God still thrives!

There are some great treasures found in this story. Notice again that the hand was afflicted with leprosy. Leprosy was a dreaded disease. It begins with crusty scabs that are usually not larger than a pin’s point, covered with white hairs. These spots rapidly spread. When it has gained ground, the whole skin appears glossy white on the forehead, nose, and the rest of the body. It affects the entire body. The nails of the hands and feet eventually fall off. The eyelids bend backward and the hair falls out. External senses are weakened and the eyes lose their brightness. The vision of the leper is affected. It was believed that only
God could heal a leper.

Because of these symptoms, leprosy is a picture of the destructiveness of sin. Sinful habits may start out small, but rapidly become addictive. Sin affects the entire body and person. It affects our head....what we think. It affects our eyes and what we see and our feet...where we go. Every step in sin is a step backward. For thirty years Mrs. Doreen Burley of Rawstenstall, England, polished her strange and lovely ornament. She let her grandchildren play with it, always returning it to its prominent place on the mantel. In March of 1988, she learned something about her ornament. It was a live bomb! Such is the danger of sin. It can devastate our lives at any moment.

* Sin built Hell. It produced the worm that never dies.
* Sin kindled the fire that shall never be quenched.
* Sin made the outer darkness where no ray of light shall never enter.
* Sin is a viper that fastens its fangs in your soul.
* Sin is a whirlpool where the soul is swept away.
* Sin is a stoker that feeds the hot fires of passion.
* Sin is a siren which lures men with her embrace and drags them into the surging sea of ruin.
* Sin is an earthquake, tearing away the foundations of our lives.
* Sin is quicksand sucking the soul down, down, and down.
* Sin is not libeled by any of these dreadful representations.

Our sin affects our senses, making us dull to dangerous activities. It has a numbing effect upon us. It affects a person’s spiritual vision.

* 2 Corinthians 4:3-4... But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: [4] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

God instructed Moses to put his hand in his bosom. This is the place of a person’s heart or what he is. The hand represents the person’s activity, what he does.

* Luke 6:45- A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

It was not the hand that affected the heart. It was the heart that affected the hand. The hand does the bidding of the heart. Cleansing must begin in a person’s heart.

* Proverbs 4:23 - Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the
issues of life.

You cannot cleanse your own heart, but the Lord Jesus can. A cleansed heart leads to a cleansed life. The lesson of the leprous hand also reminds us of the fact that whatever is hidden in the heart will come out into the open sooner or later. You cannot hide your sin. For this reason, we must confess it to the Lord and forsake it (1 John 1:9).

For Moses, God was illustrating that Israel was in a leprous condition and the Lord had the power to cleanse the nation and restore it. He would restore their freedom, but also He would restore them spiritually and deliver them from idolatry by displaying His power and exposing the fallacy of worshiping the idols of Egypt.

One can also see a symbolic application here regarding Moses' attempts in trying to free the nation of Israel. His first attempt was like the first time he put his hand into his bosom—it came out leprous. Moses' first attempt to free Israel was a failure and turned out to be very ugly. Like a leper, he had to flee to the desert and be separated from his people, but God is now restoring him as the deliverer. His second attempt will turn out better. The second time he put his hand into his bosom, it resulted in the complete healing of his hand of leprosy. So it will be in Moses' second attempt to free his people. He will succeed completely in freeing Israel from their Egyptian bondage.

God was also illustrating that the hand which holds the rod of God's power, must be a clean hand. Clean hands indicate a clean heart. Christians are to live holy, godly lives, especially the men who preach God’s Word. Brethren, if you preach the Word and hold God’s rod in your hands, then make sure your life is clean! God was telling Moses, “I want your hand and your heart.” If you could put your hand into your heart, would it come out leprous?

In Chicago's Field Museum are skulls from ancient Indians. Some are called trepanned skulls because they have holes bored in them. Primitive people used to cut holes in the skulls of living people to let the demons out. We know now that evil cannot be evicted from us quite that easily. The war that is waged in our heart takes place almost every day. Our flesh and the Holy Spirit wrestle like two bears.

In Bulgaria, the head movements for yes and no are just the opposite of those with which we are familiar. A nod of the head means “no.” Shaking the head from side to side means “yes.” Sometimes when we are tempted we say “no” but mean “yes.” We say “no” with our lips but say “yes” in our hearts and this is what gets us into trouble. God help us to be yielded to Him each day.
Chapter 10
Let Someone Else Do It!

Exodus 4:9-17

Moses has been concerned about the authority of his message if he should face God's people. God endeavored to encourage Moses and elevate his faith with several object lessons to demonstrate His power and authority. A rod was changed into a serpent and then back to a rod again. A hand was turned to leprosy and then immediately restored again. According to verse nine, God would give a third sign of turning water to blood.

*Exodus 4:9- And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.*

If unbelief is persisted upon, it will indeed experience judgment. This sign warns God's people about not believing Moses. The certainty of judgment is emphasized in this ninth verse by the two words "shall become." The "water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." The Hebrew from which "shall become" is translated can be rendered "shall be, even shall be, it shall assuredly be so." Going along with this rendering, the 1611 King James Version had in the margin of its original edition, "Shall be and shall be." Yes, judgment is definite when men persist in unbelief.

The questions we will ask at this point are these, "Is Moses convinced now? Is he ready to obey God and go to Egypt?" Surely you would think he is convinced by the miracles that have been performed. Let's take a look.
I. THE RESISTANCE  4:10

*And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*

Moses proceeded to offer excuse number four to God’s call. So far he has used the excuses that pertain to:

* Ability...Who am I? I can’t do this.
* Answers... What will I say?
* Authority... They won’t believe me.
* Articulation is the next excuse given here. I can’t talk good.

Spending forty years in the desert, Moses’ Hebrew and Egyptian may have gotten rusty. He claims that he can’t talk well or never has been able to do so, but Acts 7 indicates he was a powerful speaker.

*Acts 7:22- And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

Is there a contradiction here? I don’t think so. I think Moses is doing everything he can to get out of this assignment, even denying his own abilities. He doesn’t want to do this job at all and is not being honest about what he can do. He may have been a perfectionist, equating his rustiness of speech as inability. Later in the book of Exodus, we find that he does just fine in the speech department.

Moses’ doubting heart placed more confidence in an eloquent tongue than in the One who created his tongue. God was not looking for diction, but dedication; not oratory, but obedience; not a fancy speaker, but a follower of Him; not articulation, but availability; not a powerful speech, but a person, a man yielded to God. This was a key truth that God wanted to teach Moses. He was looking for a man yielded to Him.

*Ezekiel 22:30- And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.*

**Elocuence is not a criteria for preaching the Word.** There is nothing wrong in being eloquent, but it is not a requirement. I should know because I am far from eloquent. I am not interested in five dollar words that no one can understand. I believe in keeping your words and message simple. Let me also say that we should do our best to use the right kind of language and speech and not be sloppy. As we look at Moses, we find that he did eventually stand in the gap for his people.

*Psalm 106:23- Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not*
Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

While men seek better methods, God is seeking better men and women who are mighty in Word, faith, love, prayer, and purity.

* 2 Chronicles 16:9- For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. The word “perfect” is from the Hebrew word *shalem* {shaw-lame’} which means “totally devoted and obedient; at peace.”

The Lord is not seeking men and women with great abilities, but for men and women He can use with His ability and work through their lives.

* Ephesians 6:10- Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

* Zechariah 4:6- Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

If your excuse is, “I can’t speak well,” then you need to learn from the Apostle Paul.

* 2 Corinthians 3:5- Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

* Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

When Moody was preaching in England, a university student came up to him after the service and said, “Mr. Moody, do you realize you made eighteen grammatical mistakes in your sermon today?” Moody quickly replied, “Yes, I may have made that many mistakes, but listen young man, I use all the grammar I have for the Lord. What are you doing with your grammar?” That is a good question for us. Paul made it clear that eloquent speech wasn’t a requirement for service to the Lord.

* 1 Corinthians 2:1- And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

* 2 Corinthians 11:6- But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things. The word “rude” comes from the Greek word *idiotes* which forms our English word “idiot.” This word “rude” means “unskilled, uneducated, unlearned.” Paul did his best for the Lord and was willing to use his tongue for the Lord. He may have not been eloquent, but he
was obedient and bold for Christ to speak up for Him with courage and compassion for the lost. Are you?

II. THE REMINDER OF THE LORD  4:11-12

And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? [12] Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

God reminded Moses who made his mouth and tongue. The Lord assured him He would give him the words to say. Moses complained of having a slow mouth and tongue. God countered his excuse. He said, “I will teach you what to say.” The word “teach” is from the Hebrew word  יראת (yarah) which means “to throw, cast, pour like water,” or shoot like arrows.” God was saying, “I will speed up your speech and quickly give you the words to say. My help will be abundant, strengthening, and adequate.”

By the way, He can do this for you too. When God calls you to do something, He enables you to do it. The Lord had covered all the bases concerning the weaknesses of Moses. He has done the same with us. Our responsibility is to make sure that our message is right as preachers. Make sure you take time to get your message from God’s Word. Study and preach the Word!

* Psalm 32:8- I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.
* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
* Colossians 2:9-10...For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. [10] And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

This is the third time God has told Moses to begin his work of freeing His people. The two former times were recorded in Exodus chapter three, verses ten and sixteen. When God has to repeat His commands to us, it is an indication that we are being delinquent in obeying. The Lord does not have to repeat His orders to those who are busy doing them.

Notice that the Lord emphasizes the timing of doing His will is NOW! He is stressing to Moses the urgency to obey. Moses does not have time to waste. He needs to get busy and get on his way. Tardiness,
neglect, and delinquency in God's work is never productive. It only hinders—it never helps.

III. THE REQUEST 4:13

And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

The fifth excuse that Moses uses is the excuse concerning aptitude. The translation here is very vague and unclear. The Hebrew text reveals the rebellious attitude of Moses. It reads, “Get someone else to do it! Send anyone but me!” Moses is speaking out of disobedience and fear. He flat out doesn’t want to go back to Egypt. He feels he cannot do the job or he just won’t do it. Is this your excuse? Are you wanting someone else to do the job that needs to be done? Listen to what Paul says in Philippians 2.

* Philippians 2:13- For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Moses has a stubborn streak, but many times we are not any different than this leader. We need to understand that our stubbornness in obedience to the Lord is like a thief in the night, robbing us of God’s best and His blessings. How does stubbornness affect us? Let’s take a look.

* Stubbornness

1. It leads to a shortage and scarcity of faithfulness to the Lord and heading toward the wrong direction.
   * Psalm 78:8- And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.
   * Isaiah 46:12 Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness:
   * Jeremiah 7:24 - But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. The word “imagination” is from the Hebrew word sheriyruwth {sher-ee-rooth'} which means “stubbornness, hardness, or firmness.” This word comes from a Hebrew root word which means “twisted or firm, like a rope that is made hard and firm by being twisted.” When we are stubborn, our heart gets hard and twisted. It is knotted and bound in rebellion.
2. It leads to sorrow and is idolatrous.
* 1 Samuel 15:23- For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

The word “iniquity” is derived from the Hebrew word *aven* {aw-ven’} which means “the trouble or sorrow that comes from iniquity.” It comes from an unused Hebrew root word that not only means to pant or exert yourself, but to exert yourself in vain. A stubborn spirit leads to trouble, sorrow, and the dissatisfaction that comes from trying so hard to get your own way, but to no avail. Sorrow comes from also getting your own way and finding it does not make you happy or satisfy your needs. Many stubborn, selfish people have found that getting their own way does not leave them satisfied at all. They find that once they get their way, they are not happy when they presumed they would be. Many find they get what they want, but lose what they had.

3. It hurts our sweet fellowship and walk with God.
* Exodus 33:3- Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee: for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.
* Acts 7:51- Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

4. It is characterized by selfishness and self will.
* Judges 2:19- And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.
* Psalm 81:12- So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. The words “own hearts’ lust” can also be translated “stubborn heart or way.”
* Jeremiah 18:12- And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. The word “imagination” can also be rendered “stubbornness.”

5. It causes us to shun or reject wise counsel.
* 1 Kings 12:13- And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him. The word “roughly” is the same Hebrew word that is translated “stubborn.” Many children have felt the sting of their stubbornness as they have rejected the counsel of their parents or pastor.
6. It leads to suffering or punishment from the Lord.
* Romans 2:5 - But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. The word “hardness” can also be rendered “stubbornness.”

Beloved, if you are going to accomplish anything for God, you must come to a point where you take responsibility, take action, and go where the Lord wants you to go. You don’t wait around for someone else. You just do what the Lord wants you to do. God is your source of strength to accomplish His will for your life.
* John 15:5 - I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Some may say, “Moses was just being humble here.” No, I don’t think so. Take a look at verse fourteen now.

IV. THE RANCOR OF GOD 4:14a
And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses,...

The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses. Guess what? God gets angry with our excuses, resistance, reluctance and rebellion. Is the Lord angry with you because you have the “Let Someone Else Do It” attitude? Are you constantly giving the Lord your excuses? Why not yield and surrender your life to Him as that great gospel song proclaims.

All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give.
I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.
I surrender all, I surrender all,
All to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

V. THE RE-ENFORCEMENTS 4:14B-17
...and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. [15] And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. [16] And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. [17] And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.
God endeavored to strengthen the weak faith of Moses by sending Aaron to help him. Moses would go and Aaron would speak for Moses. This is the first mention of Aaron. He was fluent in Hebrew and Egyptian languages. Being a good speaker does not necessarily mean you are a good man. We will see down the road that this people-pleasing, golden-tongued Aaron would have some smooth words about how the golden calf was forged! Using Aaron was not God’s best for Moses as we will see. Beware of second best. When God gets angry and accommodates your wishes and stubbornness, you will soon wish you had never had those wishes. Moses eventually gained his boldness and confidence. He will speak on his own before Pharaoh.

* Exodus 8:9 - And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?

* Exodus 8:29 - And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.

* Exodus 9:29 - And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord’s.

**God knew the weaknesses of Aaron.** This is perhaps, why he wasn’t chosen in the first place. In Exodus 32, he allows the construction of a golden calf. For now, Moses needed Aaron and Aaron needed Moses. God has already been working behind the scenes on both ends. He knew what Moses would do and that he would need encouragement. God has brought Aaron into the desert to find Moses after forty years. The Lord was working on both ends. The Lord did the same thing in the New Testament. He brought Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch together and the Ethiopian was saved. In Acts 9, the Lord prepared Ananias and Saul to receive each other. God has a way of working at both ends of a situation all the time. May we go through life with the attitude, “Here am I Lord, send me” instead of “Let someone else do it.” May we have a servant’s attitude.

In his book, *Living Faithfully*, J. Allen Blair tells of a man who was struggling to get to Grand Central Station in New York City. The wind blew fiercely, and the rain beat down on him as he lugged his two heavy
suitcases toward the terminal. Occasionally he would pause to rest and
regain his strength before trudging on against the elements.

At one point he was almost ready to collapse, when a man suddenly
appeared by his side, took the suitcases, and said in a strangely familiar
voice, "We're going the same way. You look as if you could use some
help." When they had reached the shelter of the station, the weary
traveler, the renowned educator Booker T. Washington, asked the man,
"Please, sir, what is your name?" The man replied, "The name, my friend,
is Roosevelt. Teddy Roosevelt." Teddy Roosevelt was one of the
Presidents of the United States. Perhaps his servant's heart helped him
to become a great man. May the Lord help us all to have the attitude,
"Here am I Lord," instead of "Let someone else do it."
Chapter 11
The Bloody Bridegroom
Exodus 4:18-31

After offering all of his excuses to the Lord, God calms Moses’ reservations and fear by letting Aaron assist him and be a spokesman for Moses. Aaron is on his way to meet Moses. Moses is ready to return to Egypt.

I. THE REQUEST 4:18
And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

Moses showed consideration, gratefulness, respect, and deference as he returned to Jethro his father-in-law and asked permission to leave the clan and return to Egypt. It is interesting to note that Moses does not mention anything about God’s call to return to Egypt. He was 80 years old, yet showed respect for authority. Beloved, no matter what our age, we are to honor our parents. We are to respect the authorities in our own lives....pastors, teachers, police, employers, government officials and especially our parents.

* Ephesians 6:1- Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
II. THE RETURN 4:19-20

And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. [20] And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

This is the fourth time God has told Moses to go to Egypt. The first time God commanded Moses to go to Egypt to emancipate the Israelites is recorded in Exodus 3:10. Then repeated commands came in Exodus 3:16; 4:12, and here in our text. As we have said in the previous repeated commands, God does not generally repeat His commands to us if we are doing what He has told us to do. It is when we are delaying our obedience that He has to repeat His directions. Moses may have delayed because he was skiddish about going back to Egypt.

The Lord in His compassion endeavors to calm Moses' fears. He knows what Moses is worried about and is obviously concerned about seeing the Pharaoh. When God gives a word of encouragement regarding some particular problem, it is because that problem is present. He tells Moses that all the men that sought his life are dead and he should return to Egypt.

* Proverbs 29:25- The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

* Proverbs 14:26- In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

God assures us too, of His care over our lives and that we should trust in Him. He does not want us going through life living in fear and worrying all the time.

* Isaiah 41:10- Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

* Hebrews 13:5-6... Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. [6] So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Note that Moses' rod is called the "rod of God" here which among other things tells us that the things which the world despises are often highly esteemed by God. That which was ordinary was very special because it was set apart for the service of God. Beloved, God can take an
ordinary person and make them very special as they use their lives to serve the Lord and glorify Him.

III. THE REHEARSAL  4:21-23

And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. [22] And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: [23] And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

The Lord instructs Moses again to do all the wonders before Pharaoh. God wants Moses to demonstrate the power that He has put into the hands of Moses. The same command is applied to us today. God has given us power to serve and glorify Him.

* John 1:12- But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: May the Lord help us all to demonstrate the power of God by our changed life, by our forgiveness toward those who offend us, and by our dedication to our Lord.

God tells Moses to do all that he has been instructed to do. The Lord would harden, embolden, or make courageous the heart of Pharaoh where he would not let the people go. The Hebrew text reads, "I will make strong his will," or "I will strengthen his resolve." As an act of judgment, God would strengthen the rebellion and resistance that was already in the heart of the Pharaoh. Men that resist God’s grace tend to become bolder in their wickedness. God did not put the resistance in Pharaoh’s heart. Pharaoh was already resistant. As an act of judgment, the Lord would strengthen the decision that the Pharaoh has already made. God is not the author of sin. He did not cause Adam and Eve to sin as some believe. The Bible is clear that the Lord does not tempt men to sin.

* James 1:13- Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: * Romans 3:5-6... But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) [6] God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?
* Romans 9:14- What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.
* Deuteronomy 32:4- He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.
* 2 Chronicles 19:7- Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.
* Psalm 92:15- To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

**God did not make Pharaoh sin and then judge him for it.** He did not make the king disobey the Lord and then punish the king for his disobedience. That's crazy, yet there are people today that hold to Reform Theology or Calvinism that believe God did this. Beloved, if God was the author of sin, then we are not responsible for our sinfulness. The responsibility for our sin would fall upon God. If God was the author of sin, He would not be holy and Christ, the Son of God, could not be the Redeemer of mankind. For these reasons such teaching is unscriptural and dangerous. Our Lord is sinless. Men are accountable for their own sins and choices. I am saying this as loud as I can!

The job in Egypt would be tough for Moses. The Lord has warned him several times that he would be rejected. Being aware of this fact would help keep him from being overwhelmed when he was rejected. Beloved, rejection is like a wet blanket in service, but if we know it is coming, we will be better prepared to react wisely to it than if we had no idea it was coming. We will not be as apt to quit when some turn away from us. No matter what, Moses was to do what he was told by the Lord. In fact, the phrase “Thus saith the Lord” is the first of 413 appearances in the Bible. Our message is to be “Thus saith the Lord.”

**Beloved, God knows our future.** He knows our choices that we will make down the road. Perhaps, this is why the Lord did not choose Aaron for leadership in the beginning. The Lord knows more about you than you know yourself. He knows the hairs on your head, your health, wealth, and the time and manner of your death. God is not surprised by anything because He knows everything.

The Lord gives Moses His message for Pharaoh. The announcement that Israel was God's "son," yes, even his "firstborn," may have stunned Pharaoh for he was accustomed to regarding himself alone as the "son of the gods," but for a whole nation to be a "son" of the deity was a little surprising. God has given to us His message too. It is the Gospel of
Jesus Christ. As Israel belonged to the Lord, believers belong to Him also.

* 1 John 3:1-2... Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. [2] Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Take a closer look at verse 23. God in His grace was giving Pharaoh a warning if he disobeyed the Lord. The firstborn would be slain which eventually happened in the tenth plague. The Lord’s warning of future judgment continues even today.

IV. THE RECKONING 4:24
And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.

Moses sets out as God commanded. He is obeying God or is he? God meets Moses and seeks to kill him. Where did this come from? What is going on? Did we miss something? Why is God confronting Moses to the point of seeking to kill him? When I read this verse, my antennas went up. It is obvious that something is wrong. The next verse reveals that God deals with sin.

V. THE RESENTMENT 4:25-26
Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. [26] So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.

The answer to the mystery begins to unfold in these next two verses. Moses has disobeyed the Abrahamic covenant. His sons were not circumcised.

* Genesis 17:14- And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Moses has been rendered so helplessly sick that his wife has to perform the circumcision. This is ironic because she resisted this ordinance. This may be the reason why it wasn’t done in the first place.
Moses had difficulty in standing up to his own wife, so God stepped in. He has a way of doing this.

Being a Midianite, Zipporah did not have a concern for the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed. She therefore was not very compatible with Moses on a spiritual level and would, as a result, have a negative influence on her husband in such matters as circumcision. This doubtless was a factor in the neglect of this very important act for their son.

**This incident is a great warning about letting those around us, who do not have the zeal and interest in spiritual matters as we do, diminish our dedication for the things of the Lord.** These folk may be friends or members of our close family whom we love much, but if their spiritual dedication is not what ours is, they can influence us in a bad way if we are not careful. This situation also exhorts those who are planning to get married, to not marry one whose spiritual interest, dedication, and doctrine is not compatible with ours. Spiritual compatibility is the most important thing to consider in marriage. God makes it very clear we are not to marry unbelievers.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14-Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Circumcision was a symbol of separation, purity, and loyalty to God’s covenant, but Moses failed to obey this in his son. Circumcision of the heart was evidence of obedience and fellowship with God.

* Romans 2:28-29... For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: [29] But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

After the circumcision of his son, the Lord restores Moses. Zipporah’s statement about a bloody husband means, “I who am an alien have entered as fully into covenant with thee by doing this act, as my son, on whom this act has been performed.”

**There are a number of insights here that we will address.**

1. Obedience to God’s Word may bring hardship in the home with other family members. Zipporah’s resentment was revealed in her words, “You are a bloody husband.”

2. The shedding of blood was offensive. It still is today. We do have a bloody religion. Liberals do all that they can to remove the blood of Christ and replace it with works.
3. Who is held for disobedience in the home? Notice it was Moses, the father. Moses had to be obedient in all areas before he could be God's ambassador to Egypt. He had to set his own house in order before he could minister to Israel. He would not be qualified until he did so. If you want to be an effective witness for Christ, have your own life right with God. If the church is to be a proper witness in its community, it must have its house in order. Judgment begins at the house of God. If Christians are not living right, how can we expect the world to listen to our message. Our carnality and inconsistency corrupt our credibility.

4. Moses' punishment reveals the importance of following God's directions and the consequences if we don't obey Him. For one small neglect, apparently out of deference for his wife's wishes, or perhaps to keep peace in the home, Moses almost forfeited his opportunity to serve God and waste eighty years of preparation and training!

5. The more fruit-bearing qualities we possess, the more thoroughly shall we be pruned. The finest, rarest, metals are exposed to the whitest heat. And it was because Moses was to be so eminently used, that he came into God's most searching discipline. God holds those in leadership to a higher standard.

6. Secret or hidden sin will come out into the open sooner or later. The lack of circumcision of Moses' son was not seen by men, but it was seen by God. God knows everything about us.

* Ecclesiastes 12:14- For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.
* Luke 12:2- For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.
* 1 Corinthians 4:5- Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

No matter how it is committed, sin will be exposed and judged.

* Like Joseph's brothers, it may be years before exposure.
* Like Achan, it may be well covered up.
* Like the sin of Belshazzar, it may be done while intoxicated.
* Like Judas, it may have the approval of authorities.
* Like Pilate, it may be done to gratify the crowd.
* No matter who it is or what has been done, the Lord knows about it and deals with sin.
VI. THE REUNION 4:27-28

And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. [28] And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

Moses and Aaron have a family reunion on the picnic grounds of Mt. Sinai. It was a very special time as Moses shared with his older brother God’s instructions and the power that God would give them to perform the miraculous signs.

VII. THE RELIANCE 4:29-31

And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: [30] And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. [31] And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

Aaron speaks to the people and performs the signs. The result was the faith of the people. Their prayers and cries were heard by the Lord and answered. They demonstrate their reverence and reliance on the Lord by worshiping Him. God promised Moses they would believe and they did. They rejected him the first time forty years earlier, but in God’s timing, their hearts were soft and open to God’s leading and message. You may be trying to win someone to Christ. Right now they might be unwilling to listen to you. Keep praying, time and circumstances have a way of softening a person’s heart.
Chapter 12
From Straw to Stubble
Exodus 5:1-23

Moses departed to Egypt to carry out God’s commands and had a brush with death because he had failed to do what the Lord dictated in the Abrahamic covenant by not circumcising one of his sons. Zipporah performed the bloody surgery and the life of Moses was spared. The journey continued and Moses and Aaron encounter the Jewish leaders and convinced them of their mission. They believed they were sent from God just as the Lord foretold.

Moses delivers God’s message as instructed. Pharaoh, however unleashes his fury and increases the pressure on the people of God. He removes their straw for the brick production and tells them to get their own. In this section of Exodus, we address the difficulties that may arise from obeying God. It is not all rosy. Serving Christ, especially in the ministry, may require hardships. If you are not committed to face them and keep going forward, or if you quit easily, it would be better for you to not get into the ministry in the first place. Preaching the truth of God’s Word is not a task for sissy’s or people who wet their finger and put it in the air to see which way the winds of opinion are blowing.

God is looking for people who will serve him whether they have straw or stubble. Whether we are enjoying the straw of provision and abundance or the stubble of hardship and suffering, God is looking for men and women who will not quit serving and obeying Him. Dr. Ralph Byron is an outstanding Christian surgeon. Early in his medical profession he sought for a way to make his life count. Professionally and personally, he wanted to be a man of God. One day in his search for godliness, he came across Ezekiel 22:30, “And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.”

Dr. Byron pondered this kind of question: "Would God find me
standing in the gap?" Here he was, a young surgeon with the press of responsibility all around him, and he answered the question honestly, "No, not right now." He concluded that in order for him to be a man of God, he must continually place a priority on prayer. At first, it was very difficult, because his duties were numerous. He decided that in order for him to have time with God, he would personally have to get up very early. He set aside the time of 5:30 a.m., which he called "an unearthly hour," but he did it. It was the best time, in light of his busy schedule.

Week after week. The remarkable thing he discovered was that within just two weeks, he began to have a quality of life he had never known before. He saw two men trust Christ. He discovered that a major conflict in their church had been resolved -- dissolved is a better word -- as he committed it faithfully to God in prayer. So he concluded, "It was apparent to me that I must give prayer top priority, even if it means getting less than six hours of sleep every night." I like what Paul said.

* 1 Corinthians 15:58- Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Are you a quitter? The next ten chapters of Exodus (five through fourteen) focus on the great contest between Moses and Pharaoh. The gauntlet is thrown down and the tug-of-war of wills begins. It is a fierce ordeal which tested the metal of Moses and his people, and also revealed the power and care of Almighty God for His people. The chapter confronts us with the reality that we may have times of provision or straw but also times of hardship, suffering or stubble. In those difficult times, however, God knows what is going on and working behind the scenes.

I. THE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH  5:1

And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

Moses and Aaron gain an audience with Pharaoh. This was amazing because shepherds were considered as an abomination in Egypt. God, however, was preparing the path for his men. Our steps are prepared by the Lord. He guides and cares for our lives as we endeavor to live for Him.

* Lamentations 3:22-23....It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every
morning: great is thy faithfulness.

The message to Pharaoh is direct and simple, "Let MY people go that they may hold a feast unto ME." The word "feast" is a pilgrimage festival. It was not an unreasonable request. Pharaoh's temper toward Israel is known. Yet courageously, and by faith, Moses and Aaron walk into the cobra pit. God has already warned them that Pharaoh would not let them go! They did what the Lord commanded any way. God help us to have this same kind of courage.

Their message was one of simplicity and confrontation. Two key things we will note here.
1. This was a message of conflict. God said, "Let me people go." Pharaoh's claim, "They are my people." God said that He was God. Pharaoh believed that he was a god and should be treated like one.
2. Pharaoh is being told to obey someone else. This was a new experience for him for sure. He has been giving orders as king. Now he is being given orders by shepherds. His authority is challenged and his pride is plucked. His pride will lead to the plucking of his own life and Egypt's prosperity.

Captain James Cook was an English explorer and navigator (1728-1779). He is the man credited with discovering Hawaii. When he first landed on those Pacific islands the natives thought he was a god and gave him divine treatment. He did nothing to discourage their perception; he embraced the role of god. All worked well for Cook until he left the isles. A storm forced him to sail back to the island for shelter. The natives believed no god would be hindered by a storm, so they felt betrayed and killed Captain Cook for pretending to be a god. When we assume the role of deity, our destiny is death. Pride causes us to assume that kind of thinking.

* Proverbs 11:2- When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

This word "pride" comes from the Hebrew word zadown {zaw-done'} which means "pride, insolence, presumptuousness, arrogance." This term is from the root zid or zud which means "to boil; to seethe; to act proudly or rebelliously; to act presumptuously." The idea is that of boiling over the edge of the pot, signifying overstepping the boundaries and lacking self control. We do not know how the disgrace or shame will come, but it will follow our pride, rebellion, lack of self-control and arrogance. Such behavior is out-of-bounds with God. Pharaoh's arrogance led to his disgrace and doom.
* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. An Arabic proverb states, "The nose is in the heavens, the seat is in the mire." Such would be the destiny of Pharaoh. The word "destruction" is derived from the Hebrew word sheber [sheh'ber] which means "breaking, fracture, crushing, crash, ruin, shattering." This is the effect of pride upon our lives. It obliterates it. The word "fall" can be rendered "calamity." Calamity is what happened to Pharaoh and Egypt.

* Proverbs 29:23- A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. The contrast in this verse works well: The proud will be brought "low," but the one who is "lowly" will be honored. If Pharaoh had humbled himself before God, the Lord would have honored and blessed him. Let me ask, "Is pride ruining your life?"

II. THE ENQUIRY OF PHARAOH 5:2

And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

Notice Pharaoh's response, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? Who is the Lord to tell me what to do? I don't know the Lord and I'm not going to do what He says." Pharaoh says, "No way Hozay!" The Lord was thinking, "We will see about that!" Little did Pharaoh realize that this choice, this crucial decision was going to open the garage door to discouragement, distress, disease, destruction, and death for him and his people.

Little do we realize sometimes how one decision can change the whole course of our lives. The decision to obey or disobey, to sin or remain pure, to yield to the Lord or fight Him are many times life-changing decisions that have consequences that affect us for the rest of our lives and sometimes for all of eternity. Such was the case with Aaron Burr.

A revival swept through the university at Princeton, New Jersey. Aaron Burr came to the president of the university and said: "Mr. president, I have made up my mind to consider the claims of Christ. Now, Mr. President, what would you do?" The old president of the university gave him this advice. He said, "Burr, if I were you, I would wait until the excitement of the revival had subsided, and then I would think it out carefully." Aaron Burr bowed his head a moment, and then he said, "Mr. President, that is exactly what I will do." And, it is stated as a fact, that
never again in his life did he express a desire to be a Christian, and they
say he died without such an expression. Beloved, make sure God’s
blessing and approval are on your decisions and choices by studying His
Word, praying for direction, and getting wise counsel. If you do not know
the Lord as your Savior, put your faith in him right now.

* 2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted,
and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the
accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

The attitude of Pharaoh of “I don’t know or need God” is the same
attitude of many unbelievers today. We live in the “Don’t Tell Me What
to Do!” generation. People spurn God’s authority only later to regret it.

* 2 Thessalonians 1:8- In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that
know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Realize that we all are going to be accountable to the Lord one day.
He is our judge. Pharaoh asked, “Who is the Lord?” He is about to find
out. The point of the plagues and the exodus will be "that he might
know." Pharaoh will come to know this Yahweh, but not in any pleasant
way.

III. THE ENTREATY TO PHARAOH 5:3

And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go,
we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the
Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

A

n appeal is made again to Pharaoh for permission to worship,
“Let us go three days and sacrifice unto the Lord lest we be
judged by pestilence or sword.” They needed to be out of sight of the
Egyptians because the animals they were going to sacrifice were
considered sacred to the Egyptians. They would have incited a riot.
Moses was concerned about this. Notice Exodus chapter eight.

* Exodus 8:26- And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall
sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall
we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will
they not stone us?

God’s judgments were not launched upon Egypt yet. Why not? The
answer is God was speaking in grace and with longsuffering, giving
Pharaoh an opportunity for obedience. Beloved, before God deals in
wrath, He acts in mercy. This is always His way.

* Noah warned of the Flood for 120 years.
* The prophets warned the nation of Israel of captivity before it came.
* Jonah warned Ninevah before judgement came and the city repented.
* Jesus warned His people of the destruction of the Temple.
* It is for reasons like these that the teaching which says that God
  chooses certain people to be saved and picks others to go to Hell does
  not make any sense at all. Such teaching has no justice, mercy, or love
  and goes contrary to the character and consistent behavior of God in the
  Old Testament. God is not a respecter of persons. It also contradicts
  numerous verses in the Bible.

  **Beloved, God dealt in patience and mercy with us when we were
unbelievers.** If you are without the Lord, your opportunity is NOW to
trust in Him for Heaven and forgiveness of your sins. The Bible warns
us of the wrath to come to those who die without Christ in their heart.
Some day the door of salvation will be shut for you and it will be too late
to be saved. God wants us to repent and believe in Him now.

  * Acts 17:30- And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now
commandeth all men every where to repent:

  * 2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted,
and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the
accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

  The feast in verse one points to rejoicing. The sacrifices make the
rejoicing possible. True worship involves sacrifice. We have joy because
of what the Lord has done for us on the cross. Another matter we will
note here is when we worship the Lord, we are to separate from Egypt
and what it represents. We cannot truly worship with unbelievers or
idolaters, or use carnal, worldly, sensual methods without corrupting our
worship. We cannot truly worship in a church that denies the great
doctrines of the faith or tolerates the wicked lifestyles of a sinful society.
It is not going to happen because sin grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit
which in turn, hinders the true worship of Jesus Christ.

  **Sensuality and carnality attract carnal Christians or unbelievers
to your ministry.** It is very difficult to have an evangelistic, Christ-
honoring ministry when your church is full of carnal Christians or
unbelievers. Yes, we are to reach the lost. We want to do this, but we
are not going to reach them and disciple them to be like the Lord Jesus
Christ if we are living just like them, compromising with corruption, or
watering-down our preaching.
IV. THE EMBITTERMENT OF PHARAOH  5:4-5

And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. [5] And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.

Pharaoh is not happy at all with what he is hearing. He is upset with two key things: the excuses and the encumbrance. The word “let” in 1611 has the opposite meaning of the word today. It means “to hinder.” He said, “You are keeping the people from working! YOU need to get to work!” Pharaoh is commanding Moses to work. The king’s attitude is “I’m the boss! You are getting in the way. You do what I say!”

This message is still echoed today. Christians are in the way of Satan’s schemes. We are to be the salt of the earth. We are in the way when we speak about political corruption, educational corruption, and social corruption such as abortion, homosexuality, gambling, immorality, pornography, and alcohol. The message that the world screams at us is, “Conform to our ways. Do what we say! Live like us!” Such a message is pure hypocrisy and a total contradiction of the world’s other message which says, “Do your own thing! Be yourself! You are your own boss!”

This world is very confused about what it believes because those without Christ follow the author of confusion, Satan. He is their father and all that he can offer is emptiness, burdens, and destruction. His cookies may seem sweet at first, but they eventually become bitter.

* John 8:44- Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

God’s message to us offers “rest” from the burdens of sins and sorrows.

* Matthew 11:28-30... Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
V. THE ERADICATION OF SUPPLIES  

And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, [7] Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. [8] And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

Pharaoh is furious, “The people have too much time on their hands. They are goofing around and are idle and lazy.” He informs the taskmasters and time keepers to let them get their own straw for the bricks and keep the brick quota the same.

What was the purpose of the straw? Chopped straw was mixed in with the clay to make the bricks more pliable and stronger by first binding the clay together and then by decaying and releasing a humic acid similar to glutamic or gallotanic acid. This acid, also known as tannin, is also used in tanning animal skins to make leather. What it does is produce compounds that resist decomposition. When mixed with clay, it causes the clay of the brick to dry and harden. This is why it was important. This straw was provided by the Egyptians, but now Pharaoh tells them to get their own, believing they are goofing around because they want to do something he thought was a waste of time. The world today still has the same attitude as the Pharaoh. Society believes that worship is a waste of time. They still wonder why Christians go to church on Sunday and Wednesdays, etc.

There is another important insight that we will note. When a person rejects God’s message, it makes the person more irrational. Pharaoh wants bricks, but his decision hinders the production of them. On the same line, when a person rejects salvation and the Savior, Jesus Christ, that is irrational too. To flirt with eternity in Hell is foolish.

Another note we will make is this, “Obeying God’s message may lead to a loss of convenience and hardship. You may suffer for doing what is right, losing friends, family, a job, possibly your freedom or life.” We have been warned just as God warned Pharaoh of hardship to come.

*John 16:33- These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*
Years ago, a small group of Japanese believers were heckled and abused whenever they assembled to worship the Savior, but the persecutors could not shake the faith of the new converts. Each time the Christians gathered, the mob would throw stones at them, but they still faithfully continued to have their weekly meetings. Eventually the opposition became so great that the outdoor services had to be temporarily abandoned. Later, when a time of relative peace and tolerance had come to the community, many were won to Christ.

Returning to the spot where the believers had frequently been attacked, they began to pick up some of the rocks. Using them as part of the building materials, they constructed a small house of worship, rejoicing that God had worked all things together for good. Jesus says that His followers will meet with suffering and heartache, but He admonishes them not to be discouraged. Earth's sorrows are meant to be stepping stones in the process of sanctification. Glorifying in affliction will turn our troubles into spiritual triumphs!

**Serving the Lord requires determination in spite of hardship, defeat, and discouragement.** We see determination in many different ways. Conviction is belief with determination. Faithfulness is determination to always do right and fulfill responsibilities or duties. Courage is determination in times of perilous situations. A lot of people have determination in the things of the world but not in the things of God. God help us all to be dedicated to the tasks that He has for us.

**VI. THE ESCALATION OF SUFFERING  5:9-19**

When you follow the Lord and start trusting Him, don’t be surprised at the resistance you may receive. Satan may unleash his fury upon you before you even get going for the Lord. He will try to discourage, distress, and depress you and he is good at doing this! This is common among new Christians or believers that have recently rededicated their lives to the Lord. Thank God that the Lord does not allow more than we can bear.

* 1 Corinthians 10:13- There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Let’s take a look at Satan’s plan to sidetrack and defeat God’s people. The pattern of what he uses is still being used today.
A. The Addition of More Burdens 5:9-11

Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words. [10] And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. [11] Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

The demands of the king were illogical and unreasonable, but such is the case when a person rebels against God and follows Satan. When people rebel against the Lord they tend to be illogical, making foolish stupid, decisions. Many times they become selfish, unreasonable, harsh, and oppressive, just like Pharaoh.

Rebellion against God leads to sinful habits. The bondage and burdens of addictions and sinful habits are draining and depressing. Sinful lifestyles may promise joy, fun, and happiness, but in the end they only give misery, emptiness, dissatisfaction, destruction, and death. In the beginning, the path of sinful living is smooth and pleasant, but then it becomes bumpy, rough, demanding more of your life and strength. Satan’s yoke is heavy, exhausting, and burdensome, but this does not hold true with the yoke of the Lord.

* Matthew 11:28-30... Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

B. The Agitation from Distractions 5:12

So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

Pharaoh has scattered the Jews with his unreasonable command. This would be a huge hindrance and distraction in the production of the bricks. Satan works this way too, being the master distractor. He loves to get us side-tracked and distracted so that we cannot devote our energy to the important tasks at hand. He loves to scatter and divide us to the point where we are running in circles and wasting away our time and our lives. He loves to distract us from focusing upon the Lord.
Pharaoh is the big loser here. His bitterness robbed him of what he needed. What did he need from the people? He needed good quality bricks! Not only will the people be unable to meet the quota, but the bricks will be of less quality. The Jews were forced to gather stubble or chaff instead of straw. The straw was of much better quality for making bricks. The stubble was rough, uneven, dried out, sapless stalks of sticks and wood. Barley, wheat, and straw made much better bricks because it released an acid that hardened the bricks. The decomposition of stubble did not produce the same chemical reaction and the bricks were weaker as a result.

**Bitterness, rebellion, and pride cloud our thinking, just like it clouded Pharaoh's.** They rob us of what we need and what is best for us such as wisdom, love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and faith. Our bitterness can make us angry at God if we are not careful and leave us seeking stubble and chaff instead of what is best for us.

*Hebrews 12:15 - Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

An old missionary couple had been working in Africa for years and were returning to New York to retire. They had no pension; their health was broken; they were defeated, discouraged, and afraid. They discovered they were booked on the same ship as President Teddy Roosevelt, who was returning from one of his big-game hunting expeditions. No one paid any attention to them. They watched the fanfare that accompanied the President's entourage, with passengers trying to catch a glimpse of the great man.

As the ship moved across the ocean, the old missionary said to his wife, "Something is wrong. Why should we have given our lives in faithful service for God in Africa all these many years and have no one care a thing about us? Here this man comes back from a hunting trip and everybody makes much over him, but nobody gives two hoots about us." "Dear, you shouldn't feel that way," his wife said. "I can't help it; it doesn't seem right."

When the ship docked in New York, a band was waiting to greet the President. The mayor and other dignitaries were there. The papers were full of the President's arrival, but no one noticed this missionary couple. They slipped off the ship and found a cheap flat on the East Side, hoping the next day to see what they could do to make a living in the city. That night the man's spirit broke. He said to his wife, "I can't take this; God is
not treating us fairly." His wife replied, "Why don't you go in the bedroom and tell that to the Lord?"

A short time later he came out from the bedroom, but now his face was completely different. His wife asked, "Dear, what happened?" "The Lord settled it with me," he said. "I told him how bitter I was that the President should receive this tremendous homecoming, when no one met us as we returned home. And when I finished, it seemed as though the Lord put His hand on my shoulder and simply said, 'But you're not home yet!'" Yes, there are rewards for faithfulness, but not necessarily down here. Don't get bitter with the hardships and trials you face. You will meet your reward for your faithfulness one day.

C. The Acceleration of Work is Demanded 5:13

*And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw.*

The pressure was increased to produce the same amount of bricks. Speed up! This mentality of hurry and scurry is still relevant today. We are going so fast that we don't have time to hear or listen to the Lord. Our stress level and blood pressure go through the roof. God tells us to slow down.

Have you ever wondered why a pigeon walks so funny? According to an interesting article in the Detroit Free Press, a pigeon walks the way it does so it can see where it's going. Because it can't adjust its focus as it moves, the pigeon actually has to bring its head to a complete stop between steps in order to refocus. This is the way it walks: head forward, stop; head back, stop. Don't laugh -- that's how it goes!

In our spiritual walk with the Lord we have the same problem as the pigeon. We have a hard time seeing while we're moving. We also need to stop between steps -- to refocus on where we are in relation to the world and the will of God. That's not to say we have to stop and pray and meditate about every little decision in life, but certainly our walk with the Lord needs to have built into it a pattern of "stops," which enable us to see more clearly before moving on.

*Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
D. The Affliction and Agony from Oppression 5:14

And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

The manner of beating may be similar to what is done today in the Middle East. The culprit lies on his belly, his legs being turned up behind erect, and the executioner gives him so many blows on the soles of the feet with a stick. This is a very severe punishment. The sufferer is unable to walk for many weeks after, and some are lamed by it for the rest of their lives.

E. The Accusations that are False 5:15-17

Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? [16] There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. [17] But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.

Notice that the Jewish leaders complained to the Pharaoh. There was nothing wrong in doing this, but it would prove to be a waste of time. This would do them no good at all. They really needed to call upon the Lord. The false accusations of laziness were most hurtful. It is no fun at all when you are wrongly accused, is it? Slander creates stress and emotional distress. God, however, provides a blessing for us when we are falsely accused for righteousness sake.

* Matthew 5:11-Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

F. Anticipation that is Diminished 5:18-19

Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. [19] And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.

The Jews felt hopeless and knew they were in serious trouble. Meeting the Pharaoh’s quota would be almost impossible.
Hopelessness leads to depression and despair. Many Christians quit serving the Lord because they are hopeless.

* Proverbs 13:12 - Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Some folks are hopeless because they have a problem they cannot seem to solve or do not see it being solved. Others grieve over sin and past failures. They feel their usefulness to the Lord is diminished. Beloved, understand that where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

Rejecting the Lord will definitely leave you hopeless. Don’t turn your back upon Him. Writers H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw were brilliant men, yet they rejected the message of Scripture. They placed their trust in their own systems of belief, which were based on human reason. Yet, they could not find lasting inner peace, and they slowly lost confidence in what they believed. Wells’ final literary work, for example, has been aptly called "a scream of despair." Shortly before Shaw died in 1950, he wrote, "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, have led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions and now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith." The hope of mankind is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

* 1 Timothy 1:1 - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

VII. THE EXASPERATION OF THE PEOPLE 5:20-21

And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: 21 And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

Pharaoh’s plan of divide and conquer is working at this point. He is pressuring the people to divide them and make matters difficult for Moses. Moses was basically prepared for his conflict with the Pharaoh, but the criticism from his own people may not have been considered. “Moses, you have made us stink! They won’t mind killing us now!” Criticism from our own people hurts. For this reason we need to encourage one another as much as possible. The world does a number on us already. If what is bugging you is trivial, go ahead and keep your
mouth shut, move on and forget it.

VIII. ENTREATING THE LORD  5:22-23

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? [23] For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Moses has a problem, but at least he is taking it to the Lord. Notice that the Lord is blamed for the problems. He tells the Lord, “Why did you send me? Matters have gotten worse Lord. Do you know what you are doing? Why have you not delivered us yet?” Moses sounds like many of us, doesn’t he? Even Moses had God on a time table. We tend to rush God too, and be impatient with Him. It’s in times like these we need to learn to trust in Him and wait.

* Proverbs 3:5-6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

* Psalm 27:14- Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

When her husband, Edmund Gravely, died at the controls of his small plane while on the way to Statesboro, GA, from the Rocky Mount-Wilson airport, NC, his wife Janice kept the plane aloft for two hours until it ran out of fuel. During this time she sang hymns and prayed for help. As the plane crossed the South Carolina-North Carolina border, she radioed for help: "Help, help, won't someone help me? My pilot is unconscious. Won't somebody help me?" Authorities who picked up her distress signal were not able to reach her by radio during the flight because she kept changing channels. Mrs. Gravely finally made a rough landing and crawled for 45 minutes to a farmhouse for help.

How often God's people cry out for help to God, but switch channels before God's message comes through. They turn to other sources for help, looking for human help. When you cry out to God for His intervention, don't switch channels! Be still and wait for His direction and guidance.
Chapter 13
Certainty in Uncertain Times

Exodus 6: 1-5

Have you ever had those days where things don’t work out the way you planned or imagined? Such was the case for Moses. He has gone to Pharaoh and asked him to let them go to sacrifice to the Lord in the wilderness. He has done what God has told him to do. Circumstances, however, did not go as Moses had planned. Pharaoh became more oppressive and ruthless. He increased the burden upon the people. The Jews become angry with Moses and blame him for their problems. They are discouraged, doubting, and feel deceived by Moses.

Moses responds by asking the Lord some common questions.

* What are you doing?
* Why have you treated us this way?
* Why have you sent me?

Moses told the Lord, “Since I have done what you told me to do, events have gotten worse and you have not done what I expected. The people are not delivered!” Beloved, the Christian life is not a playground, but a battleground. It is not a merry-go-round where we can goof-around. When you understand that the Christian life involves spiritual warfare, you will begin to understand the trials, battles, victories, defeats, wounds, pain, failures, ups and downs. We really are in a war! Understand that some Christians may fall into sin as they have been struck by satanic darts. They may willingly be deceived and fall into sin. Satan is out to destroy them, and he is good at doing this, but we are to try to restore them.

* Galatians 6:1- Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
Moses needed to keep his focus upon the Lord’s promises if he was to survive the battles he was facing and the ones that would thunder in the future. We need to learn this too. This is where our peace and strength come from when our battles are raging and our problems are like a tsunami. Saints keep their sanity and serenity during their health problems, conflicts, financial woes, set-backs, and disappointments by keeping their focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting Him to work out their difficulties in His own time and way.

* Isaiah 26:3 - Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

* Philippians 4:7 - And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Beloved, afflictions and tough times are designed for our good, not our detriment.

* Job 23:10 - But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

* 2 Corinthians 4:17 - For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Difficult circumstances destroy us or develop a dependence upon the Lord. A dependence upon the Lord develops patience. Patience develops wisdom in us. This is what the Lord will do in the life of Moses. He has hit rock bottom. He has returned to Egypt and has been rejected again by Pharaoh and his own people. This is exactly what he dreaded. He is at the end of his rope and totally dependent upon the Lord like never before. We will now see how the Lord gives him certainty in uncertain times.

I. THE ASSURANCE  6:1

*Then* the Lord said unto Moses, *Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh:* for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

There are three key words here: then, now, I.

* Then*= God has Moses where He wants him. The time is right. When God is ready, He moves.

* Now*= There is great encouragement found in this word. There are no longer any more delays. God had everything worked out. He has also been patient with a fearful Moses. The curtain was being raised on the
stage of Divine revenge and the intervention of God was to begin. The long wait was over. "Now" Moses would see things happen. The hand of God would make things happen.
* Psalm 103:8 - The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
* Psalm 103:14 - For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.
* I = God says, "I will do..." There are no "if"s" or "maybe's." God's message is one of absolute certainty.

What a blessing! We have absolute security as Christians because of the certainties God has given to us. We don't have to think so or hope so when it comes to our salvation and God's promises to us. We can "know so!" We have certainty in uncertain times. The Bible informs us that there are a number of certain things.

1. God's Word is certain.
   * 1 Kings 8:56- Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.
   * Isaiah 55:11- So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

2. God's Reward is certain.
   * Matthew 10:42- And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

3. God's Acceptance is assured.
   * John 6:37- All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Our salvation is certain in Christ.

4. God's Love is sure.
   * Romans 8:38-39... For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, [39] Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Immortality is for sure.
   * 2 Corinthians 5:1- For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
6. The Exposure of Sin is for certain.
  * Numbers 32:23- But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.

7. Death is certain.
  * Hebrews 9:27- And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

8. Leaving earthly possessions is definite.
  * 1 Timothy 6:7- For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

  * Ecclesiastes 12:14- For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.
  * 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: [9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10. Salvation is for sure.
  * 1 John 5:13- These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

  Pharaoh said, "No, they cannot go!" God said, "Oh yes they will! See what I am going to do. I will deliver them with my strong hand." Pharaoh seemed so strong. Moses was dismayed by the inactivity of God's hand and the indictments and insinuations of the Jews that were blaming Moses for their hardships. To Moses, the circumstances seemed almost hopeless. This is when the Lord loves to make His move.

  The moment of God's power is revealed many times when the enemy seems to have his greatest power, when we are weaker than ever before, and when our problems seem overwhelming. The moment of God's power is frequently manifested when from our natural viewpoint, we appear least likely to overcome the enemy.

  God often waits until things are at their worst before He steps in to intervene on our behalf. This gives the Lord the opportunity to show how great His power really is. The greater we behold His power, the greater our faith can be encouraged and the greater is His glory! The Lord is never late. He is always on time. He tells Moses, NOW it's time to show you, my people, and Pharaoh what I can do. I love this!

  The power of God is awesome! It can cause the enemy to do the very thing the enemy adamantly opposes. It can cause Pharaoh to insist
on action he had strongly opposed. The power of God caused Haman to give honor to Mordecai though he utterly despised Mordecai and sought his destruction. God's power can cause our most adverse circumstances, which threaten our destruction, to become circumstances that promote our well being. Moses was a living example of this truth as he was reared in the palace of the man that tried to kill him as a baby. God's power can make the wrath of man to praise Him.

*Psalm 76:10- Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

**You may be facing an impossible situation right now.** It may be the loss of a job, health problems, a wayward child, or a marriage on the verge of destruction. All I can say is, "Turn your problem over to the Lord and watch His power." I have seen Him work many, many, many times. Never underestimate His power and don't put Him on a stop watch. Let Him do what He wants to do in His own time. When you truly turn your situation over to Him, you can rest. Your peace will come from His care for you. This is what Peter tried to get across to us.

*1 Peter 5:7- Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

**Strong faith in God does not come all at once.** It is often gained through willing submission to His love and goodness in the midst of trials. In February 1862, President Lincoln's son, Willie, died and his son Tad became seriously ill. A Christian nurse attending the sick child recalled that the President watched by his bedside and often paced, saying, "This is the hardest trial of my life. Why is it? Why is it?"

She told him that she was a widow and that her husband and two children were in Heaven. She saw the hand of God in it all and never loved Him so much as she did after her great trials. "How is that brought about?" inquired Lincoln. "Simply by trusting in God and knowing that He does all things well," she replied. "Did you submit fully under the first loss?" he asked. "No," she answered, "not fully, but as blow came upon blow, and all were taken, I could and did submit to the Lord." Lincoln replied, "I'm glad to hear you say that -- I will try to go to God with my sorrows." After a few days, she asked him if he could trust God. He replied, "I think I can. I will try. I wish I had that childlike faith you speak of, and I trust he will give it to me." May this be our desire, too.
II. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE LORD 6:2-5

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: [3] And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them. [4] And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. [5] And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

God tells Moses, “What I want to happen will happen. I am the Lord!” God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name of God Almighty. This is mainly how they knew Him. The Hebrew words for “God Almighty” are El Shaddai. This name denotes God’s attributes of power, provider, and sustainer. The word El is the singular form of Elohim. It is a masculine Hebrew noun that emphasizes the might of God. It was the most commonly used word for God in the ancient Near East. El was the name of the chief Canaanite god.

The word for “Almighty” is Shaddai. This word means “powerful one, mighty one, sufficient, or the one who satisfies.” Shaddai is derived from a Hebrew word shadad which means to be burly, powerful or to ravage. Shadad is like the mauling action of a wolf (Jer. 5:6). Some scholars feel it is derived from the word shadd referring to the breast of a nursing mother. The picture is that the Lord is our satisfier and that He is all we need. He is our encourager and giver of strength. He is the all-sufficient, powerful one. This is the relationship that every believer can have with the Lord Jesus Christ. God can supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He can satisfy every longing in our empty heart.

In the Greek Septuagint, which is the Old Testament in the Greek language, the idea is the same. The word for “Almighty” is the word pantokrator. It is derived from two words, pas meaning “all” and krateo meaning “to hold or have strength.” This word is used of God only and is translated “omnipotent” in Revelation 19:6. Our God has all strength. He is all powerful. The Lord used this title to let Abram know that He had the power to keep His word, to perform any miracle, and to meet every need Abram had in his life. It was important for them to know God’s name.
* Psalm 9:10-  And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

God told Moses that He was not only powerful, but the Lord is telling Moses that He is also a promise keeper by His referring to His name of Jehovah. He would be the One who would redeem His people.

The name Jehovah denoted God’s character as absolute and eternal. It was the name of His covenant relationship with Israel. The name Jehovah underscores His greatness, His power, His self-existence, and His superiority. The Lord says, “By my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” This has puzzled scholars. God revealed Himself to Abraham as Jehovah before declaring Himself as El Shaddai (Genesis 15:7). He revealed Himself to Jacob as Jehovah-Elohim (Genesis 38:13).

The Patriarchs were acquainted with God’s name, Jehovah. What is its meaning? The Patriarchs were acquainted with the title of Jehovah, but the full revelation of God’s name was not fully disclosed to them, not recognized, understood, or appreciated. This name “Jehovah” was known but it was not in common use. It would now become common among the Jews as the Lord would lead them and bless them by fulfilling His promise to them. He had a home for them and has not forgotten His promise.

**Jehovah was his covenant name.** He was about to fulfill His covenant with Israel. Israel would witness the faithfulness, power, and deliverance that His covenant name implied. God was about to reveal Himself as the faithful performer of His Word and promises. Beloved, God’s Word is certain! It provides certainty in uncertain times.

These descendants would know the Lord in a way their fathers had not known Him. They would have greater knowledge of the gracious performance of His promises and fulfilling of His covenant. Verse four refers to God’s covenant, “I have established it.” In verse five, the Lord acknowledges the groaning of His people.

* Psalm 56:8- Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? Our tears are recorded in His book.

* Hebrews 4:15 - For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

*Broken hearts He can mend, flowing tears He can dry.
Thoughts of fear He will tend, He gives joy to replace our cries.*
We have a need to be reminded frequently that God cares, for we are so prone to accuse God of not caring at all about us. Though God cares for us far greater and more faithfully than anyone else, we still are likely to accuse Him more quickly of not caring than we accuse anyone else. Hence, the continued reminders of God's care are necessary. If we are faithful in reading the Bible, we will be reminded frequently of the Lord's concern and care, and that His compassion is great.

Each trial and each temptation develops a better understanding of God's character. If you are worried, realize He is the Prince of Peace. If you are dissatisfied, understand that the Lord is the Bread of Life. When you are confused, lost, undecided, and need direction, see the Lord as the Light and the Way. If you are insecure, know that the Lord is our Door and Rock. He gives us certainty in uncertain times.

Hummingbirds are so fragile, tiny, and beautiful. There are actually 320 kinds of hummingbirds. The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that the tiniest among them is the Bee Hummingbird. It is 2 1/8 inches long, and half of that is tail feathers and beak. It only weighs five grams, just about the same weight as several aspirins would be in your hand and yet, that bird can hover, it can go up and down, sideways, and in and out with the most amazing grace and flexibility. It flaps its wings ninety times a second.

That little bird somehow knows that when it begins to get cold, for its own health, it's best to leave far Northern Canada and migrate across the United States and the Gulf of Mexico, all the way to the Panama Canal Zone. It knows when to turn around and go back. Just an accident? If you think so, you're the type who believes there could be an explosion in a printing plant and unabridged dictionaries would fall from the sky! Jesus points to the birds and says, "Look at God's concern for that small creature--and learn." Beloved, God's care is certain, even in uncertain times.
Chapter 14
The Possibility of the Impossible

Exodus 6: 6-9

After Moses’ first appointment with Pharaoh, matters became worse for Moses and the Israelites in Egypt.

* Pharaoh got meeker.
* Provisions got leaner. (They had to get their own straw)
* The Prophet Moses’ complaints got keener. Why Lord? What are you doing?

God encourages His man and tells Moses, “NOW, see what I will do. I have established and remembered my covenant. I have heard their groaning.” The impossible will now become possible. The Lord indicates this truth to Moses by His seven “I wills.” Let’s take a look.

I. THE AFFIRMATION OF THE LORD 6:6-8

Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: [7] And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. [8] And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord.

God emphasizes His authority, “I am the Lord.” The word “Wherefore” refers back to the previous verses emphasizing God’s fulfillment of His covenant. The Lord’s message was, “Because of my word, I will do these things. The impossible will be possible.”
Notice the promises that He makes.

**A. I Will Bring You Out from Under the Burdens of the Egyptians**

God speaks about His purpose. He promised to deliver them and keep His word. He promised them rest. One of the consequences of living in sin is the loss of rest and peace. The promise of sin is “fun” but the reality is sin leaves us *famished, flustered, floundering, and frustrated.*

*Isaiah 57:20*- But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

Thank God for His forgiveness and deliverance from sin. The Lord is still delivering people from their burdens today. He delivers from the burdens of sin and from the judgment of Hell when we put our faith in Christ for our salvation. The forgiveness we find in Christ gives us rest.

*Hebrews 4:9*- There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.
*Matthew 11:28*- Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

**B. I Will Rid You Out of Bondage**

The word "*rid*" is translated from the Hebrew word *natsal* {noun-tsal'} which means "to pluck out of the hands of an oppressor or enemy; to snatch . . . from danger." Hence, it means to rescue, to free, to give liberty to that which was bound and in bondage. Soon Israel was going to be free from their Egyptian bondage. They were going to be rescued from their slavery, from the murderous decrees, and from terrible oppression. There would be complete severance from their previous condition. The impossibility of freedom from their bondage would become possible. He would remove them from the land of bondage.

Our Lord today delivers the believer from slavery, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the fear of death. Jesus liberates the lustful, delivers the drunkard and drug addict, helps the harlot, and saves the sinner. As a lad, James M. Gray had a friend whose father was very wealthy. Having already made a fortune, the man sought to add to it by purchasing a large tract of real estate in upper Manhattan Island. At that time it was known as Harlem Flats. One day Gray’s young companion said, "Let’s go up and see the land Dad bought." Dr. Gray, recounting the incident years later, said, "I remember how I laughed when we got there.
He couldn't show me a single spot of dry ground. The property was completely covered over with tidewater. I didn't see much of an investment in that for anybody. But, of course, his father did not acquire it for what it was worth then, but for its value in decades to come. "Today that land has all been filled in and is heavily populated. It represents millions and millions of dollars to its present owners. What a picture of our redemption!" God sees our worth and value even when we don't. He looks ahead to the finished product. What the Lord starts in our lives, He will complete.

* Philippians 1:6- Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

C. I Will Redeem You

The Lord would be a kinsman redeemer to them. The word "redeem" means "to purchase or set free." The price is the shedding of atoning blood. The power to redeem would be with a stretched-out-arm. The phrase "stretched-out-arm" signified one that helps and saves. In Egypt the phrase meant active, energetic help.

Those who have trusted Christ as their Savior have been redeemed.

* 1 Peter 1:18-19. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; [19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

While salvation is free to the sinner, it costs more than anything else, but the sinner does not pay for his salvation. God takes care of the payment. Our salvation is all of God because He alone paid the entire price for our redemption. Jesus is our kinsman redeemer. He fulfilled the qualifications to be our redeemer. What are those qualifications?

1. The redeemer had to be related to the individual. Jesus was our redeemer after the flesh. He was born of a virgin. He was Son of man and Son of God. He was the God-man, God in human flesh, related to mankind as a man.

* John 1:14 - And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

2. The redeemer had to be free. Jesus was free from sin which bound us.
3. The redeemer had to pay the price of redemption. Jesus alone, by His sinless life, was able to pay the price for our salvation.

4. The redeemer had to be willing to pay the price. At Gethsemane, Jesus demonstrated His willingness to do His Father’s will and die for us.

5. The redeemer had to be prepared to marry the widow. The result of Christ’s redemption was the fact that He was married to the church. Believers are the bride of Christ.

D. I Will Take You to Me for a People

Israel belongs to God. They are His people. The phrase “will take you to me” comes from the Hebrew word יָקָץ (lqach, law-kakh) which means “to seize or snatch.” It is also the word which means “to marry someone.” God was going to hold His people close like a husband embraces his wife. He would snatch them from the hands of the Egyptians.

In Christ, we belong to God as His peculiar people. We are accepted in the beloved, even though we are unworthy. The Lord says and wants you to know that you belong to Him when you have put your faith in Christ. If you are saved, you are part of the bride of Christ.

* Romans 14:8- For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.

E. I Will Be to You a God

God is not only someone we talk about, but He is also the One whose hand can be seen in our daily lives. He is God to us!

* Who but God could open the Red Sea like a zipper on a coat.
* Who but God could prepare a path as dry as a bone for them to cross.
* Who but God could blanket the Egyptian army with the waters of the Red Sea.
* Who but God could guide them with a pillar of cloud to cool them and a pillar of fire to warm them on cold desert nights.
* Who but God could be their grocer for 40 years in the middle of the wilderness.
* Who but God could quench their thirst with water from a desert rock.

The Lord promised to be God to them. His same promise is given to you and me.
* 2 Corinthians 6:16- And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

F. I Will Bring You into the Land

The Lord would not only bring them out of Egypt, but would also bring them into the Land of Promise. The Promised Land was a picture of the victorious Christian life. We are saved from a life of wickedness to a life of righteousness. That which is negative is replaced with that which is positive. The Holy Spirit gives us grace and power to live a godly life.

G. I Will Give You the Land for a Heritage

The full enjoyment of your inheritance is future. We already have the earnest or down payment of our inheritance in Christ. Columnist L.M. Boyd recently described the amazing good fortune of a man named Jack Wurm.

In 1949, Mr. Wurm was broke and out of a job. One day he was walking along a San Francisco beach when he came across a bottle with a piece of paper in it. As he read the note, he discovered that it was the last will and testament of Daisy Singer Alexander, heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune. The note read, "To avoid confusion, I leave my entire estate to the lucky person who finds this bottle and to my attorney, Barry Cohen, share and share alike."

According to Boyd, the courts accepted the theory that the heiress had written the note 12 years earlier, and had thrown the bottle into the Thames River in London, from where it had drifted across the oceans to the feet of a penniless and jobless Jack Wurm. His chance discovery netted him over 6 million dollars in cash and Singer stock.

How would you like to have been making Mr. Wurm's footprints on that San Francisco beach? What a find, and yet, 6 million dollars doesn't even begin to compare with our spiritual inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have so much to look forward to. In Christ we now have the Holy Spirit to comfort us. He is our engagement ring or down payment. We have the joy and peace of the Lord, and a home in Heaven that we will enjoy when we leave this world behind.
* Ephesians 1:13-14... In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

II. THE ANGUISH OF THE PEOPLE 6:9

*And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.*

Moses speaks to the people. Notice it is not Aaron doing the talking. Moses spoke but the people would not listen to him. This must have been frustrating. Have you ever spoken to someone, but they would not listen to you? Hope deferred makes the heart sick. The Jews were hoping for a speedy delivery, but there wasn’t one. At first, there were only more problems. Their circumstances drastically changed and overwhelmed them. Life looked impossible!

Imagine how Moses must have felt when the people would not listen to him. He was excited, enthused, and encouraged because he heard from God. When he delivered God’s wonderful message to the people, they responded like rocks....nothing. It did not move or encourage them at all. It did nothing for them.

If you are a preacher, you may go through this same experience. God may bless your soul as you study throughout the week, but when you share with your people what you have learned, they may respond like bumps on a log. Does this mean God’s Word is irrelevant for today? Does this mean you are a crummy preacher? The answer is “No.” Many times the message is great, but the condition of the hearts of God’s people has become cold and hard. They become unteachable and miss out on what God is trying to tell them.

*Zechariah 7:12- Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.*

What does a pastor do when God’s people seem indifferent to the Word? Make sure you are not the problem. If you have been offensive, seek the forgiveness of the church. If that is not the problem, keep trying to do you best in your preaching. Pray and study, study, study the Book. It takes time and it’s hard work, but will yield great
rewards. Be faithful in preaching the wonderful truths of God’s Word. Let me stress to you to carefully and accurately preach the Word, not your philosophy or a bunch of jokes. Many times people are not responding or growing because you are not feeding them anything. Preach the Word! It will have its impact on someone. That is God’s promise to us.

*Isaiah 55:11- So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent.*

Part of the problem of God’s people toward God’s message was the fact they were overwhelmed by their circumstances. They were in “anguish of spirit.” This means “shortness of spirit or breath.” The words signify that their labor was so continual, and their bondage so cruel and oppressive, that they had scarcely time to breathe. They lost heart, were disappointed, and also impatient. Their despair was rooted in their unbelief and bitterness. Moses was looked upon as a deceiver. God was considered as a deserter. Their bondage was more devastating than before. Discouragement is an effective tool of Satan that is used to rob us of God’s blessings and His best for us. Such was the case here with God’s people. Their attitudes were wrong for several reasons.

1. **Their attitude wronged God.**

God did not desert them. He doesn’t desert us either. He was on the eve of fulfilling every promise that He had made to them. God’s time table is not the same as ours. The Bible says that one day with the Lord is as a thousand of our years. How many times have we missed God’s best because of our impatience or because we have turned our back on the Lord? In spite of great pressures, the Lord was on the eve of fulfilling and answering their prayers. Do you realize that David’s greatest calamity came a few days before he was established as the king?

*1 Samuel 30:6 - And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.* This took place after the Amalekites destroyed the city of Ziglag.

God’s message to us is, “Don’t give up on the Lord.” There are possibilities in our impossibilities. The blessings that come from not quitting are amply illustrated in the life of Thomas Edison. On October 18, 1879, a young inventor by the name of Thomas A. Edison sat in his laboratory. He was weary from 13 months of repeated failure in his
search for a filament that would stand the stress of electric current. To add to his problems, the men who had backed him financially were now refusing to put up any additional funds. Having tried every known metal in his experiment, Edison was admittedly baffled.

Casually picking up a bit of lampblack, he mixed it with tar and rolled it into a thin thread. Suddenly the thought struck him, why not try a carbonized cotton fiber? For five hours he worked on the first filament, but it broke before he could remove the mold. Two entire spools of thread were used in similar fruitless efforts.

At last, a perfect strand emerged, only to be ruined when he tried to place it inside a glass tube. Still, Edison refused to admit defeat. He continued to work without sleep for two more days and nights. Eventually he managed to insert one of the crude carbonized threads into a vacuum-sealed bulb. "When we turned on the current," he said, "the sight we had so long desired to see finally met our eyes!" His persistence in the face of the most discouraging odds gave the world one of its greatest inventions -- the electric light! Beloved, don’t give up, especially on the Lord.

* Galatians 6:9- And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

2. Their attitude made their trials more difficult.

If trials are difficult with faith in God’s goodness and help, imagine how difficult they are without faith in the Lord. Could this be the reason why those without Christ turn to alcohol, drugs, or suicide? Their problems may seem impossible.

3. Their attitude robbed themselves from divinely sent comfort and consolation.

Their discouragement led them to reject the very message which would give them relief. Grief can cause one to refuse to be comforted. The heart is very capable of sinking into gloom and despair. This brings us to an important question, "How do we deal with discouragement?"

* Dealing with Our Discouragement

A. Remove any guilt from your life.

Guilt is removed by repentance and confession of sin to the Lord or others we have wronged. Satan will use past failures to keep us from removing guilt and dealing with discouragement.

* James 5:16a- Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.....
B. Take up the shield of faith by quoting God’s truth when you recognize Satan’s lies.
* Lie= God has left us; Truth= I will never leave thee (Hebrews 13:5)
* Lie= No good will come from this; Truth= All things work together for good (Romans 8:28)
* Lie= People hurt us; Truth= We wrestle not against flesh & blood (Ephesians 6:12)
* Lie= God is punishing me and doesn’t care; Truth= For whom the Lord loves, He chastens (Hebrews 12)
* Lie= We are weak; Truth= My strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)

C. Encourage your heart in the Lord by meditating on Scripture.

A Bible that's falling apart probably belongs to someone who isn't. Think on God’s Word.
* Psalm 19:8 - The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
* Psalm 119:97 - O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
* Joshua 1:8- This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

D. Establish a quiet place to be alone with God.

Have you ever wondered why a pigeon walks so funny? According to an interesting article in the Detroit Free Press, a pigeon walks the way it does so it can see where it's going. Because it can't adjust its focus as it moves, the pigeon actually has to bring its head to a complete stop between steps in order to refocus. This is the way it walks: head forward, stop; head back, stop. Don't laugh -- that's how it goes!

In our spiritual walk with the Lord we have the same problem as the pigeon. We have a hard time seeing while we're moving. We also need to stop between steps -- to refocus on where we are in relation to the world and the will of God. That's not to say we have to stop and pray and meditate about every little decision in life. But certainly our walk with the Lord needs to have built into it a pattern of "stops," which enable us to see more clearly before moving on.

* Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

E. Remove yourself from fearful people as much as possible.

Fearful people generate more fear and discourage others.
* Judges 7:3 - Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. God instructed Gideon to remove the fearful from the army.

G. Read the biographies of great Christians.

Seeing how God met their needs in difficult times will encourage you.

H. Avoid making major decisions during times of discouragement.

Dr. Norman Peale said, "Once walking through the twisted little streets of Kowloon in Hong Kong, I came upon a tattoo studio. In the window were displayed samples of the tattoos available. On the chest or arms you could have tattooed an anchor or flag or mermaid or whatever. But what struck me with force were three words that could be tattooed on one's flesh, "Born to lose." I entered the shop in astonishment and, pointing to those words, asked the Chinese tattoo artist, "Does anyone really have that terrible phrase, 'Born to lose,' tattooed on his body?" He replied, "Yes, sometimes." "But," I said, "I just can't believe that anyone in his right mind would do that." The Chinese man simply tapped his forehead and said in broken English, "Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind."

Some folks have been tattooed by discouragement. When you are discouraged, you are not thinking clearly. For example, when Elijah was depressed, he wanted God to kill him. He didn't want to live at all. This was not a good time for making any kind of decisions in his life.

* 1 Kings 19:4 - But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die: and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

I. Overcome the pride of not telling your authorities, family, or friends that you are discouraged and need prayer.

* Proverbs 27:17 - Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

* Proverbs 11:2 - When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

Jacques Cousteau reported the strange behavior of a dolphin he sighted near Corsica. The great animal was not swimming, it was just watching the boat draw nearer and nearer. They decided that the dolphin was sick, so they netted it and examined it. There was neither resistance
nor fear on the part of the dolphin. There was no sign of any wound or illness. Yet an hour later, the animal was dead.

The conclusion Cousteau reached was that the dolphin may have been ostracized by other dolphins. When they are excluded in this way, they become desperate, attach themselves to anyone or anything, and sometimes in their sadness, they “will” themselves to die.

Like the dolphin, we need fellowship. We need companionship. We need support and encouragement from one another. This is why it is important to share our discouragement with those who care about us. When they know there is a need, they will do what they can to encourage us.

**J. Focus on God’s reputation.**

Make sure what you are doing is God’s work and do it God’s way. If you do, God will show Himself strong on your behalf.

*Isaiah 43:2*- *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

**K. Offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to God.**

Recall the Lord’s blessings and thank Him for what He has done. There is power in praise. Praise Him especially for the possibilities that He has made out of our impossibilities.

*Hebrews 13:15*- *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*
Chapter 15
When Failure is No Failure
Exodus 6:10-30

Our last message emphasized the possibility of the impossible when the Lord does His will and executes His power. The Pharaoh got meaner. Israel’s provisions got leaner. God, however, encouraged His man by proclaiming seven things He would do. The Lord promised to bring them out of Egyptian slavery and free them. He would be their God and bring them into the land that He promised them.

God’s people, however, were deeply depressed and discouraged. They were no different than the way we get sometimes. We closed the last section by listing ten steps on how to properly deal with discouragement. Moses has been listing one excuse after another on why he can’t serve God. Here are his excuses.

1. Lack of fitness, ‘Who am I, that I should go?’ (3:11);
2. Lack of words, ‘What shall I say?’ (3:13);
3. Lack of authority, ‘They will not believe me’ (4:1);
4. Lack of power of speech, ‘I am not eloquent’ (4:10);
5. Lack of special adaptation, ‘Send by whom Thou wilt send’ (4:13);
6. Lack of success at his first attempt, ‘Neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all’ (5:23);
7. Lack of acceptance, ‘The children of Israel have not hearkened unto me’ (6:12)

As we approach this section of Exodus, we will deal with that which takes the wind out of our sails, the glow from our eyes, and the spring in our steps. We are going to learn how to face failure and identify what true failure is and is not.
Chapter 15...When Failure is No Failure....6:10-30

1. THE ARGUMENTS  6:10-13, 29-30

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [11] Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. [12] And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? [13] And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. That the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I am the Lord: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. [30] And Moses said before the Lord, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

Moses has failed to get through to his people at this point. He has been knocked down, but not knocked out. He is pressed, but not pinned. With the wind knocked out of Moses, the Lord says to him, “Get back up boy! Go into Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go out of the land.”

This is an important element of revival. If you fall, flounder, fail, or forsake the Lord, get back up! Confess your sin to the Lord, seek His forgiveness, forsake your sin, and go forward the best you can. Try again, get into the battle again, and serve the Lord. Some might say, “My sin is terrible.” If so, don’t do it any more. We all understand what sin does to us.

Notice that the Lord gets Moses back into the battle right away. He does not give Moses much time to sulk and go into deep depression. God is like a father who is trying to teach his child to ride a bike and he falls. The father gets his child back on the bike and tells him to try again. The Lord knows that the longer a person is out of the will of God, the harder it is to get him back on track.

Take note also that the Lord brings Moses back to the place of his alleged defeat. Moses is suffering from stinkin thinkin. He is discouraged at the despair of his people. He is also not thrilled about having to go before the Pharaoh again. Imagine the response of Moses when the Lord said, “Moses, go see Pharaoh again.” Can you see him saying, “What! See who? Say what? Lord, my own people don’t believe me. How do you expect Pharaoh too?”

God wants Moses to go to Pharaoh because Moses has need of learning some important lessons that would result in his confrontation
with the king. He would learn needed lessons about faith, trusting in God, in His power, and courage.

Beloved, if we are going to grow spiritually, we must confront the areas of our weaknesses and failures and become conquerors in Christ. Christians get out of God’s will because of defeat in areas of sinful habits, disobedience to God’s Word, bitterness, conflicts with others, and robbing God of His tithe. They stay defeated, get out of church, or they switch churches without resolving or overcoming their problems or conflicts. When this happens, the same old problems tend to surface again. Why? The problems have not been properly dealt with.

We need to understand that if we run from obstacles that are hindering us, the Lord may put the obstacles on our path again in order to develop our maturity and character. Where a person leaves the will of God, that is the place where they get back into the will of God. For Jonah, it was rebellion and fear over Ninevah. After he got out of God’s will, the Word of the Lord came unto him a second time stating that he should again rise and go to Ninevah. For Abraham, it was a lack of faith and disobedience in going to Egypt because of a famine that got him out of God’s will. He got back into God’s will when he returned to the place God wanted him. Christians today get out of the will of God when they rebel against principles of God’s Word. They resist submission to what the Bible says and they stop growing. If they come to a point of obedience to God’s Word, they can start growing again in the Lord.

Moses is also discouraged over a revived sense of personal deficiencies and weaknesses. His claim, “I am a failure because I have uncircumcised lips which means ‘I am unable to talk eloquently.’” Moses has a great fear of failure. It is one of the pains of life that we just cannot bear. No one wants to fail. Unfortunately, we are bad judges of identifying failure.

Our service to the Lord Jesus Christ must not be conditioned on how folks respond to our message. We are to do what God says whether people believe God's message or do not believe it. God sent Moses back to Pharaoh again and again even though Pharaoh never believed. Our calling is simply not dependent on whether people believe or not. It is dependent upon God's commands. What Moses considered a defeat, was actually in essence, a delay. His so called “failure” was not one at all.

Let me ask at this point a question, “Has Moses done what God has told him to do so far?” The answer is “Yes, even though he was fearful.”
Thus, Moses is not a failure. It is the doing of our duty God’s way and our obedience to God’s Word that we are held accountable for, not the failure or success of the response of others which may accompany the work. I know that goes contrary to what preachers are being taught in some Bible colleges today. You are considered a success if your church is big, but you are ordinary or a nobody if your church is not big. How tragic that many have swallowed that philosophy only to quit the ministry because their church was not big. Many times people feel like failures because of a false notion of what success is and because of an incorrect understanding of the will of God.

If you are a godly man or woman that has endeavored to obey God’s Word and do God’s will for your life, you are a success in the eyes of the Lord and that is what really matters. You do not have to be honored or recognized by men to be considered a success. Your value or importance to God is not based upon the recognition of men. Beloved, just do your best for God and don’t worry about honor, recognition, popularity, prestige, and praise. You will enjoy these things at the Judgment Seat of Christ if you have been faithful to the Lord.

Moses was experiencing a delay with Pharaoh and Israel. Delays in God’s service are not necessarily defeats. Take Adoniram Judson for example. Was Judson a failure? By men’s standards, he might have been considered one. He preached in Burma for six years before he baptized his first convert to Christ. The first six years were a delay, but not a defeat. Thirty years after his death, there were 63 churches in Burma, 163 missionaries, and 7000 baptized converts. Just think what would not have happened if he quit in the first six years.

By current standards of success, Jesus might be considered a failure. Let’s look at how Jesus measured up to these standards: Was He popular? No. He was not well-liked. In fact, after one of His sermons, all of His followers deserted Him, except for the Twelve Apostles. Did He have political power? No. He was a political failure. All levels of government first rejected Him. Then they conspired to kill Him. Did He have lots of friends? No. His friends often hurt Him, eventually abandoned Him, and one of them betrayed Him to death. Did He have money and possessions? No. He had no house, no "wheels", no world headquarters, no Christian amusement park. Was the Lord respected by His peers? No. His professional peers (Pharisees) rejected His work. Despite His apparent failure by these standards, Jesus Christ has changed the lives of millions of men and women across the centuries. How could
He, in light of His failures? He did His Father's will.

Beloved, the Lord wants us to be faithful and obedient to His will. We are to labor onward, believing in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not. We are not to take the plough and look back. We are to focus on God's ability when we are neck-deep in impossibility and it looks like failure is imminent. The Bible stresses this over and again.

* Jeremiah 32:17 - Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

* Jeremiah 32:27 - Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

* Luke 18:27 - And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.


You may be facing impossibilities in school, business, home, in your marriage, with your kids, or in your job. Obey the Lord, trust and depend upon Him.

Some men are failures because they believe in their head that they are a success, when in reality, they are not. One man put it this way, "I climbed the ladder of success only to find my ladder was leaning against the wrong wall." If a person sacrifices his marriage, family, testimony for Christ, or his faith to be a success in the eyes of the world, he is not a success at all according to God's standard.

Moses needed an attitude adjustment about failure and success. He gave God his excuses again and God told him to get back to Pharaoh and Israel. He was to tell them it was time to go. Many Christians today have the same fears as Moses. Some Christians are so afraid of failure that they become reserved, overly cautious, and uninvolved in life. They follow a policy of guarded living, holding back time, talents, and treasure from God's service. Their motto is: To keep from failing -- don't try!

On the other hand, those who are willing to make mistakes and risk failure are the ones who ultimately achieve great things. Instead of being filled with fear, they go forward in faith. Problems are challenges. While they may not all be solved, these courageous people would rather live with that reality than have a clean record of no failures and no accomplishments. Benjamin Franklin said one time, "The man who does things makes many mistakes, but he never makes the biggest mistake of all -- doing nothing."
Men who have accomplished great things in secular and spiritual matters have done so many times by overcoming their failures. Men like Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth were successful failures in the world of baseball. Ty Cobb was thrown out more times trying to steal than any other man in baseball history. Babe Ruth struck out more times than any man in baseball history. Hank Aaron, who broke Babe Ruth's record, has struck out more times than 99% of the players who make it to the major leagues. Nobody -- but nobody -- considers them failures and few people even remember their failures. Virtually everyone remembers their successes.

Enrico Caruso's voice failed to carry the high notes so many times his voice teacher advised him to quit. He kept singing and was recognized as the greatest tenor in the world. Thomas Edison's teacher called him a dunce and he later failed over 14,000 times in his efforts to perfect the incandescent light. Abraham Lincoln was well known for his failures but nobody considers him a failure. Albert Einstein and Werner von Braun both flunked courses in math. Henry Ford was broke at age 40. Yet, it was Henry Ford who said, "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." Spiritual success is a result of not quitting, but faithful obedience to God's Word and will.

In verse eleven, notice an important principle about obedience. It says, "Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land." It is no longer a three-day journey that the Lord is commanding. It is a permanent exit from the land. This message would be even more difficult to give to Pharaoh because the demands are greater. Who said that delivering God's Word was easy? The principle here is "If God lays a light burden upon us and we refuse, we may expect Him to exchange our light burden for a heavier one." The Lord has a way of increasing pressure until we obey. We better accept the first cross that He offers to us. When we do this, that is success in God's eyes. When we resist His commands, the pressure is increased to submit. When we look in the book of Judges, we find that God gradually increased His punishment upon a disobedient Israel. Israel failed because they would not listen or obey the Lord.

When we examine the ten plagues of Egypt, we find that the pressure on Pharaoh was gradually increased in the severity of the plagues. Even though the pressure increased, God was still giving the king the opportunity to change his mind. God could have brought down judgment upon Pharaoh for his scornful rebellion and rejection of the
first request given to him by Moses, but the Lord did not do that at all. God gave Pharaoh ample opportunity to yield to His demands. Pharaoh would not be punished until he had repeatedly rejected the requests to let Israel go. Before Pharaoh will be punished with the signs and wonders, God will graciously give him precepts by which he could escape the punishment. Matthew Henry describes this act of God's grace well when he says, "God repeats his precepts before he begins his punishments."

II. THE ANCESTRY OF MOSES 6:14-27

These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben. [15] And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon. [16] And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years. [17] The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. [18] And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred thirty and three years. [19] And the sons of Merari; Mahali and Mushi: these are the families of Levi according to their generations. [20] And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years. [21] And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. [22] And the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. [23] And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [24] And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these are the families of the Korhites. [25] And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these are the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families. [26] These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. [27] These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.

This family tree shows that Moses descended not from Reuben, Simeon, or Judah, but from the tribe of Levi. We learn that
his father's name is Amram (Exodus 6:20) and his mother's name is Jochebed. The genealogy also confirms that Aaron is Moses' brother. Some details of Aaron's family are recorded to substantiate the high priest position of Eleazar, Aaron's successor, and Phinehas, Eleazar's successor. This family tree gives hope for the failure. It reveals that where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. Reuben lost his birthright when he committed adultery with Bithah. Simeon and Levi treacherously murdered the men of Shechem and were judged by being scattered throughout the land of Israel.

The Levites, however, turned their curse and judgment into a blessing. Their devotion to the Lord and zeal at the golden calf incident elevated them. This event was a key turning point for the tribe because they obeyed God's Word. The priesthood was to come from the tribe of Levi. Their failure turned into a success and blessing when they obeyed the Lord. They would live among all the tribes of Israel.

Moses came from the third son of Levi. The number three is the number of resurrection in the Bible. God was beginning to revive this tribe under the leadership of Moses. Levi means "joined." They were, in fact, the mediating tribe and are a reminder of mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Christ, our sin debt was paid and people can be reconciled to God by their faith in Jesus for their salvation. Jesus arose from the dead and is presently at the right hand of God the Father, making intercession for us. We are joined and brought into fellowship with the Lord through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He takes our failures and turns them into victory. May He be praised!

* Romans 8:34- Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

* 2 Corinthians 5:18- And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.
Chapter 16
From Coldness to Boldness

Exodus 7:1-13

Exodus chapter seven begins the second literary division of the book of Exodus. The first six chapters deal with the person of the deliverer...Moses. Chapters seven through twelve deal with the work of redemption as God frees His people from bondage. This section begins the first great concentrated period of biblical miracles. The second great period will be during the days of Elijah and Elisha. The third period will be during the time of Jesus and the apostles.

Chapter seven and onward will reveal a marked change in Moses. Something has happened to this guy. He is no longer timid, hesitant, and discouraged. That is how we left him. Moses has gone from coldness to boldness. Notice verse one.

I. THE EXALTATION OF MOSES 7:1

And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

Moses has gone from excuses to exaltation. This verse instructs us plainly that God does not rank men as mankind does. The Lord made Moses like God in the eyes of Pharaoh. This is ironic because Pharaoh was looked upon as a god in Egypt and he considered himself to be God, yet he is ranked lowest on the totem pole of Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh. The Lord was popping the king’s balloon. Moses has been so concerned about his reputation and failure, but the Lord took care of these petty excuses. He will take care of you too. Just obey Him and do His will. Stop worrying about your petty prestige, prominence, or popularity. Get a life and get out of pastoral politics. Be concerned about what God thinks of your life. In so doing, you will develop boldness in your life.
* Psalm 75:5-7... Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck. [6] For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. [7] But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. The word "horn" means "defiance, strutting, or self-confidence." We are not to raise our fist in defiance against Heaven. We are not to count our chickens before they are hatched either. We are not to speak with a stiff neck which means "stubborn rebellion or pride" against God.

II. THE ENTIRETY OF THE MESSAGE 7:2

Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

God expects 100% obedience from us. Moses was to speak what the Lord commanded. This is better said, than done. For some, they find that God’s messages are difficult to deliver. They can be controversial, conflicting, and convicting. People do not like to be told they are sinners, condemned to Hell, and that Christ is the ONLY way to Heaven. They don’t like it when their lifestyle is condemned and labeled as sinful. Paul offered a warning about these kinds of responses.

* 2 Timothy 4:3-5... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; [4] And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. [5] But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

When you are concerned about the Lord’s opinion of your life, then delivering His message will be much easier. In my ministry, I have found that preaching expository, verse-by-verse messages through a book in the Bible act as a shield against the accusations and anger of people who may claim I am picking on them. Our folks know what topics are coming up in the weeks ahead when we preach through a book. They know I am not picking on anyone when I deal with certain sins. If a sensitive issue arises, I deal with it because it’s there in the verse. When we go verse by verse, we cover everything God covers in His Word. This kind of preaching helps people to learn what the Bible says about a large variety of topics.

Here, we find that God’s message is not popular. Israel was to be
sent out of the land. If you are going to deliver difficult messages and go from coldness to boldness, you must be committed to obeying the Lord.

III. THE EMBITTERED HEART 7:3-4

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. [4] But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.

God said that He would harden the heart of the king and warns Moses that Pharaoh is not going to listen to him. One sign and wonder after another would be used to wake up this pompous king. Yet, his pride would destroy his family, his nation, and eventually himself. His arrogance was like water on concrete mix. It ruined his heart and stiffened his will. When men refuse to repent when hit with a plague, God simply brings another plague. How often this happens in the world with individuals and with nations, but they just don’t get the message and continue to suffer.

What does this word “harden” mean? The word “harden” is a figurative word which can mean “twisting as with a rope.” God was twisting the heart of this king of Egypt. He was going to squeeze out what was in his heart like a man who squeezes a wet towel. The Lord was forcing Pharaoh to do what was already in his heart. He would expose Pharaoh for what he truly was in the deep ravines of his heart and soul.

Pharaoh first hardened himself, then God hardened him later as an act of judgment. God in His wonderful grace and longsuffering, gave Pharaoh an opportunity to obey the Lord, but he refused to listen to the Lord and obey Him. Few forms of judgment in this life are as severe upon mankind as the judgment in which God lets you have your sinful way. If you want a hard heart and persist in a hard heart, God will see to it that your request is granted. If you insist upon doing something or getting something which God forbids, the Lord in His judgment may go ahead and let you do or get what you want, but it will not be long before you will loath the day you ever wanted your own way because of the misery you have created for yourself.

Beloved, God NEVER compels a man to be an unbeliever. His grace is for all men, not a select few, but His grace can be resisted
because men are given the choice to obey or reject the Lord. God's grace is extended to all men, but His grace can be resisted to the point where you won't listen anymore. The Holy Spirit can be grieved. This issue of a hard heart is dealt with all throughout the Bible.

* Proverbs 28:14- Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

The word "hardeneth" is from the Hebrew word *qashah {kaw-shaw'}* and carries the meaning "severe, harsh, stubborn, obstinate, difficult or stiff." This same word is used to describe severe labor pains of a mother giving birth. The person who has a stubborn, harsh heart will fall. This word "fall" is a very strong word. It is from the Hebrew word *naphal {naw-fal'}* which means "to cast or throw down violently or to be knocked out." The hard hearted will fall into "mischief" which means "evil, distress, misery, injury, or calamity." This is what eventually happens to Pharaoh and Egypt.

* Proverbs 29:1- He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept correction will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery. The destruction from their hardness will be swift. This word "destruction" is from the Hebrew word *shabar {shaw-bar'}* which means "to shatter, break in pieces, or to crush." The damage from their decision is beyond repair, like a can that is crushed or a glass that is shattered into hundreds of pieces. This is an adequate description of what happens to Pharaoh and the Egyptian army.

* Hebrews 3:13- But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
* Acts 28:27- For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
* Romans 1:28 - And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

A man was driving down a bumpy country road when he saw a bag of cement beside the road. It appeared to have fallen off a delivery truck as it hit one of the bumps in the rough road. Being a person who did not like to see anything wasted, the man stopped to pick up the lost bag of cement. When he reached down to pick up this heavy bag, to his surprise, he discovered it was not soft and limber, as he had expected, but
had solidified into an immovable piece of cement.

Beloved, often our lives are like that bag of cement. They take on shapes that were not intended and become hardened in that shape. That bag of cement was meant to become a part of some beautiful, useful structure but, because it did not reach its place of service, because it was not used for its intended purpose, it became a useless rock in the form of a bag of cement. God wants to make something beautiful of your life. Don't let His will and purpose be thwarted by spiritual neglect or a bump in the road of life. Don't let bitterness and anger toward the Lord, rob you of His wonderful blessings.

**When we resist the Lord, we become cold.** As the sun can soften butter, it can also harden clay. God's Word can soften or harden you based on your response to it. As God was squeezing Pharaoh, revealing what was in his heart, He will do the same to us. When we are judged by the Lord, we will be seen as we really are with no camouflage at all.

*2 Corinthians 5:10-* For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Our rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal our life and our works. Realizing that we will give an accounting of our lives one day should motivate us to go from coldness to boldness and get involved in serving the Lord and reaching people for the Lord Jesus Christ.

**IV. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE EGYPTIANS** 7:5

*And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.*

God squeezed Pharaoh to demonstrate His power and the fact that He is God, not the king of Egypt. The result would be that the Egyptians would know that the Lord is God and believe. Did some of the Egyptians believe? The answer is “Yes.” They were among the mixed multitude that departed from Egypt.

*Exodus 12:38-* And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.
V. THE ELDERLY SERVANTS  7:6-9

And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they. [7] And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh. [8] And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, [9] When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.

Moses and Aaron did exactly what God told them to do. They were obedient to the Lord. It may seem difficult at times to obey the Lord. Go ahead and just obey Him. Obey Him in tithing, baptism, being faithful, witnessing, and standing for Christ.

Moses is 80 and Aaron is 83. The lesson here is don’t let your age become and excuse for not serving God. They both still have 40 years left to serve the Lord. Moses died at the age of 120 (Deut. 34:7) and Aaron at 123 (Numbers 33:38-39). Do not use your age as an excuse for doing nothing at all.

"The world stands aside," said David Jordan, "to let anyone pass who knows where he is going." This applies to those, who learn where they are going late in life as well as for the young.

* At age 53, Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first female prime minister.
* At 64, Francis Chichester sailed alone around the world in a 53-foot yacht. At 65, Winston Churchill became British prime minister for the first time and started the epic struggle against Hitler.
* At 72, Golda Meir became prime minister of Israel. At 75, Ed Delano of California bicycled 3100 miles in 33 days to attend his 50th college reunion in Worcester, Massachusetts.
* At 80, Grandma Moses, who had started painting in her late 70s, had her first one-woman exhibit.
* At 81, Benjamin Franklin skillfully mediated between disagreeing factions at the U.S. Constitutional Convention.
* At 80, Winston Churchill returned to the House of Commons as a member of parliament and also exhibited 62 of his paintings.
* At 96, George C. Selbach scored a 110-yard hole-in-one at Indian River, Michigan.
* On his 100th birthday, ragtime pianist Eubie Blake exclaimed, "If I'd known I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself."
* Beloved, serve the Lord until you drop.

**VI. THE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH  7:10-13**

A. The Stick  vs. 10a

"And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh,..."

Aaron obeyed God, cast down his rod before the king and it turned into a snake.

B. The Serpent  vs.10b

"... and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent."

The word "serpent" comes from the Hebrew word *tannîyn* {tan-neen'} which means "dragon or crocodile." They occupied a large place in the worship and religion of Egypt. Egyptians worshiped all kinds of creatures, birds, insects, etc.

* Romans 1:22-23...Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, [23] And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

In Egypt, Sebak was the deity of evil with a crocodile head. He represented God the creator. Apepi was the enemy of the solar god and had a crocodile form. He was attributed to stirring up lightning, thunder, and storms, filling the skies with blackness and fog.

C. The Sorcerers  vs. 11

"Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments."

The reason Pharaoh called the magicians was to hopefully obtain from them, a reason for rejecting the message the miracle of Aaron's rod gave. If Pharaoh can obtain an equal or superior miracle from his magicians, who represent the gods of Egypt, then he does not have to give respect to Moses and Aaron or to the God they
claimed sent them—which would mean Pharaoh would not have to grant their request to worship or to leave. The wise men were the educated ones. They knew the occult arts. The sorcerers muttered magic spells and formulas. The magicians were the bearers of sacred words and the scribes of hieroglyphic writings.

D. The Swallowing vs. 12

“For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.”

These men duplicated the miracle of Moses, most likely through Satanic powers. This is possible.

* 2 Timothy 3:8- Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Satan has the ability to imitate parts of God’s work in order to lead others astray. He has the ability to offer all kinds of counterfeits, miracles, signs, and wonders to deceive mankind. Satan likes to simulate, to duplicate, to imitate Divine deeds and works. He does this in the spiritual realm in order to deceive mankind into rejecting God’s truth and embracing error. Here, it was done to keep Pharaoh from believing God, and Pharaoh took the bait and embraced unbelief as we will see more about shortly.

Satan's counterfeiting of God's work is repeatedly seen and warned about in the Scriptures and in experience. The Apostle Paul speaks of this simulating work of Satan in his epistles.

* 2 Corinthians 11:13-15... For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. [14] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. [15] Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

* 2 Thessalonians 2:9- Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

* Matthew 24:24- For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

In the days of the early church, gnostic gospels were written and placed alongside the true Gospels. Some of these have claimed that Jesus told Judas to betray Him. Other gnostic books claim that Jesus was
married to Mary Magdalene. Such writings are bogus and deceitful. They are counterfeits and are offered as substitutes for the truth of Scripture.

The fact that Aaron’s rod swallowed up the magician’s demonstrates the power of God is greater than Satan’s power. There is a great message here. Aaron’s rod will later blossom. Life will come from death. His rod is a type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the victor over the old Serpent, the Dragon...Satan. One day, God’s power will totally swallow up and destroy Satan once and for all. Good riddens! Jesus arose, conquering death, sin, and Satan. It is most encouraging to our faith to know that when God so pleases, He can swallow up any of His enemies. The enemies of God may put on quite a show and deceive many, but God can take care of the best the enemy has to offer.
* There is coming a day when God shall wipe all tears from our eyes.
* There is coming a day when death will claim its last victim and it will be no more.
* There is coming a day when funeral homes will be put out of business. No more loved ones will be laid into the arms of this cold earth. There will be no more sorrow, crying, pain, or “Good-byes.”
* There is coming a day when Satan will no longer hinder and harass mankind with hellish schemes and temptations.

E. The Sureness of God’s Word  vs. 13
“And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.”

In the Hebrew, the first "he" is not in the text in the way the KJV translators have rendered it. The Hebrew simply says that Pharaoh's heart was hard or grew hard. In other places in Scripture, it is correctly stated that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but in this text, the "he" is not supported by the Hebrew. The verb employed is not active, but neuter; and 'his heart' is not the accusative, but the nominative. What this means is Pharaoh's heart was too hard for the sign [miracles] to make much impression on it. The emphasis here is that the coldness of Pharaoh's heart kept him from letting the miracles with the snakes and rods influence him positively. Pharaoh's heart had become hard because of sin and a hard heart will not be receptive to God's revelations, but will rebel against the decrees of the Lord.
Pharaoh’s heart hardened as God had said. The Lord knew this was going to happen. Pharaoh focused on the miracles, not the message. Matching miracles was a test of power and credentials. God’s Word is to be the basis of faith, beloved, not miracles. This error that Pharaoh made is the same one that many are making today. Mark it down, if a miracle of God takes place, the miracle will not lead people to contradict or disobey God’s Word. It will not rob God of His glory. We are not to be on a quest for supernatural miracles to get in touch with God. We have His supernatural Word that can speak to our heart if we will let it speak to us. God’s Word can help us go from coldness to boldness.

We marvel, not that Christ performed miracles, but rather that He performed so few. He, who could have stormed the citadels of men with mighty battalions of angels, let men spit upon Him and crucify Him.

Oswald Chambers
Chapter 17
Red Runs the River
Exodus 7:14-25

God in His grace has been giving Pharaoh opportunities to obey Him and let His people go from Egypt, but to no avail. Pharaoh’s heart is hard and stubborn. He feels that he doesn’t have to obey the Lord since he does not know Him. People today feel the same way. The Bible makes it clear if you do not obey the Lord and bow to Him now, you will eventually bow to Him later, but it will be too late.

*Philippians 2:9-11.. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: [10] That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; [11] And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Pharaoh’s hard heart has not cost him anything yet. God in His mercy demonstrated His power by changing Aaron’s rod into some sort of dragon or crocodile that swallowed the serpents of the magicians (7:12). The rebellion of this king, however, is about to get real expensive. Rebellion against God is always very costly. We lose when we rebel against the Lord. The word “plague” means “a blow or a stroke,” and indicates that the hand of the Lord was going to bring judgment upon the Egyptians.

With the first plague, or blow on Pharaoh, a new section of the book unfolds. Until now the dominant focus has been on preparing the deliverer for the Exodus. From this point, the account will focus on preparing Pharaoh for it. God is about to send ten plagues or judgments upon Pharaoh and Egypt. It is clear from the outset that God could have delivered His people simply and suddenly, but He chose to draw out the process with the series of plagues. These ten plagues are grouped into three cycles of three plagues each, with the tenth being a climatic judgment. A look at these plagues reveals interesting insights, contrasts, and comparisons. Plagues 1, 4, and 7 begin each cycle and are introduced by the words, “in the morning.”

In cycle one, the three plagues were loathsome, affecting the comfort of the Egyptians. Israel was afflicted too. Aaron’s rod was used
in these plagues of bloody water, frog infestation, gnats or a mosquito pestilence.

In cycle two, the plagues were bothersome, affecting their possessions such as land, cattle, and themselves. No rod or staff was used and only the Egyptians were affected. The plagues consisted of a pestilence of flies, the death of the livestock, and bothersome boils on their bodies.

In cycle three, the plagues were natural disasters bringing desolation and death to the Egyptians. Moses’ staff was used and in the final plague, the firstborn died. God knew how to get the attention of those concerned. He messed with their comfort, their possessions, and their health. The longer sinners resist God’s will and refuse to hear His Word, the “louder” He has to speak to them through His judgments.

In all three cycles, a warning was issued in the first two judgments of each cycle, but no warning was given before the final judgment of each cycle. These ten plagues may have occurred over a period of at least nine months. The Nile rises in July and August (Plague 1). The barley ripens in January (Plague 7). The east winds bring locust in March and April (Plague 8). The Passover is in April (Plague 10).

* What are the Purposes of the Plagues?
1. First, they reveal the omnipotence of God and the impotence of Pharaoh who was considered a god by the Egyptians. God was trying to get the king to let His people go from the land.
2. The plagues demonstrate God’s protective power in shielding His people and that He cares for us.
   * Exodus 8:19- Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.
3. They were a divine visitation of God’s wrath and a punishment of Pharaoh and the Egyptians for the cruel treatment of the Jews.
   * Exodus 10:16- Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you.
4. The plagues were also a judgment of God upon the demons and fake gods of Egypt.
   * Exodus 12:12- For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.
   * Numbers 33:4- For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the
Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.

5. The judgments were a solemn warning to other nations that God would curse those who curse Israel.
* Genesis 12:3- And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
* Joshua 2:8-9. And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; [9] And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.
* 1 Samuel 4:8- Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

6. The plagues were a series of testings for Israel that were designed to soften their hearts and create a desire to leave Egypt. They had been in Egypt for 400 years, a country steeped in idolatry. God would use the plagues to deliver His people.
* Deuteronomy 4:33-35 ... Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? [34] Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? [35] Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.
* Exodus 15:11- Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? This was the result of the plagues and their departure.

7. The judgments were designed to strengthen the faith of Moses. He needed faith for the wilderness journey that was ahead of him.
* James 1:3- Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Unbelief puts our circumstances between us and God, but faith puts God between us and our circumstances.

When we look at the plagues, we will also note that many of the judgments and events in Egypt will take place again during the Tribulation period, described in the book of Revelation. In spite of all the plagues, none of them softened Pharaoh's heart. He let them go after the death of the firstborn, only to pursue Israel later to his own death. Pharaoh was a proud man. Notice verse fourteen.
I. THE DEFIANCE OF PHARAOH 7:14

And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

The heart of this king is hardened or dull again. It was hardening against conviction. He had to realize that God was behind all these miracles. The Lord was giving him an opportunity to obey. This is consistent with God's character. He is merciful and longsuffering, giving men time to repent before God's judgment falls.

*Lamentations 3:22-23... It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [23] They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

In Noah's day, men had 120 years after they were notified that judgment would come upon the world. Before Israel was taken into captivity in Babylon, prophets were sent to warn the nation. Jonah was sent to Ninevah and warned the people to repent lest they be destroyed. God in His mercy uses gentle methods first to get us to repent before He uses much stronger methods. Our Lord is a merciful Lord.

When the infidel Robert G. Ingersoll was delivering his lectures against Christ and the Bible, his oratorical ability usually assured him of a large crowd. One night after an inflammatory speech in which he severely attacked man's faith in the Savior, he dramatically took out his watch and said, "I'll give God a chance to prove that He exists and is almighty. I challenge Him to strike me dead within 5 minutes!" First there was silence, then people became uneasy. Some left the hall, unable to take the nervous strain of the occasion, and one woman fainted. At the end of the allocated time, the atheist exclaimed derisively, "See! There is no God. I am still very much alive!"

After the lecture a young fellow said to a Christian lady, "Well, Ingersoll certainly proved something tonight!" Her reply was memorable. "Yes, he did," she said. "He demonstrated that even the most defiant sinner cannot exhaust the patience of the Lord in just 5 minutes!" Another man added, "As I was coming downtown today, a belligerent little fellow came running out of an alley, daring me to hit him. Do you suppose I actually struck him, just because he challenged me to do so? In the same way, our Lord will not strike everyone dead who defies Him. We should be thankful that in this age He is still operating in grace and desires to show His love rather than His wrath." Mark it down, however, He will eventually show His wrath one day to those who reject Christ. If
Mr. Ingersoll died without Christ, he is in Hell now and will never escape its torments.

Pharaoh is about to learn when you reject God’s grace and mercy, you will reap the consequences.

* Romans 1:25-26... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. [26] For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

**Disobedience hardens us.** We can become so hard that we lose our desire to turn to the Lord and we end us saving destruction for ourselves.

* Romans 2:4-5.. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? [5] But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; God never allows rebellion or scoffing without eventual judgment unless you repent.

* Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

**People are not lost because they are hardened, they are hardened because they are lost.** Turn to Christ today if you have never done this. The Lord does get His way. He can apply the pressure to bring us to a point where we finally submit our will to Him. We can acknowledge Him as Lord now or after we die, but then it will be too late. Our excuses will be unacceptable with God.

* Romans 14:11- For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ
    And He shows me His plan for me.
The plan of my life as it might have been
    Had He had His way, and I see.
How I blocked Him here, and I checked Him there,
    And I would not yield my will --
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,
    Grief, though He loves me still?
He would have me rich, and I stand there poor,
    Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing
    Down the paths I cannot retrace.
Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break
With the tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands,
I shall bow my uncrowned head...
Lord of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand;
Take me and break me, mold me to
The pattern Thou hast planned!

***Author Unknown***

II. THE DIRECTIONS FOR MOSES  7:15-16

Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water; and thou shalt stand by the river's brink against he come; and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. [16] And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

God tells Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hard. Tomorrow morning, go to him. He will be by the river. Tell him that the Lord told me to tell you to let His people go, but so far you won’t listen and obey. Get with it Pharaoh!” Imagine this! This would take courage for sure. How did Moses get away with this? The answer is “God protected Moses and Pharaoh was leery.”

III. THE DETAILS OF DESTRUCTION  7:17-21

Thus saith the Lord, In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. [18] And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. [19] And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. [20] And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were
in the river were turned to blood. [21] And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

Moses is to inform Pharaoh of the first plague. God is going to change the water of the Nile River into blood. Fish will die and stink and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water. Streams, rivers, ponds, and pools would all be affected. Eighty years earlier, Pharaoh’s daughter was at this river and rescued baby Moses. Moses faces a different king now. The tables are turned and the Nile River becomes a place of death for the Egyptians instead of Jewish baby boys. In this first plague, God dealt first with the instrument of death that killed thousands of Jewish baby boys that were drowned and perhaps eaten by crocodiles. The bloody Nile would be a reminder of the bloodshed eighty years earlier. God was confronting Egypt with its sin.

The Lord was also proving to Pharaoh and the Egyptians the weakness or non-existence of Egypt’s gods. One reason why the Pharaoh may have been at the river was to worship it. The Nile River was worshiped as a god. It represented the chief god of Egypt. Hapi or Apis, the bull god, was the god of the Nile. Isis was the goddess of the Nile. Khnum was the ram god and was the guardian of the Nile. The Nile River was considered as the body and blood of Osiris himself. The yearly flooding symbolized the miraculous rebirth of Osiris, god of earth and vegetation according to the Egyptians.

What was the blood? There are a variety of thoughts on this topic. The sources for the Nile's inundation are the equatorial rains that fill the White Nile, which originates in east-central Africa (present-day Uganda) and flows sluggishly through swamps in eastern Sudan, the Blue Nile and the Atbara River, which both fill with melting snow from the mountains. They become raging torrents filled with tons of red soil from the basins of both these rivers. The higher the inundation, the deeper the color of the red waters. This gives the water the appearance of blood. This is one theory.

Another theory is the river turned red from a type of algae, known as flagellates, that come from the Sudan swamps and Lake Tana along the White Nile River. This algae produces the stench and the deadly fluctuation in the oxygen level of the river that proves to be so fatal to the fish. It is also known as “Red Tide.” Such a process, at the command of
God, is believed to be the case for this first plague rather than any chemical change of the water into red and white corpuscles.

There is another thought about the bloody river. God smote the heart of the nation by turning the water to blood. The Hebrew word for blood is *dam* {dawn} and it occurs over one hundred fifty times in the Pentateuch. It is always used of real biological blood, except in two passages (Gen 49:11; Deut 32:14;) where it speaks figuratively for the "blood" of the grape. If Moses had simply meant that the Nile turned "red," he could have used any of several words to signify that color. I believe this was some sort of blood. I can't explain it because it was a miracle of God. It even affected the water that was in the storage containers. The water and food supply would be severely affected by this contamination.

* What was loved was now loathed.
* What was desired was now despised.
* What was worshiped was now wretched.
* The object of adoration was an abomination.

The Bible says in verse 18 that the Egyptians would "loathe" the water. The word "loathe" comes from the Hebrew word *la'ah* {law-aw'} which means "to be weary, impatient." The use of this word here carries the idea of making oneself weary in doing something, or "to strenuously exert oneself." It seems always to indicate exhausted patience. The term seems to imply that the Egyptians were not able to drink the contaminated water, and so would expend all their energy looking for water to drink, in frustration of course. They exhausted themselves in hunting for water.

It was frustrating because of the great love the people had for the waters of the Nile. The force of this expression cannot be well felt without taking into consideration the peculiar pleasantness and great health promoting benefits of the waters of the Nile. The water of the Nile is known to be very thick and muddy, and the Egyptians are obliged to filter it through pots of a kind of white earth, and sometimes through a paste made from almonds. The vessels of wood and stone mentioned in verse 18 may refer to the process of filtration, which no doubt has been practiced among them for hundreds of years.

"The water of Egypt," says the Abbe Mascrrier, "is so delicious, that one would not wish the heat to be less, or to be delivered from the sensation of thirst." The Turks find it so exquisite that they excite themselves to drink of it by eating salt. It is a common saying among them, that if Mohammed had drank of it he would have besought God
that he might never die, in order to have had this continual gratification.

When the Egyptians undertake the pilgrimage of Mecca, or go out of their country on any other account, they speak of nothing but the pleasure they shall have at their return in drinking of the waters of the Nile. There is no gratification to be compared to this. It surpasses, in their esteem, that of seeing their relations and families. All those who have tasted of this water testify there is no other water as good as the Nile’s.

When a person drinks of it for the first time he can scarcely be persuaded that it is not a water prepared by art; for it has something in it inexpressibly agreeable and pleasing to the taste. It is very good for the health of a person. No matter what quantity is drunk, large or small, it never disturbs or upsets the stomach. It is no uncommon thing to see some people drink three buckets of it in a day without the least inconvenience! So for the water to be turned to blood was a catastrophe.

Egyptian priests abhorred blood, seldom admitting bloody sacrifices. The sweet water was now an object of disdain. The Egyptians turned from their gods in disgust to other means of survival and life. That which they looked to as a source of life became a source of death. This same principle applies even today. People look to good deeds, idols, memberships, self-salvation, or dependence upon men for eternal life. They think these are sources of eternal life, but instead they are sources of death. They will not get you to Heaven.

The underlying principle here is the fact that what God has given to us can become a blessing or curse depending on how we use those gifts. When we abuse what the Lord has given to us, that which is good can become a curse. The Egyptians found blood instead of water when they needed to drink, cook, wash, or water plants. There was suffering when the blood was where the water should have been. God gave the Egyptians a taste of blood after they murdered baby boys eighty years earlier in the same river. The river that was a blessing became a curse. When God’s blessings are misused, they become a curse. Our senses of sight, touch, taste, hearing, and speaking are gifts of God that help us live day by day. They help us serve the Lord and others. Yet, these same senses, when abused, can become a curse. We can become addicted or enslaved to harmful things when we abuse these senses.

Another principle revealed here is anything which becomes an idol with us will one day become a plague to us. God demands that He be number one in our lives. Someone has written a wise exhortation
regarding this principle: "The dearest idol I have known, whate'er that idol be; help me to tear it from Thy throne, and worship only Thee." We also see that anything which tasted sweet in sin will someday become unpalatable. In their sin, the Egyptians had enjoyed the Nile, but "the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river" (Exodus 7:21) after it turned to blood. This event reminds us of the fact that sin's sweetness soon sours.

IV. THE DUPLICATION OF DEEDS 7:22

And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the Lord had said.

Satan is the great imitator and counterfeiter. He has the ability to copy some of God's works, but not all. These magicians duplicated what Moses did. The magicians would not have much water left to turn into blood. To turn water into blood, they would have to get their water from the wells that the Egyptians had dug for water after all the other water had turned to blood. Therefore, though they could duplicate the miracle, they were no match for Moses and Aaron who did a much greater miracle. God is never second best.

Unfortunately, they couldn't change the blood back to the water. Why did not the magicians change the blood back into water? That would have alleviated the misery and distress of the people of Egypt. Changing what water was left into blood, only aggravated the situation for the Egyptians. There was not much good water around and the magicians made it even less. That was pretty stupid, but this is what Satan does to people when they reject God. He robs them of common sense! I never cease to be amazed at the stupid choices that backsliders make in their lives. They ruin their lives and create more problems for themselves when they run from God.

What mercies Egypt had, the magicians would take even those away. All of this tells us that the devil cannot remove judgment, he can only compound and add to it. Likewise when people come up with clever arguments to reject God's will and way, they do not improve their situation but only make it worse. They do not bless others around them by encouraging them with their clever arguments to disobey God; they only curse them. This duplication by the magicians deceived and dulled Pharaoh more. He considered the blood as another trick and became
dispasionate toward God's work. Pharaoh could accept an inferior performance by the magicians but the great work of Moses and Aaron was found unconvincing to his heart.

V. THE DULLNESS & DISPASSION OF PHARAOH 7:23

And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

Pharaoh would not listen. He did not consider it as a miracle of God. He has been deceived and is defiant because of the trick of the magicians. What Satan did to Pharaoh, he does to us if we let him. Deception has duped Pharaoh from deliverance, seduced and swindled him out of salvation, blinded and buffaled him from God's blessings, lied to him about life, cheated him from God's choices and wooed him from the will of God. This is what he is trying to do to us! He tempts us to throw away our opportunities to obey or serve the Lord.

There was a very cautious man
Who never laughed or played
He never risked, he never tried
He never sang or prayed
And when he one day passed away
His insurance was denied
For since he never really lived
They claimed he never died.
****Author Unknown****

The Lord was chastening Pharaoh and he shrugged it off. Is God using calamity to chasten you and are you shrugging it off, claiming it is just coincidence or your imagination? We are to examine ourselves. Don't harden your heart like Pharaoh.

* Proverbs 29:1- He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.
VI. DIGGING FOR LIFE  7:24-25

And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. [25] And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river.

The water that filtered through the soil or sand was not stricken. The people had to abandon the Nile River and their gods to have water to drink. For seven days they had to dig for their water to survive. Seven days reveal the obstinacy of Pharaoh and the opportunity that God was giving Him to repent before the next plague. If God is trying to get your attention, then pay attention. If He is giving you an opportunity to be saved or serve Him, then take advantage of the opportunity.

* 2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)
Chapter 18
The Ruler and the Ribbits
Exodus 8:1-15

Pharaoh in his stubbornness has refused to obey the Lord and let God’s people leave Egypt. The Lord has begun to increase the pressure upon him by turning the rivers, streams, and pools into blood. This was the first of ten plagues that God would use to bring Pharaoh to a point of submission. Pharaoh hasn’t gotten the message. He is determined to disobey and defy the Lord. He is resolved to resist and rebel against His commands. Pharaoh is intent on ignoring the Lord.

With this attitude, we open the curtains on Act Two of this play of plagues. Today’s episode could be entitled, “The Pharaoh and the Frogs, The Day the King Croaked, One More Night with the Frogs, or the Ruler and the Ribets.” Take your pick. Notice verse one.

I. THE REPEATED REQUEST 8:1
And the Lord spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

God repeats the same request again, “Let me people go!” Pharaoh has stood in the way, keeping God’s people from serving and worshiping Him. Beloved, don’t stand in the way of one who wants to serve the Lord. If God calls your kids or your husband into the ministry, don’t stand in their way.

II. THE REFUSAL WILL BE PUNISHED 8:2
And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:

The Lord, in His mercy, warns again of judgment. He warns of an infestation of frogs. These judgments were blows from
God. God’s judgment are not vague or general. He is very specific. He has warned us that to deny and reject Christ results in spending eternity in Hell. As the frogs would cover the land in every nook and cranny, God’s judgment will find us out in every sphere of our lives. The plague of frogs may be linked to the first plague of the bloody waters of the Nile. The problems of the waters most likely were used by the Lord to drive the frogs on the land.

Why frogs? Frogs were considered sacred in Egypt and believed to have divine power. They were worshiped in Egypt. Heget was a woman with a frog’s head. From her nostrils came the breath of life of the creatures created by her husband god Khnum. Heget was the sacred emblem of creative power, rebirth, and fertility.

This invasion would be annoying and straining to Egypt’s religious system. God was showing the fallacy of the Egyptian gods, bringing the Egyptians to the point where they would detest them. What becomes an idol to us will someday become a plague and burden. Anything that gets between us and God will eventually curse us. God does not tolerate competition. Our idols must go. He will make them a real problem to us if we do not forsake them.

The frogs would get upon the people. The Egyptians would hate this especially because of their big emphasis on cleanliness. The water and food would be contaminated too. To step upon the cold, clammy skin of the frogs would drive them crazy. It would drive me crazy too!

The Egyptians could not kill the frogs because they believed they were gods, even though the frogs were destroying their comfort and happiness. The Egyptians worshiped the frog as a god of fertility. Now in the plague, the frog’s fertility will run wild and produce abundantly. These folks would be miserable. The perpetual croaking would drive them nuts and rob them of any peace and rest. Sin is like this too. It robs us of our peace and joy. It plagues us with guilt. You cannot escape the effects of sin except through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Nile River cleared up, Pharaoh thought he got rid of God and he had no more worries. Beloved, you can’t get rid of God’s commands by resistance or holding out. The Lord comes back with the same message to obey His commands. If you don’t, you incur new punishment or pressure.
III. THE RAID OF FROGS  8:5-6

And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. [6] And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.

Here they come! There were frogs everywhere when they cooked, walked, ate, bathed, and when they tried to sleep. Frogs normally would not enter a house or leave a moist environment, but this army was under God’s command. God was getting the Egyptians to the point where they didn’t want to see another frog. The goddess Heget wasn’t the creator and source of life. Jehovah is God! The Egyptians could pray to Heget all they wanted to, but to no avail. They could pray to Apis or Hapi, the guardians of the Nile, but the frogs were still coming from the Nile and the swamps. These little Kermits were driving them crazy.

In some ancient writers we have examples of a similar plague. The Abderites, according to Orosius, and the inhabitants of Paeonia and Dardania, according to Athenaeus, were obliged to abandon their country on account of the great numbers of frogs by which their land was infested.

IV. THE REPLICATION BY THE MAGICIANS  8:7

And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

The magicians, through Satanic power, duplicate the plague of frogs, but in so doing, they only make matters worse. The last thing they need is more frogs! They only increase their own problems. Again we see the lack of common sense of those who rebel against God.

The magicians cannot remove the frogs. They only prove that this is a judgment from God. If you try to disprove, outwit, or mock God’s judgment, it will only increase your problems.
* You will become harder to the Lord.
* Judgment and pressure will increase.
* Shame, reproach, and humiliation will eventually come.
* Destruction will be inevitable.
Like the magicians, Satan is unable to restrain or exterminate God’s judgments. He can only make matters worse. He is a destroyer, not a deliverer. He is not a redeemer, but a ruiner, and wrecker of lives.

V. THE REQUEST OF PHARAOH 8:8

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.

Get these frogs out of here! The king croaks. These creatures seemed so innocent and harmless. No suffering was expected. The Lord, however, can use small things to wound and whip like a scourge. He sent hornets before the Israelites to drive out the Amorites from their strongholds. In Amos, He used locusts to judge backslidden Israel by destroying the harvest.

* 1 Corinthians 1:25-29... Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. [26] For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: [27] But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; [28] And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: [29] That no flesh should glory in his presence.

In this second plague, God changed His method to get Pharaoh to submit. Imagine this situation, “Pharaoh, what caused you to give in and break? What terrible animals did God use to get you to surrender? Were you attacked by vultures, wolves, lions, or bears? What dreaded beasts were they?” Imagine the humiliation of Pharaoh as he responds, “We were invaded by frogs.” This would be like the Chicago Bears being defeated by the Munchkins in the Wizard of Oz in a football game.

* Proverbs 29:23 - A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

The Lord did not give Pharaoh the luxury of a dignified invasion of bears, lions, or tigers. God showed the greatness of His power by making an animal, empty of every evil quality, as the means of a terrible affliction to His enemies. How easy is it, both to the justice and mercy of God, to destroy or save, by means of the most despicable and insignificant of instruments! With God, nothing is impossible.
Pharaoh not only suffered humiliation from the frogs, but God also humiliated Pharaoh another way. The Lord reversed the relationship of Moses and Pharaoh, making the king the suitor and Moses the one being sought. What an embarrassment for the Pharaoh, the so called “god” of Egypt has to go to Moses. The Almighty has exalted Moses in the eyes of the Pharaoh. Pharaoh has gained nothing by resisting God, only pain and humiliation. The same holds true for us today.

In Exodus 5:2, the Egyptian king said he did not know the Lord. He is getting to know the power of the Lord now. God was forcing him to know who God is. God is God and is all powerful. Obedience would have brought blessing to the king, but his rebellion led to judgment. The same fact holds true for this day and age. In his prosperity, the Pharaoh scoffed and shunned God, but in his day of adversity and trouble, he changed his tune and sought God’s mercy. The rich man did the same thing. He courted Lazarus for a drop of water while he burned in Hell, but it was too late. At the Great White Throne judgment, the lost will seek God’s mercy, but it will be too late.

*Matthew 7:22 - Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Now is the time to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. THE REQUISITION OF TIME  8:9

And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?

Pharaoh agrees to let the people go. The phrase “glory over me” in the Hebrew means “Have honor over me and name the time of request and deliverance from the frogs.” As cruel as Pharaoh has been, Moses returns good for evil.

VII. THE RESPONSE OF PHARAOH  8:10a

And he said, To morrow....

Pharaoh, when do you want to get rid of these frogs? Tomorrow for I want one more night with the frogs. This king is suffering from a severe case of procrastination and Rockitis in the Head. Unpleasant things are many times put off until tomorrow and
when tomorrow comes, "Tomorrow!" is the cry again. Why tomorrow and not today? Pharaoh may have believed his problem would disappear and have no obligation to God or Moses.

Procrastination is one of Satan's most effective weapons in destroying the souls of men and the service of Christians.
* I'll be saved tomorrow.
* I'll get right with God tomorrow.
* I'll serve the Lord when I get older.

The story is told of a family that moved into a new community. They were promptly visited by two men and the pastor of a nearby church who cordially invited them to attend the services on the Lord's Day. The man assured them that he would come just as soon as he got straightened out. Several months passed, and he still hadn't put in an appearance, so the pastor called again and repeated his invitation, but he received the same reply. The fellow hadn't yet gotten everything straightened out, but he'd be there just as soon as he did. A few weeks later he died, and his widow asked to have the funeral services in the church. The preacher graciously agreed. It was indeed a sad affair. Later when a member of the congregation asked the pastor if the man was a Christian, he answered, "He never attended services here, and no one can recall ever hearing him give a testimony of his faith in Christ, so I can't say. I only know he was a man of his word. He promised to come to church just as soon as he got straightened out -- and he did!"

Beloved, vice has slain its thousands, pride has slain its ten thousands, but procrastination has destroyed hundreds of thousands of people. "I won't now. I will soon. I will when..." are words of spiritual suicide. To defer duty until tomorrow may be to defer it forever. Arthur Godfrey said, "Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there and do nothing." Benjamin Franklin said, "Never leave until tomorrow that which you can do today."
* Proverbs 3:27-28... Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Procrastination with God is a form of rebellion. It says, "I will on my own terms." Procrastination creates complications. With the passing of time, our tomorrow becomes more complicated, our companions become numerous, and the needs and demands become more urgent. Our difficulties and entanglements get thicker. For this reason, God warns us about procrastination.
Proverbs 27:1 - Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Boasting of tomorrow leads to carelessness and dropping your guard against temptation. A classic example in the New Testament of procrastination is found in Acts 24.

Acts 24:24-25... And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. [25] And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. Felix played with opportunity. God says we are to take advantage of our opportunities now, especially when it comes to being saved.

2 Corinthians 6:2- (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

I've gone for a drink and sharpened my pencils,
Searched through my desk for forgotten utensils.
I reset my watch, I adjusted my chair,
I've loosened my tie and straightened my hair.
I filled my pen and tested the blotter
And gone for another drink of water
Adjusted the calendar, and I've raised the blind
And I've sorted erasers of all different kinds.
Now down to work I can finally sit,
Oops, too late, it's time to quit.

**Author Unknown**

An incident from the American Revolution illustrates what tragedy can result from procrastination. It is reported that Colonel Rahl, commander of the British troops at Trenton, New Jersey, was playing cards when a courier brought an urgent message stating that General George Washington was crossing the Delaware River. Rahl put the letter in his pocket and didn't bother to read it until the game finished. Then, realizing the seriousness of the situation, he hurriedly tried to rally his men to meet the coming attack, but his procrastination was his undoing. He and many of his men were killed, and the rest of the regiment were captured. Nolbert Quayle said, "Only a few minutes' delay cost him his life, his honor, and the liberty of his soldiers. Earth's history is strewn
with the wrecks of half-finished plans and unexecuted resolutions. Tomorrow is the excuse of the lazy and the refuge of the incompetent."

VIII. THE REVELATION  8:10b,11

..... And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God. [11] And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

The miraculous removal of the frogs was designed to open Pharaoh’s eyes and show him that there was no one else like the Lord.

IX. THE REMOVAL OF THE FROGS  8:12-14

And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. [13] And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. [14] And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank.

Verse twelve shows that the prayers of the godly person should be feared if they are against us and desired if they are for us. The frogs died as Moses requested. I can imagine that the stores had a special on frog legs that week. Ha! Even in death, the frogs served God’s purpose of judgment. Heaps upon heaps of frogs were gathered and the stench of death blanketed the land.

See, there is a residue to rebellion and sin. The stench of death is linked to sin. When we sin, we can find forgiveness, but sometimes the stench of our sin stays with us for a while with other people. People need time to see if your repentance is genuine. That’s the way it is. Sin leaves scars that don’t disappear quickly. The sown fields of rebellion in a person’s life will sprout a great crop of corruption that doesn’t go away quickly. Pharaoh’s hard heart created a hard life for Egypt.
X. THE REBELLION & RENUNCIATION OF PHARAOH 8:15

But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

The relief from the frogs led to the release from Pharaoh’s promise in his mind and hardened heart. He felt that he did not have to keep his word now that the frogs were gone. Remember, this man thinks he is a god. His pride and rebellion have overpowered his reasoning and conscience as he renounced his promise to the Lord.

Pharaoh was like men and women of today. He abused the kindness and longsuffering of God. He hardened his heart when he saw there was “respite.” This word “respite” means “a breathing space or a breather.” Pharaoh took God’s mercy for granted. Isaiah and Paul both described men like this.

* Isaiah 26:10- Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

* Romans 2:4-5... Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? [5] But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Pharaoh had a rebellious heart that was destroying his life and the Egyptian’s lives. Rebellion does that. Rebellion:

* Robs you of God’s blessings.
* Ruins your testimony for Christ.
* Ripens your heart for sinful pleasures.
* Raids your mind with bitterness.
* Rears a miserable future.
* Receives God’s punishment and justice.
* Rewards you with misery and unhappiness.
* Reduces your ability to learn the Word of God.
* Rejects those folks who have a concern for your life.
* Relaxes your attitude toward spiritual matters.
* Replaces God’s authority with self-authority.
* Revives old, sinful habits that you once conquered.

Pharaoh begins a destructive pattern here. He will promise freedom and then rebel and break his promise. Each time he does it, it gets easier it seems to do it again because his heart is harder. The terror and fear of
death produced a fickle repentance which can lead to hardening when the fear or threat is gone.

A heart seldom changes by vows that were made in seasons of sorrow, fear, or grief. Many times, when health or prosperity returns, the decisions are renounced.

* Psalm 78:31-37 ... The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fittest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. [32] For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. [33] Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. [34] When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. [35] And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. [36] Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. [37] For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.

If there is no true genuine repentance, decisions made by the force of the affliction will not abide when the conviction is gone. You cannot force a salvation decision. Fox hole or hospital bed decisions sometimes don’t last very long because there was no genuine repentance in the decision.

The actions of the Pharaoh reveal that he was a double-minded, unstable man. He would say one thing and then do another. He claimed to submit to the Lord and then recant on his decision. E. Stanley Jones states it graphically, "If you don't make up your mind, then your unmade mind will unmake you. Here is the place where there must be no dallying. For any dallying will be the Trojan horse that will get on the inside and open the gates to the enemy. God can do anything for the man who has made up his mind. He can do little or nothing for the double-minded."

* James 1:6-8... But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. [7] For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. [8] A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

A double-minded person is an unstable person. They are out of balance and cannot get their priorities straight. They are not on a firm foundation because the Lord is not really first in their lives. They are not anchored to a firm foundation. Paul said we are to be rooted and grounded in the Lord. Double minded people are weak and wobbly in the way that is right. They are feeble and flimsy in firmness or convictions because they are trying to serve two masters. This cannot be done.
* Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The Bible challenges us repeatedly to not be double minded.

* 1 Kings 18:21- And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

* Hosea 10:2- Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

* 1 Corinthians 10:21- Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

A missionary in India was once teaching the Bible to a group of Hindu ladies. Halfway through the lesson, one of the women got up and walked out. A short time later, she came back and listened more intently than ever. At the close of the hour the leader inquired, "Why did you leave the meeting? Weren't you interested?" "O yes," the Hindu lady replied. "I was so impressed with what you had to say about Christ that I went out to ask your driver whether you really lived the way you talked. When he said you did, I hurried back so I wouldn't miss out on anything."

Beloved, may the Lord help us to be consistent in our daily walk for Christ. People are watching how we live.

* 2 Corinthians 3:2- Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:
Chapter 19
Pharaoh and the Finger of God
Exodus 8:16-19

Tug of War is a fun game to compete in and lots of fun to watch, especially when both sides are evenly matched. In Exodus, a Tug of War, if you please, has been taking place, but the sides are definitely not even. On one side is Pharaoh and his magicians and on the other is Moses and God. The king was told to let God’s people go and the Pharaoh tugged. The Lord tugged back by turning the Nile into blood. The king was told again to let the people go. Pharaoh tugs again and the Lord tugs back by creating a vacation paradise for Kermit the frog. The land of Egypt was invaded with frogs. Frogs were everywhere...in the pillows, pies, palace, parlors, pineapples, pots, pans, and pants. Pharaoh is finally frustrated, flustered, and flabbergasted with frogs and faints to be free of them.

He tells Moses, “I’ll let you go, but get the frogs out first!” The frogs were removed, but Pharaoh hardened his heart and broke his promise. Pharaoh tugs again and God is going to tug back.

I. THE INSECTS IN THE SAND 8:16-17

And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. [17] And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

Another plague is sent, this time without warning. There are three cycles with three plagues in each cycle. The last plague in each of these cycles comes without warning. The Lord has
warned and warned Pharaoh and He suddenly punishes the king again.  
* Proverbs 29:1- He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Judgment is unavoidable if you are not willing to obey constant warnings.

There is a change in this judgment. In the first two judgments, the plagues came from the river. This one comes from the land. As God controls drops of water, He also controls grains of dust. He is God.  
* 2 Chronicles 20:6- And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

The Lord is again demonstrating that He is the Lord of Heaven and that the gods of Egypt are nothing but phonies and fakes. He is mocking again the Egyptian gods and priests. This plague would mock several Egyptian deities.  
* Geb= The Egyptian earth god.  
* Set= The god of the desert.  
* Chem= The name given to soil. Dirt was considered sacred too. It was a good source of food and now their dust becomes a source of disgust, disdain, disappointment, discomfort, and disillusionment.

Our little gods are dust too. Things like pride achievements, glory, and possessions are dust. If we look to these petty things for satisfaction and joy, we too, will be miserable like the Egyptians. The Egyptian soil has gone from being a source of comfort to a curse. It was infested with lice. Their security was a source of insecurity and sorrow.

The Egyptians adored these gods and worshiped them. Imagine now their confusion and disillusion as their world is falling apart. Why is this happening? What has happened to our gods? The more they revered these gods, the deeper was their chastisement. Egypt would not let Israel worship, now this plague will not let Egypt worship. This is a shocking time for them. It will also be so for those who die without Jesus Christ. Those who depended upon themselves, their deeds, works, memberships, catechisms, baptisms, arguments, reasoning, or other gods will be shocked when they stand before the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment one day.

Excuses like “But I thought...” or “I was told....” will be of no value before the Lord. Those without Christ are without excuses. Paul made this very clear.
* Romans 1:18-20 ... For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; [19] Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse:

This judgment was aimed also at the priests. Lice would be despicable to all Egyptians, especially the priests who prided themselves in cleanliness. The priests in Egypt were noted for their physical purity. Daily rites were performed by a group of priests known as the Uab or ‘pure ones.’ Their purity was basically physical rather than spiritual. They shaved the hair from their heads and bodies every three days to prevent vermin on their bodies. They were circumcised, washed frequently, and were dressed in beautiful linen robes. Now they are objects of disgust. Their sacred animals are infested with lice. They are unclean for their sacred duties and to worship their fake gods. God aimed an arrow at the heart of their religious system because they would not let His people worship Him.

What about lice? What were these creatures? The word “lice” comes from a Hebrew root word which means “to cover, to nip, or pinch.” The Hebrew word is kinnim. Many scholars believe they were possibly mosquitoes or stinging gnats of that area which would molest the people and beasts by flying into their ears, eyes and nostrils, driving them to madness, fury, and a terrible, agonizing death. The death of the creatures in the rivers and the heaps of frogs may have produced an ideal environment for the breeding and multiplication of the lice.

Of the nature of these insects it is not necessary to say much. The common louse is very prolific. In the space of twelve days a full-grown female lays one hundred eggs, from which, in the space of six days, about fifty males and as many females are produced. In eighteen days these young females are at their full growth, each of which may lay one hundred eggs, which will be all hatched in six days. Thus, in the course of six weeks, the parent female may see 5,000 of its own descendants! So mightily does this scourge of indolence and filthiness increase!

Sir Samuel Baker offered the possibility that the reference to “lice” may have been a terrible tick which lives in the hot sand and dust and preys upon the blood of animals. Its natural size is the same as a grain of sand and swells to the size of a hazel nut. The root word for “lice” means
to fasten. For this reason it is believed that this insect may have been some form of tick instead of a mosquito or gnat which is constantly moving.

II. THE INABILITY OF THE SORCERERS 8:18

And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

As in the first two plagues, the magicians try to duplicate this plague, but God allows them not to do so. Satan’s boundaries are prescribed by God Almighty and beyond those he cannot go. Satan is limited in the affliction of the saints.

* Job 1:12- And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

Satan may be conquered by God’s grace.

* Luke 10:19- Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

* Romans 16:20- And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Satan is limited in his temptations.

* 1 Corinthians 10:13- There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Satan also knows when he is defeated.

* James 4:7- Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Satan knows his time is limited.

* Revelation 12:12- Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Beloved, there is security in boundaries, especially when you are playing a game or when looking across the fence or cage at a big dog or tiger. Young people, thank God for the rules and boundaries that are set by your parents. With most parents, you will be secure in knowing what to do and what NOT to do.
III. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SOURCE 8:19

Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

The verdict of the magicians is, “This is the finger of God.” These are the last recorded words of the magicians. Sooner or later they had to acknowledge that the hand of the Lord was at work. In the end, every person who has rejected Christ will finally bow and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, but it will be too late!

The magicians were intent on resisting no longer. They abandoned the conflict for several reasons.
1. They cannot cloak failure and have a sense of shame.
2. They are astonished.
3. They fear the pain of more plagues.

They tell the king, “This is the finger of God!” Pharaoh was hard and rebellious. He did not want to listen to the truth. This is what happens when we get hard and rebellious. He had listened to them until now. When he didn’t like their message, he tuned them out. This is what happens when a person gets rebellious. He will not listen to caution, truth, or wisdom. Are you like this?

The magicians excited the Pharaoh to unbelief and resistance. Now they are cautioning him perhaps to stop his resistance. They helped to get this snow ball rolling and now they can’t stop it. Beloved, your influence has a ripple effect. A wicked life affects other people, even though you may repent. The impact on others is already done. Just because you get right with the Lord does not mean that others will automatically get right with God. Hateful, destructive talk, sensuality, immorality, drunkenness, and rebellion will scar the lives of people.

A godly influence will affect the lives of other people too! President Woodrow Wilson told this story. He said: "I was in a very common place, I was sitting in a barber chair, when I became aware that a personality had entered the room. A man had come quietly in upon the same errand as myself ...to have his hair cut and sat in the chair next to me. Every word the man uttered showed a personal interest in the man who was serving him. And before I got through with what was being done for me, I was aware that I had attended an evangelistic service. Because Mr. D.L. Moody was in that chair. I purposely lingered in the room after he had left and noted the singular effect that his visit had brought upon
the barbershop. They didn't know his name but they knew that something had elevated their thoughts and I felt that I left that place as I should have left the place of worship. My admiration and esteem for Mr. Moody became very deep indeed." Emerson wrote, "The best effect of fine persons is felt after we have left their presence." What effect has your presence left on the lives of others?

**Pharaoh was getting harder.** He submitted once and broke his promise. Stronger means would be needed to get him to submit again. The magicians knew this plague was the finger of God. Why now?

1. The finger of God was evident in the bloody river and the frogs. They could not make these problems go away.
2. His finger was pointing all the time to obedience.
3. In their failure and humility, they saw God working. This is why the Lord humbles us too. He is trying to get us to look at Him. He confronts us with the shackles of sin to make us see He is the only one who can break the chains.
4. Pharaoh refused in his hardness because he didn’t want to see God’s work or have a part in it. This is not what he was looking for or desired.

What do you see? Can you see the Lord working in your life or are you even looking at all? Beloved, let the finger of God point the way and give you guidance.
Chapter 20

The Compromises of the King

Exodus 8:20-32

The magicians understand that the finger of God is behind these judgments upon Egypt. This proud Pharaoh refuses to soften. The heart of this king is as frosty as a funneled ice cycle hanging from the branches of an oak tree on an arctic, winter day. It was no surprise for Moses, for God said that Pharaoh would choose to respond this way. The pressure continues to increase on the king. Let’s see what happens next.

I. THE STAND COMMANDED 8:20-21

And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [21] Else, if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.

Moses is commanded again to stand before the king early in the morning at the water’s edge. The old alternative to Pharaoh’s problem is being offered again. God’s invitations are simple and to the point....obey.

Why are they at the water? There are several ideas here. Some believe that Pharaoh went to the Nile River with a procession in order to open a solemn festival 120 days after the first rise of the Nile. This would be around the end of October or early November. The waters would now be residing and the first traces of vegetation would be seen on fresh soil. Another reason he may have been at the water early in the morning was to go to the restroom and freshen up for the day. The
phrase “cometh forth to the water” is from the Hebrew word *mayim {mah'-yim}* which means “refreshment, urine, or to go to relieve yourself.” Moses was to confront the king when he was doing this.

God warns the king if he disobeys, he will send “swarms” of flies upon all the Egyptians. The word “swarms” is an interesting word. It is from the Hebrew word *‘arob {aw-robe’}* which means “a mixture or variety of insects.” This word comes from a Hebrew root word *‘arab {aw-rab’}* which means “a mortgage, to become indebted.” The idea is that failure to obey meant that Egypt would be in debt to the Lord and He would collect. Egypt belonged to the Lord, not Pharaoh. As we will see in future chapters, God exacts payment from the king and the Egyptians.

Men without Christ have a sin debt that must be paid. The debt is death. Sinners can pay this themselves and go to Hell or they can accept God’s payment or gift of the death of Christ and have eternal life.

* Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

II. THE SEPARATION OF JUDGMENT 8:22-23

*And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. [23] And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.*

The Israelites were believed to be fellow sufferers with the Egyptians. This was permitted for their chastisement of unbelief, murmurings, and purifying discipline, but now there is a new feature as the second cycle of plagues begins. God offers a new sign which is the exemption of His own people from the plagues. He would put a “division” or a redemption, a deliverance, between His people and the Egyptians. The land of Goshen would be spared. Goshen was the eastern delta region. About fifty miles northeast of modern Cairo is the Wadi Tumilat, a valley five or six miles wide and thirty miles long, ending in Lake Timsah, which is now part of the present-day Suez Canal. This was the Goshen region.

**Israel would be redeemed by the Lord.** God called them “my people” for they belonged to the Lord, not Pharaoh. This redemption would be a great encouragement to the Jews and a source of bafflement.
and discouragement to Egypt.

III. THE SURENESS OF GOD’S WORD  8:24

And the Lord did so; and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies.

The first three plagues caused annoyance. Now the prosperity and the people are greatly affected. Plagues have come from the water, the land, and now from the air. The voice of repentance has been summoned from all directions as God keeps His word.

The flies came and the land was "corrupted" which means it was destroyed, marred, and devastated. The crops, land, livestock and people were injured and severely affected. Even today, there are many flies in Egypt. I noticed this when I was in Egypt in 1982. What were the swarms of flies? The swarms were a variety of different insects that devoured the land.

*Psalm 78:45- He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

The flies possibly included cattle or dog flies which have very painful bites. These flies lay 600-800 eggs in rotting debris and waste. The death of the frogs and creatures in the rivers would breed these flies like crazy. The lack of frogs to eat the flies would also contribute to their multiplying. They infest the houses. Their bites are on the lower extremities of men and beast and are very painful. They are the principle transmitters of skin anthrax which they contract by contact with animals that die from anthrax. Some of the diseases can cause blindness.

The flies could also be the scarab beetle. It was considered sacred and not to be destroyed. It too, preys upon flesh, tormenting people and animals and also on plant life. In Egypt, the beetle was an emblem of eternal life. This sacred insect became a curse to the people and a plague upon the land. The Egyptian god’s would be mocked again.

* Chepra= a man with a beetle’s head. He was the sun god and creator.
* Uatchit= their god represented by the fly.
* Re= fly. The god of the sun, earth, and sky.
IV. THE SOLUTION OF COMPROMISE  8:25

And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

This separation between Egypt and Israel startles and shocks Pharaoh. He sends for Moses. For the first time the king pays attention to God’s commands and tells them they can go worship the Lord. The Egyptians were faced with a mixture of flying insects. Moses was faced with a mixture too...the mixture of compromise. Go sacrifice where? The king says, “in the land.” Notice the history of the request for worship and also the location.

* Exodus 3:18 -And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. The original request was a three day journey into the wilderness in order to sacrifice to the Lord.

* Exodus 4:23- And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. The purpose of departure was for God’s people to serve Him.

* Exodus 5:1- And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. Israel is to depart in order to hold a feast unto the Lord.

The order of these three events is important. If judgment is to be averted, there must be sacrifice first. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission {Hebrews 9:22}. In the Tabernacle, the brazen altar was situated first. After sacrifice comes service. First, there is reconciliation and then comes service. The laver in the Tabernacle represented and was used for daily cleansing in service. Following sacrifice and service comes the feasting, which speaks of fellowship and gladness. The Holy Place of the Tabernacle was a place of service, fellowship, and gladness as seen in the table of shewbread, which was the place of fellowship for the priests and in the altar of incense, which was the place of fellowship with God.

This same order was illustrated in the life of the prodigal son. The son was reconciled to the father. He took his proper place, “Make me one of thy hired servants.” Then came the feasting as the fatted calf was killed for the feast.
The first compromise offered by Pharaoh was “sacrifice in the land. Don’t leave Egypt.” Egypt is a type or symbol of the world in the Bible. Satan’s desire for the church today is don’t leave the world’s lifestyle and priorities. Serving the Lord is NOT a priority of the world. The lost do not even know the Lord for they are spiritually blind. Satan desires that believers live like the unsaved. It is OK to be religious and talk God-talk, but you need to stay in Egypt and live like Egyptians. Don’t separate yourself from Egypt, from the carnality of the world. Don’t trust Christ as your Savior, and if you do, don’t live like Him or for Him.

Compromise in worship with the world doesn’t work or mix for holy worship and heathen worship are 180 degrees different. You cannot please these two masters.

* Galatians 1:4 - Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

* John 15:19- If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

* John 17:14- I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

* James 4:4- Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Like a porcupine in a balloon factory, worldliness and holy worship of Christ don’t mix. Put them together and you have confusion and a conflict in message. Satan is constantly trying to get the church to compromise, mix, and adopt the philosophy of this wicked world in areas of philosophy, music, marriage, divorce, gambling, homosexuality, alcohol, church history, etc.

Compromise with carnality is an effective tool of Satan to weaken the Christian. Compromise appeals because it seems to offer you your desire quickly. You don’t have to wait and that is very appealing to impatient people. Compromise often provides a shortcut to your goal, but, of course, the shortcut is not without your sacrificing some part of your goal. The compromise would argue that it is better to have part of your desire than not any, but what this actually does is give you part now instead of all of your goals or desires later. You end up being cheated by your compromises. In the area of character and spirituality, that is a tragedy because compromise promotes defilement.
Great pressure is placed upon Christians, especially pastors, to compromise Biblical principles and convictions. If you are unwilling to compromise, you are considered unreasonable, stubborn, and inconsiderate. Compromise may be acceptable in some situations, but it is never acceptable when right and wrong are involved. Compromise with evil is a crack that ends up opening the garage door to carnality in the Christian and in the church.

A hunter raised his rifle and took careful aim at a large bear. When about to pull the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft soothing voice, "Isn't it better to talk than to shoot? What do you want? Let's negotiate the matter."

Lowering his rifle, the hunter replied, "I want a fur coat." "Good," said the bear, "that is a negotiable matter. I only want a full stomach, so let us negotiate a compromise." They sat down to negotiate and after a time the bear walked away alone. The negotiations had been successful. The bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had his fur coat! Satan says to you, "Let us negotiate," but there are some things that cannot be negotiated. We cannot compromise the church with the world.

God demands our obedience to His Word, but compromise opposes complete obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. It says that God is not Lord and we have some say in our decisions, too. It sanctions negotiation with God's orders, not submission to them. All of this is a subtle assault on obedience to God and to His lordship and mastery of our lives. We need to make up our mind whom we are going to serve.

*Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

V. THE STEADFASTNESS OF MOSES  8:26-27

And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? [27] We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us.

Moses wisely rejects Pharaoh's offer of compromise and partial obedience to God's instructions of three days in the wilderness. He was governed by the conviction and principle of obeying the Lord's commands. Nothing less than God's demands can be
accepted. If we are to go free and obtain all the inheritance and blessings that God has for us, there must be no compromise with sin. There must be a separation from the world in our lifestyle. There must be no compromise on morality. A compromise between vice and virtue is an insult to virtue because there would be no virtue at all. There must be no compromise with doctrine. It is either false doctrine or BIBLE truth. Notice I said Bible truth, not traditions.

There are teachings propagated by popular preachers of big churches today that are not Biblical teachings at all, especially in the areas of Bible translations. They are traditions of men that have been accepted as Bible truths. Such teachings are destructive, damaging, divisive, and have no Bible basis at all. God did not give us His word only in one language from a translation of the Anglican church in 1611. The Word of God has been preserved in many countries and languages.

**Moses said, “We cannot worship here in Egypt.”** He confronted compromise with conviction and firmness. He was not wishy-washy, or namby-pamby in his beliefs. Israel’s worship was much different than Egypt’s. The sacrifice of Egyptian sacred animals would be considered as an abomination and would invoke the death penalty. Perhaps few people were more superstitious than the Egyptians. Almost every production of nature was an object of their religious worship: the sun, moon, planets, stars, the river Nile, animals of all sorts, from the human being to the monkey, dog, cat, and ibis, and even the onions and leeks which grew in their gardens.

Jupiter was adored by the Egyptians under the form of a ram, Apollo under the form of a crow, Bacchus under that of a goat, and Juno under that of a heifer. The reason why the Egyptians worshiped those animals is given by Eusebius, who said that when the giants made war on the gods, they were obliged to take refuge in Egypt, and assume the shapes or disguise themselves under different kinds of animals in order to escape. Jupiter hid himself in the body of a ram, Apollo in that of a crow, Bacchus in a goat, Diana in a cat, Juno in a white heifer, and Venus in a fish. Cows, especially white cows, were never to be sacrificed in Egypt. Cows were sacred to Isis, bulls to Apis, and rams to Amon. The Persians under Cambyses won a battle against the Egyptians by driving a protective screen of sacred animals ahead of his army when they attacked.

**Moses feared an uprising and the stoning of an Egyptian mob.** He knew what he was talking about. When the Romans took possession
of Egypt, the people submitted without resistance to have their lives and property at the mercy of a foreign nation. When a Roman soldier, however, killed a cat in the streets of Alexandria, they violently tore that soldier apart from limb to limb. A Jewish colony in Elaphantine in the upper Nile region endured a massacre at the hands of the Egyptians in the fifth century because of animal sacrifice.

Even today, the true worship of God and faith's sacrifice is considered an abomination. The cross of Jesus Christ is offensive to a sin-hardened world. The cross:

* Speaks of mans’s condition. We are sinners.
* Speaks of man’s condemnation. The price for sin is death.
* Speaks of the cause of His death. Us
* Speaks of the choice and conclusion of men. They believe or reject.
* Speaks of consequences. Reject Christ and you are lost. Accept Him and you have eternal life.

VI. THE SECOND COMPROMISE 8:28

And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me.

Pharaoh says, “OK, you can go into the wilderness, but don’t go very far.” Pharaoh is afraid of losing them. This compromise is the same tool that Satan uses today to hinder Christians from serving the Lord. We are tempted to be lukewarm, borderline Christians. The king said first, “Don’t go.” Then he said, “If you are going to serve God, don’t go very far. Don’t be fanatical, too extreme or zealous for God. Be like everyone else.” When we look in Genesis at Lot, we find that he didn’t go far away. His lukewarm worldliness paralyzed his preaching. He lost his family in the process. Beloved, we are to live differently than this world. We are to be Christlike which in turn will make us look strange in the eyes of the lost.

* 1 Peter 2:9 - But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:
* Ephesians 4:17- This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
VII. THE SUPPLICATION THAT IS OFFERED 8:29-30

And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord. [30] And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the Lord.

Moses promised to pray for the departure of the flies, but he also rebukes the king about any further lies and deception. The fact that Moses changes the conversation to the third person, referring to the Pharaoh, makes this statement very powerful and decisive. Moses was not kidding. The king was supposed to be a model of truth and justice, but he was far from it. Deliverance would come, but it would come tomorrow. This delay reminds us that the consequences of our evil are not necessarily removed quickly. We've seen this truth before in this study of the plagues, and it is a sobering truth that ought to hasten our repentance of evil.

VIII. THE SWEEP OF THE LAND 8:31-32

And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one. [32] And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Pharaoh’s cold heart thaws a little. As soon as the heat of the present plague miraculously departed, his proud heart freezes up again. God intends that His goodness should encourage men to repent, but many are like Pharaoh and pervert their blessings to encourage sinning instead of repentance.

* Romans 2:4- Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Many interpret delays, reprieve and escape from troubles as a sign that their evil was not so bad after all; and, as a result, they pursue their evil again. Such reasoning is folly.

* Ecclesiastes 8:11- Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.
The fact that every fly was gone is phenomenal, but this is the way the Lord works. He is thorough when He cleans. When it comes to our sin, He washes away every single one when we put our faith in Christ.

* 1 John 1:7- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If you are a Christian, let me ask, “Are you living in Egypt? Are you lukewarm and living on the borderline?” Step out for Christ and stand for Him. Make your life count for the Lord and cease from any compromises with sin.
Chapter 21
The Plague of the Pocket Book
Exodus 9:1-7

Isn’t it amazing how those who claim or profess to be knowledgeable and wise, end up making fools of themselves? Scientists proclaim we evolved from amoeba’s and monkeys, but cannot rationally explain where they came from. Politicians proclaim their allegiance to the children of our nation by spending money on education and passing laws to imprison or execute child molesters, yet, they pass laws allowing children to be murdered in abortion clinics. God has stated clearly and simply that He created Heaven and earth and that murder is wrong. Yet, men don’t get the message.

Pharaoh didn’t get the message either. He is proud, arrogant, and cocky and has no use for God in his life at all. In fact, the king considers himself as a god. The Lord has been patiently trying to show that Pharaoh is not God, but that Jehovah is God.

God’s instructions for the king was to let His people go. That’s pretty simple and clear. You would think he would get the message and submit to the Lord by now. He has dealt with water turning into blood, an invasion of frogs, an invasion of stinging gnats or ticks, and an infestation of flies or beetles. Pharaoh is one tough cookie. He is getting harder and more stubborn after each plague. He is determined to have his own way. So the Lord turns up the heat some more. This is a showdown of power or a test of wills.
I. THE COMMAND  9:1  

_Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me._

This Pharaoh is fortunate that God has not abolished, demolished, or polished him off. God in His mercy gave him another opportunity to obey again, even though he has been faithless and disobedient. Forgiveness and blessing are at hand if he will let God’s people go. God gives us opportunities today to serve and submit to Him, but many choose not to do so. Let me say that the day may come when the opportunities will end. If you do not know the Lord as your Savior, you need to put your faith in Him NOW!

II. THE CAUTION  9:2-3  

_For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still, [3] Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain._

If Pharaoh refused to obey again, the hand of the Lord would be upon the cattle in the fields which would include their horses, donkeys, camels, oxen, and sheep. Murrain was an epidemic pestilence, possibly anthrax which was highly contagious and deadly. Murrain is a very contagious disease among cattle, the symptoms of which are a hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of gum in the eyes, rattling in the throat, difficulty of breathing, palpitation of the heart, staggering, a hot breath, and a shining tongue. These symptoms prove that a general inflammation has taken place. Our English word murrain comes either from the French _mourir_, to die, or from the Greek word _maraino_, which means “to grow lean, waste away.” With the pestilence of flies, it would be very easy to see how this disease was spread. The bacteria from feeding on dead frogs and fish would be easily spread by an infestation of bitting flies.

This is the first place the horse is mentioned; a creature for which Egypt and Arabia were always famous. The Hebrew word for horse, _cuc _soos_/ signifies “to be active, brisk, skip or lively,” all which are proper appellatives of the horse, especially in Arabia and Egypt. Because of their activity and swiftness they were sacrificed in Egypt,
dedicated to the sun, and perhaps, it was principally on this account that God prohibited the use of them among the Israelites.

Each appeal of the Lord gets louder and more severe, but after every demand there is a pause, an opportunity to ponder, yield, and forsake the path of judgment or else experience further punishment. The heart of God does not want to punish. His desire is to bless, but His holiness demands a price for sin and disobedience. Notice what Peter said.

* 2 Peter 3:9- The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

**This plague is the greatest judgment thus far.** Cattle were a large part of the wealth of the land. The wealth of a person was determined by the animals he possessed. God was targeting the pocketbooks of the Egyptians. They depended upon livestock for food, dairy, produce, and burden bearers. Imagine what would happen here in the United States if all the sheep, cows, oxen, pigs, and horses died. Our food bill and clothing would sky-rocket. Let me say right here that if you are not willing to obey the Lord, He may target your pocketbook too, in order to get your attention.

**God was again targeting the Egyptian religious system and idolatry with this plague.** The religious implications of this plague are most interesting and instructive. A large number of bulls and cows were considered sacred in Egypt. In the central area of the Delta, four provinces chose as their emblems various types of bulls and cows. A necropolis of sacred bulls was discovered near Memphis, Egypt, which was a place known for its worship of both Ptah and a sacred Apis bull.

The Apis bull was considered the sacred animal of the god Ptah; therefore, the associated worship at the site of Memphis is readily understood. Ptah was the creator god and Apis was the fertility god. There was at any one-time only, one sacred Apis bull. As soon as it died another was chosen to take its place, an event that attracted a great deal of attention in the area of Memphis. The sacred bull was supposed to have been recognized by twenty-eight distinctive marks that identified him as deity and indicated that he was the object of worship. When a bull died, the Egyptians mummified them and put them in tombs. The second largest Egyptian temple was built at Memphis, Egypt, and was for the purpose of worshiping bulls.

Another deity whose worship would have been affected by the impact of this plague was Hathor, the goddess of love, beauty and joy
represented by the cow. The worship of this deity was centered mainly in the city of Denderah, although its popularity is witnessed by representations both in upper and lower Egypt. This goddess is often depicted as a cow suckling the king, giving him divine nourishment. In upper Egypt the goddess appears as a woman with the head of a cow. In another town—Hathor was a woman, but her head was adorned with two horns of a cow with a sun disc between them.

Another deity associated with the effects of the plague would be Mnevis, a sacred bull venerated at Heliopolis and associated with the Egyptian god, Re. The death of livestock would demonstrate the inability of the Egyptian gods to protect these sacred animals. As material possessions of livestock were considered gods in Egypt, possessions are almost considered as gods in the USA too. Money may bring temporary satisfaction, but not eternal satisfaction. The Lord may allow trying circumstances in your life to show you that your possessions cannot satisfy you. Peace and satisfaction are found in the Lord.

* Isaiah 26:3- Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. The Hebrew reads “keep him in peace peace.” God gives us double peace when we trust in Him.

In the tall, golden grass of the African plains, the lion’s golden coat acts as camouflage where he blends in with the grass. The best chance that a zebra has for survival is to follow another zebra single file. Satan is out to destroy us and our best chance for spiritual growth and survival is to follow the Lord.

* 1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

* Mark 8:34-35 . And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. [35] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.

III. THE CARE & CONSERVATION OF THE LORD  9:4

And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt; and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel.

This miracle of sparing the livestock of Israel would be a demonstration again of the power of God. God’s promise was, “I will care for my people and nothing shall die.” His promise is
still the same for today.
* Hebrews 13:5- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
* John 10:28- And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

IV. THE CHANCE TO OBEY 9:5

And the Lord appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land.

God again demonstrated His grace and mercy. Tomorrow the Lord shall do this thing.

* The Schedule: Tomorrow
* The Source: The Lord
* The Surety: Shall do this thing.

The Lord gave an opportunity for those who believed this announcement to bring their animals out of the fields. All the cattle in the fields did die. Some did believe and their cattle survived.
* Exodus 9:20- He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses:

This is the third time the word "tomorrow" (previous mentioned in Exodus 8:10 and Exodus 8:29) is associated with Pharaoh, but in each case he misused his "tomorrow," his opportunity to repent. He is not alone in that habit. Many are those in every age who misuse their "tomorrows." God gives them time to escape Divine judgment, but they spurn His gracious "tomorrows" and suffer judgment instead. They are fools.

V. THE COMPLETION 9:6

And the Lord did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.

What God says will happen, will happen! His Word is sure and true. The cattle of Egypt died just as He said they would.
* Matthew 5:18 - For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
* Luke 21:33- Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not
pass away.
* Psalm 111:7 - The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.

This was a miracle.

1. By Schedule: It took place on the appointed day.
2. By Severity: All the cattle in the fields of Egypt died.
3. By Separation: The Egyptian cattle were the only ones that died.

Beloved, along these same lines, God assures us that Heaven is real, Hell is real, the Tribulation is real, and the return of Christ is real.

VI. THE CURIOSITY OF PHARAOH 9:7

And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Pharaoh sent someone to check Israel’s cattle. Sure enough, it was as God said. Pharaoh seems unmoved. He does not give in, show repentance, or cry “Uncle!” Perhaps he rationalized that there were better lands, water, and air in Goshen or the Jews were better doctors. The king knew that this murrain was from God. It came as predicted. Israel’s cattle were protected. The king was hardened and embittered even more toward God. He was under conviction, but his conviction did not compel obedience. How many times have you been convicted, but you did not obey? Don’t rationalize away the Word of the Lord as the Pharaoh of Egypt did.

God warns us about our stubbornness and hardheartedness.

1. The Deception of Sin hardens us.
* Hebrews 3:13- But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

2. We will be Disturbed by Sorrow and Suffering.
* Proverbs 28:14- Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

3. Our Destruction will be Sudden.
* Proverbs 29:1- He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. When we make the same mistake of ignoring God’s cautions, we will court disaster. People must face the consequences of refusing to learn and obey God. Unfortunately, for some, the consequences are eternal.
Like clay baking in the sun, the heart of Pharaoh is getting harder and harder toward God. This king has to obey in just one matter. He is to let God’s people go, but he won’t. If he did, he could have avoided all the problems he has had so far and all future problems for himself and his country.
* His defiance delivers destruction and death.
* His bitterness breeds burdens.
* His animosity antagonizes his anger.
* His hardness heightens his hatred.
* His stubbornness steals his serenity and serves him sickness.
* His pride poaches his peace and plunders his possessions.

When we act like Pharaoh, the same thing happens to us! When you look into the mirror, do you see someone like this king? Do you have the same kind of heart as Pharaoh? If so...
* Turn while there is time.
* Obey while there is opportunity.
* Change while there is a chance.
* Surrender with the last bit of softness that is left in your heart.

God continues to turn up the heat on Pharaoh as he boils him with boils in plague number six.

I. THE COMMAND 9:8-9

And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. [9] And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

Moses is to take handfuls of ashes of the furnace and sprinkle it toward Heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. The dust would
become boils upon the king and the Egyptians. The ashes or soot are significant. Judgment has come from all directions to get Pharaoh’s attention. It has come from water, land, air, and now ashes which represent fire. Ashes came from the furnace which was a place of fire. The tool that was used to afflict the Hebrews is now the source of affliction for the Egyptians. The tables have been turned. The disease that afflicted the Egyptians was inflammation, a burning of infection in the tissues of men. Boils were on babies, little boys and girls too. They suffered terrible pain and fever. They boiled with boils.

This furnace seems to indicate a particular furnace. The Companion Bible indicates this was a particular kind which contained an altar where human sacrifices were offered and burned to appease their god Typhon, the Evil One, and to thus, avert the plagues. Typhon or Sutech was worshiped by the burnt offerings of foreigners on an altar and their ashes were scattered in the air by the priests to avert evil wherever the ashes were blown. The ashes were used to try to avert judgment and now they are used to bring judgment upon them. The scattering of the ashes from this furnace also symbolized the pronouncement of a curse upon Egypt. This was the way a curse was pronounced in those times.

The furnace in Scripture was an emblem for the bitter cruelty or slavery of Israel while they were in Egypt. Now it becomes a symbol of retribution for Israel’s suffering. The ashes would rise up against their oppressors in the form of boils.

* Deuteronomy 4:20- But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.

The Egyptians would continue to reap what they had sown. This is a law of Scripture.

* Galatians 6:7- Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
* Hosea 8:7-For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.
* Proverbs 22:8- He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

God again was discrediting Egyptian idolatry.

1. Sekhmet- lion-head goddess with power over diseases is being challenged here.
2. Sunu- the Egyptian pestilence god.
3. Isis- the Egyptian goddess of healing.
4. Neit- The great mother of the highest heaven.
5. Serapis - the Egyptian god of healing.
6. Imhotep- the Egyptian god of medicine and the guardian of healing sciences.

II. THE CARBUNCLES  9:10

And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.

Plague number six is sent without notice like the third one and inflicts injury upon people. Pharaoh may have been the first one affected since this was done in his presence. The bodies become diseased, disfigured, and despicable to the eyes. The boils contained puss filled with ulcers. The skin festered as if burnt and then peeled off. It is possibly the “botch” of Egypt mentioned in Deuteronomy 28:27.

*Deuteronomy 28:27- The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The same Hebrew word, shechiyn {shekh-een’} is used.

The underlying, natural substratum of this plague is discovered by most commentators in the so-called Nile-blisters, which come out in innumerable little pimples upon the scarlet-colored skin, and change in a short space of time into small, round, and thickly-crowded blisters. This is called by the Egyptians Hamm el Nil, or the heat of the inundation.

According to Dr. Bilharz, it is a rash, which occurs in summer, chiefly towards the close at the time of the overflowing of the Nile, and produces a burning and pricking sensation upon the skin. It consists of small, red, and slightly rounded elevations in the skin, which give strong twitches and slight stinging sensations, resembling those of scarlet fever. The cause of this eruption, which occurs only in men and not in animals, has not been determined; some attributing it to the water, and others to the heat.

This judgment, which was worse than Nile-blisters, would again be unbearable and humbling to the Egyptians, especially the priests who prided themselves in cleanliness. They would all be unclean to worship in the temples. This incident reminds us again that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God.
This plague also demonstrates that many sins have physical consequences attached to them by a natural law. Diseases from sinful habits are painful, they injure health, destroy tissue, produce mental illness, madness, cause blindness, sterility, even death. Men and women know these consequences, but hope to escape them. Sin deceives them into thinking:
* It won’t happen to me.
* Just once won’t hurt.
* I’m healthy, strong, and young. Some think that they can be immoral, even though they are old.

Local 6 News of Florida posted this article on May 27th, 2006. The title of the article is *STD’s Running Rampant in Retirement Community*. Doctors said that sexually transmitted diseases among senior citizens are running rampant at a popular Central Florida retirement community. A gynecologist at *The Villages* retirement community near Orlando, Florida said that she treats more cases of herpes and the human *papilloma virus* in this community than she did in the city of Miami. A doctor blamed this outbreak on the drug *Viagra*, a lack of sex education, and the lack of risk in getting pregnant.

Beloved, the lies of sin are like the tongue of a snapping turtle that lures fish with its tongue that looks like two red, dangling worms. When the fish approaches, the turtle snaps the head of the fish. Satan is after your head too. If your thinking is wrong, you start behaving wrong.

Sometimes nothing will motivate us to give up our sinful vices. We cling to them and they hook and entangle us. Even when the boil is upon us, we won’t repent, just like Pharaoh. Some will give up their sin for a time, only to return back to it again like a dog returning to its vomit.

Physical suffering because of sin is sent to refine and purify your life, drawing you back to the Lord. You can avoid a lot of problems by obeying God.

**III. THE CASUALTIES 9:11**

*And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.*

The plague was upon all the Egyptians, especially the magicians. How humiliating this must have been for them. There was nothing in their bag of tricks that could deliver them now. Beloved, God does not exempt from judgment the wealthy, highly
educated, or those in powerful positions. As Romans 1:27 states, they too, will experience within themselves the reward of iniquity. The rewards are depression, discouragement, decay, despair, destruction, disease, and death.

The magicians prided themselves on matching the feats of Moses, but no longer would this happen.

* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

For the magicians, this is the “Fall Flat on Your Face” time. They cannot stand before Moses. The king is being left more and more alone. Like those magicians, those who mock God will not be able to stand before Him someday.

* Philippians  2:10-11... That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; [11] And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

IV. THE CALLOUS HEART  9:12

And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses.

For the first time, the Bible says, “The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” He has been give five opportunities to obey, but Pharaoh hardened his own heart. God now reveals what is already in his heart. God demonstrated His grace five times. In fact, five is the number of grace in the Bible. The Lord now hardens Pharaoh as predicted in 4:21. Pharaoh’s heart is hardened some eleven times during this period. We note that on at least seven occasions in the book of Exodus we are told that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh (4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20, 27; 11:10). This hardening was a judgment of God. The Lord was emboldening the king to do what was already in his heart. The Pharaoh had already made his choice. God did not make it for him.

This king was inflexible with God. His inflexibility revealed a number of insights.

* **His Interest**- He was interested in himself instead of his people.
* **His Inability**- He had an inability to discern important matters.
* **His Interruption**- It interrupted his peace and prosperity.
* **His Impoverishment**- It robbed him of God’s blessings and happiness.
* **His Ignorance**- It made him ignore God’s commands, guidance, and
opportunities.

* **His Immunity**- He was immune to the needs of others.

* **His Idolatry**- He idolized himself. It revealed his pride too. It was his way and no other.

Beloved, God wants to develop in us availability, dependability, and flexibility in serving Him. These traits:

1. Are **Cognizant** or Sense and adapt to the wishes of the person you serve.

2. **Conserve** time and energy to complete priorities.

3. **Cause** you to remain free to accept the best course of action in completing a task.

4. **Change** plans if unexpected conditions require you to do so. What is the condition of your heart? What is your attitude toward God? Is it inflexible or available?
Chapter 23

The Hail from Heaven

Exodus 9:13-25

The Word of the Lord is becoming very uncomfortable for Pharaoh because he would not obey. All this king had to do was submit to God’s command. The fact that he has continued to resist the Lord in spite of five plagues is a clear indication of the hardness of his heart. He doesn’t care who suffers. He is determined to have his own way no matter what the cost. In his mind, he believes he is a god. God has continued to demonstrate His mercy in spite of the king’s rebellion. He did not wipe him out after his first refusal. The Lord has gradually increased the pressure after each refusal to obey, but Pharaoh’s time is running out.

People act the same way as this king today with destructive consequences. Unfortunately, some of them are Christians. Two words in the Christian vocabulary which cannot go together when it comes to obeying God are, “No Lord.” If we persist in rebellion, we can also expect chastening. In Egypt’s case, they reaped the hail from Heaven.

I. THE PLAGUES & PESTILENCE 9:13-15

And the Lord said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. [14] For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. [15] For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.
The third cycle of plagues begins here. This cycle will be more severe than the previous ones and more detailed in description. The times of mild warnings are gone. This is the longest warning so far, probably because it will be the most destructive plague up to this point.

In verse thirteen, the Lord picks up again where He left off. If Pharaoh is going to please God, he must come to a point of submission in his life. God said again, “Let my people go.” The Lord is knocking at the door of Pharaoh’s heart again. The message of the Lord is very simple, “Obey.” If you are out of God’s will, then obey Him. Forsake your sin, forgive others, and follow the Lord.

The words “at this time” in verse fourteen come from the Hebrew word pa’amah (pah-am-aw) which means “stroke, anvil, hoof-beat.” This phrase points to a rapid and continuous succession of blows. Like a blacksmith hammering the metal on an anvil, God has been hammering at the hard heart of Pharaoh and Egypt with the hammer of judgment for the purpose of getting this king to conform to God’s will. Like the rapid hoof beat of a running horse, God has been sending one plague after another to try to bring the king to a point of repentance.

Pharaoh had the Burger King attitude. He wanted to have it his way. The result was self-destruction. The purpose of the chastisement is revealed in verse fourteen, “That thou mayest know there is none else like me in all the earth.” The principle here is that God uses chastisement, tribulation, or hail from Heaven, to draw men to Himself and to get our attention. He wants the believer to be like Christ.

*Hebrews 12:10- For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

Verse fifteen in the Hebrew text reads differently than what the translators have recorded here in the KJV. It reads, “For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with plague, and you would have been destroyed from the earth.” God could have wiped out Egypt totally by this point, but He didn’t. In mercy, He was giving Pharaoh one opportunity after another to repent and obey the Lord’s command. Soon, Pharaoh’s time will be up.
II. THE PURPOSE FOR PHARAOH  9:16

And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

God kept Pharaoh alive, allowed him to remain and sustained him in his position for the purpose of revealing and glorifying Himself. He spared this king for a purpose, which was to show His power and to spread His fame throughout the earth.

* Psalm 75:7- But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

* Daniel 2:21- And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

The Lord knew that the attitudes of this king would lead to a conflict that the Lord was going to win. Pharaoh’s halt to God’s commands would exalt God. His irreverence would irradiate and illuminate the glory of the Lord. His resistance would bring respect and reverence for the God of Heaven. God would reveal Himself through Pharaoh’s resistance, rebellion, and resolve to disobey. The anger of this king would lead to the praise of God.

* Psalm 76:10- Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

God can find a use for even the most wicked of persons. He can glorify Himself through that angry, mean person in your life.

* Proverbs 16:4- The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

We will all glorify God in one way or another, but some will glorify God in obedience while some will glorify God in disobedience like this king. Those who glorify God in disobedience will do so through the judgment they receive for their disobedience. This was how Pharaoh glorified God. As such, Pharaoh received no blessing for glorifying God; for only obedience is blessed for glorifying the Lord. Do you bring honor and glory to the Lord with your life, your actions, and your attitudes?
III. THE PRIDE OF PHARAOH  9:17

As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

One of the favorite things I did as a kid growing up in Normal, Illinois, was to build snow forts and have snow ball fights in my yard. We would pack the snow in boxes or garbage cans, and use them as molds. Then we would turn them over and have perfect snow blocks. We raised a snow fort or snow house in the snow. It was great fun. This is the basic idea of what Pharaoh has done. This king has exalted himself against God and His people. The word “exaltest” means “to oppose, to raise a mound or bank of rock or dirt, to obstruct.” This is what Pharaoh has been doing. He has been obstructing the worship of God’s people and their exit from Egypt. Beloved, God does deal with those who try to obstruct or oppose His will and work, and will not obey His commands.

An “I’m Going to Out-do the Lord” attitude will create mega-problems for you. A cocky spirit and pride will destroy your life. Many preachers have ruined their lives and ministries because of their cockiness. When a preacher becomes unteachable, he becomes unusable. He cannot be directed by God because he is going his own way. The most difficult people that I have dealt with in my life are those who are unteachable, cocky, proud, and think they know it all. You can’t help anyone with this kind of attitude. In fact, God calls them a fool.

* Obadiah 1:4- Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.

* Matthew 23:12- And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

* Psalm 73:6- Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

* Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Pride will manifest itself in these attitudes:

* I don’t need God.

* I can run my own life better than the Lord.

* Who is God to tell me what to do?

* These attitudes lead to a “Falling on Your Face” episode.
IV. THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT  9:18

Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

Egypt's fish and meat have been demolished severely. Attention now has been focused upon the crops and vegetation. The Lord warns Pharaoh that the Mother of All Storms is coming. God's message was, "Pharaoh hasn't seen anything like it. Judgment is coming to you." Could this be avoided? Yes, if Pharaoh would obey. God gives him plenty of time to obey and prepare for what was coming to the land.

* In mercy, the Lord warned Pharaoh.
* In mercy, He warned the world in Noah's day that judgment was coming.
* In mercy, He warned Ninevah.
* In mercy, He has warned us of the return of Christ and the flames of Hell.

Beloved, when God warns about Hell, it is not because He hates sinners, but because He loves them. God doesn't send people to Hell. People choose to go there. Men reject the message of their conscience and creation.

* Romans 1:20- For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

The Lord said it would rain hail. How does this happen? Drops of rain falling through a cold region of the atmosphere are frozen as they are sucked back up by an upward draft of air, freeze, and are converted into hail stones. Thus, the hail is produced by rain. When it begins to fall it is rain; when it is falling it freezes and is converted into hail; thus it is literally true that it rains hail.

The farther a hail-stone falls the larger it generally is, because in its descent, it meets with innumerable particles of water which attach and freeze to it, and thus its bulk is continually increasing until it reaches the earth. In the case in question, if natural means were at all used, we may suppose a highly electrified state of an atmosphere loaded with vapors, which, becoming condensed and frozen, and having a considerable space to fall through, were of an unusually large size.
Though this was a supernatural storm, there have been many storms of a natural kind, that have been exceedingly dreadful hailstorms. A storm of hail fell near Liverpool, in Lancashire, in the year 1795, which severely damaged the vegetation, broke windows, etc. Many of the stones measured five inches in circumference. Dr. Halley mentions a similar storm of hail in Lancashire, Cheshire, on April 29th, 1697, that for sixty miles in length and two miles in breadth, did immense damage by splitting trees, killing fowls small animals, and knocking down men and horses, etc.

Mezeray, in his History of France, says "that in Italy, in 1510, there was for some time a horrible darkness, thicker than that of night, after which the clouds broke into thunder and lightning, and there fell a shower of hail-stones which destroyed all the beasts, birds, and even fish of the country. It was attended with a strong smell of sulphur, and the stones were of a bluish color, some of them weighing one hundred pounds." It is interesting to note that hailstones of this size will fall in the Tribulation period.

* Revelation 16:21- And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. A talent is around 100-120 pounds.

V. THE PRINCIPLES FOR BLESSING 9:19

Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

God demonstrates His mercy again. He not only warns of judgment, but instructs them how to avoid destruction. God is giving them a chance to believe His Word. Divine clemency is offered to Pharaoh. The clemency is not in an opportunity to stop the plague as before, but is a warning on how to avoid the effects of the plague. Pharaoh is told that the people and the beasts can be spared if they will stay under shelter. The Lord is saying, “Do what I say and you will be OK.” If we will do what the Lord says today, we will also be OK.
VI. THE PEOPLE’S RESPONSE 9:20-21

He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: [21] And he that regarded not the word of the Lord left his servants and his cattle in the field.

These two verses remind us of the responses that people make today toward the Lord.

* Acts 28:24 - And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Those that feared the Word of the Lord obeyed. The reward of their faith was the survival of their cattle and servants. Their obedience involved taking a definite stand. They chose to believe God instead of Egypt’s gods.

* Isaiah 55:11 - So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Even in the country of Egypt, God’s Word did not return void or empty. Someone will be affected by the Word of God.

* Acts 17:34 - Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

* Philippians 4:22 - All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.

Even though Pharaoh was hardened, all the people were not indifferent toward God’s commands. In life, folks obey the Word and folks also reject it like the king. When they reject it, they pay the price.

* Isaiah 5:24 - Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

* Zechariah 7:12 - Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

The Egyptians that left their cattle in the field, left the Word of God, left blessing, and left their peace. Beloved, learn from their mistakes.
VII. THE PERFORMANCE OF GOD’S WORD  9:22-25;30-32

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. [23] And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. [24] So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. [25] And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.  [30] But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God. [31] And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was baled. [32] But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up.

A country preacher announced that he would preach on Noah and the Ark on the following Sunday. He gave the scriptural reference for the congregation to read ahead of time. A couple of mischievous boys noticed something interesting about the placement of the story of the Flood in the Bible. They slipped into the church and glued two pages of the pulpit Bible together.

On the next Sunday, the preacher got up to read his text, “Noah took himself a wife,” he began, “and she was...” He turned the page to continue reading, “...300 cubits long and 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high.” He paused, scratched his head, turned the page back and read it silently, turned the page again and continued reading. Then he looked up at the congregation and said, “I’ve been reading this old Bible for almost 50 years, but there are some things that are hard to believe.”

Beloved, Pharaoh thought there were some things that were hard to believe in the message from the Lord. Nevertheless, God keeps His Word. This is His promise to us.

* Ezekiel 12:25- For I am the Lord: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God.

* Matthew 5:18- For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

This plague touches both men and beast. Men died from jagged stones of ice falling like bullets from Heaven. This plague was also an attack to discredit the gods of Egypt.

* Nut- sky goddess
* Osiris- god of crops and fertility. He couldn’t protect the crops.
* Set- god of storms. He could not prevent them.
* Isis- goddess of the air.

The time of the year is believed to be around mid-February. In Egypt the cattle are sent into open country from January to April when the grass is abundant. They remain in the stalls the rest of the year.

The barley was in the ear. It ripens in February in Northern Egypt. It was the food of the poor and for horses. It was grown for beers. The phrase “flax bolled” means it was in blossom which takes place in Mid-February and early March. Flax was used to make linen and was used exclusively by the priest. White linen is a picture of righteousness. In Revelation it pictured the righteousness of the saints. The destruction of the flax was a reminder of God’s attitude toward our own righteousness. It is as filthy rags in the sight of God. This is the message that the Lord is trying to get across to the king of Egypt. You can’t save yourself. Only the Lord can do this.
Chapter 24
The Imperfection of Mr. Perfection
Exodus 9:26-35

The story is told of an eagle perched on a block of ice just above Niagra Falls. The swift current carried the ice and its majestic passenger closer to the edge of the great precipice. The cries of other birds and animals, warning the eagle of danger that lay ahead were to no avail. "I have great and powerful wings," the eagle boasted. "I can fly from my perch at any time. I can handle it."

Suddenly the edge of the falls was only a few feet away. The torrent of water rushed the block of ice over the great falls. The eagle spread his powerful wings to mount up over the impending doom only to discover too late, that his claws had become frozen to the cake of ice. Do I have to say more? The bird plunged over the falls to his death. Beloved, none of us are immune to the consequences of sin.

Pharaoh has found out again that he was powerless. His feet are frozen on the ice if you please. His pride and rebellion are destroying him and his country. Whether you are a king or pauper, you are not immune to the sting of sin. Are your feet freezing to the ice? Has sin taken hold of your life?

Pharaoh is going to cry out, “I have sinned.” Will everything be all right now? If you cry out to God, “I have sinned,” will everything be OK for you? Surprisingly, the answer is “No!” Admitting this is not enough to get you out of trouble.

I. THE PROTECTION OF GOD’S PEOPLE 9:26

Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.

God’s people were spared from judgment, demonstrating again to Pharaoh that the Lord was in control and that He was
God. He could inflict judgment upon the Egyptians but spare His own people.

II. THE PHARAOH’S PUBLIC CONFESSION  9:27

And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

Pharaoh is crying, “Uncle!” This is the first time that he makes a public confession of his error. The so called “Mr. Perfection” admits imperfection, “I have sinned.” One can find forgiveness when they make this admission, yet, another may go into further depths of sin. What makes the difference? The answer is the attitude and genuine repentance of the person making the admission.

A number of people made this admission in the Bible. Unfortunately, many did not demonstrate genuine repentance.

1. Balaam: Numbers 22:34 - And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

Balaam was an example of double-mindedness. After his confession, he went on to sin willingly and worked for the wages of unrighteousness. He tried to serve two masters, God and money and could not.

* Matthew 6:24 - No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Balaam’s confession was worthless because he did not mean it. He was caught, but not convicted.

2. Saul: 1 Samuel 15:24- And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

Saul was a picture of an insincere man. He confesses and then gives an excuse, “I feared the people.” Insincerity was a trait of Saul. He loved to please people and agree with the crowd. Some folks insincerely confess sin to please others in order to get them off their back. Admission of sin is worthless if it is not genuine. God is not fooled by our phoniness.

3. Achan: Joshua 7:20- And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:
Achan’s confession is doubtful. He was an example of a death-bed confession which creates doubt. One question that comes to mind when death-bed decisions are made is, “Did they really mean what they said?” Doubt is created because the admission or profession of faith, has not been tested by the person’s life.

4. Judas Iscariot: Matthew 27:4- Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

Judas’ admission was made in a time of remorse and despair. He saw death face to face. He had no hope. He knew the treachery of his betrayal. He knew he was condemned. If you know you are lost, your hopelessness can be changed to hope by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior.

5. Job: Job 7:20- I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

Job pictures the repentance of a saint. Job loved God, but he was a sinner like everyone else. Christians are sinners saved by grace but they still have to contend with their fleshly nature. Do you need to get something right with God? Do you need to come to Him and say, “Lord, I’ve sinned?” If so, there is cleansing in Christ.

* 1 John 1:9- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

6. The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:18- I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

This is an example of a blessed confession of a lost man. He is truly repentant. His Father saw him with eyes of mercy, ran with legs of mercy, embraced his neck with arms of mercy, and kissed him with kisses of mercy.

Pharaoh said, “I have sinned.” Did he really mean it? No, he did not. Pharaoh is a picture of a hardened sinner whose confession is born in the storms of life, but dies in the calm. The storms of disease, danger, and desperation will drive people to cry out to God, but when life returns to normal, the Lord is forgotten.

Pharaoh’s confession is superficial and worthless, “I have sinned THIS TIME.” The man just didn’t get it. He has been sinning every time. His confession is mouthed with no meaning. Even Moses knew what was going on (vs.30). There was no change in the heart of the king. False repentance has roots in a shallow, flippant view of sin. Sin is not
taken seriously, somberly, soberly, and solemnly. Pharaoh’s responsibility for his sin was diverted in a sense, “I am my people are wicked.” Not all the Egyptians were wicked for some of them believed in the Lord.

*Exodus 12:38 - And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.*

Pharaoh was trying to ease his guilt by having his people share the blame, yet, he is the one responsible. His decisions have led his people astray. Never underestimate the power of your example, whether it is good or bad. We will also note that true repentance leads you to confess your own sin, not the sins of others. Have you taken responsibility for your actions? Do you have a serious or flippant attitude toward your sin? If so, realize that it will ruin your life.

**III. A PLEA AND A PROMISE  9:28**

*Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.*

Pharaoh’s plea was for prayer to stop the thunder and hail. His promise was, “I will let you go!” What he is doing is bargaining with God. Many people do this. Lord, get me out of my mess and I’ll serve you. They usually don’t when they get out of their mess.

**IV. THE PERCEPTION OF MOSES  9:29-30**

*And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's. [30] But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God.*

Moses promises to pray for the termination of the hail storm, but is not fooled by Pharaoh’s confession. He knows that the king is not broken and his heart is not changed. How do you know if someone makes a genuine decision for Christ? The answer is watch their life.
V. THE PLUNDER OF THE CROPS  9:31-32

    And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. [32] But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up.

    These accounts are in harmony with the natural history of Egypt. According to Pliny, the barley is reaped in the sixth month after the sowing-time, the wheat in the seventh. The barley is ripe about the end of February or beginning of March; the wheat, at the end of March or beginning of April. The flax is bolled or in flower in mid-February or early March. The flax and the barley were destroyed by the storm. Barley was used by the poor and to feed the livestock. Flax was used to make linen and was used exclusively by the priest.

VI. THE PIGHEADEDNESS OF PHARAOH  9:33-35

    And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. [34] And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. [35] And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moses.

    The trees were broken, the crops were broken, but Pharaoh’s heart was not broken. His heart was hardened according to verse 34. This word “hardened” is different from the one used in verse 35. In verse 34, it is from the Hebrew word kabad {kaw-bad'} which means “made heavy, made dull, insensitive, or unresponsive, to honor.” Pharaoh became insensitive again after the storm left. The people may have honored him for the deliverance or he may have honored himself in his own pride claiming, “Look at what I did!” He may have taken the credit. In verse 35, the word “hardened” is a stronger Hebrew word. It comes from the Hebrew word chazaq {khaw-zak'} which means “a stubborn, firm, courageous, strong resolve.” His heart is like granite. The king was increasingly pigheaded. He broke his promise again.

    Pharaoh’s heart became...

* stony from sin
* petrified by pride
* rigid from rebellion
* flinty from his foolishness
* concrete from corruption
* hardened by his hatefulness.

    Pharaoh's ears were....
* muffled to the message of God
* hushed to Heaven's beckon
* quiet to the cautions of God.

    Sin will ruin your life and it will influence others around you just as
Pharaoh's sin influenced his subjects. The Bible describes sin's effects
like beasts in a zoo.

1. It's poisonous like a viper.  Matthew 23:33
2. It is stubborn like a mule.  Job 11:12
3. It is cruel like a bear.  Daniel 7:5
4. It's destructive like a canker worm.  Joel 2:25
5. It is unclean like a wild dog.  Proverbs 26:11
7. It is fierce like a wolf.  John 10:12
8. It devours like a lion.  Psalm 22:13
9. It is filthy like swine.  2 Peter 2:22

* How does Sin Affect You?

A. Sin Dulls man's ears.
* Acts 28:27- For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

B. Sin Darkens men's eyes.
* Ephesians 4:18 - Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

C. Sin Diverts men's feet.
* Isaiah 53:6 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

D. Sin Defiles our tongue.
* Romans 3:13-14...Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: [14] Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

E. Sin Deceives our heart.
* Jeremiah 17:9- The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately
wicked: who can know it?

F. Sin Devours our intellect.
* 1 Corinthians 2:14 - But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

G. Sin Dooms our soul.
* Ezekiel 18:4 - Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

There is a story about a monastery in Europe perched high on a cliff several hundred feet in the air. The only way to reach the monastery was to be suspended in a basket which was pulled to the top by several monks who pulled and tugged with all their strength. Obviously the ride up the steep cliff in that basket was terrifying.

One tourist got exceedingly nervous about half way up as he noticed that the rope by which he was suspended was old and frayed. With a trembling voice, he asked the monk who was riding with him in the basket how often they changed the rope. The monk thought for a moment and answered very harshly, "Whenever it breaks." Beloved, don't wait until your rope breaks to change the direction of your life if you are going the wrong direction. If you are not saved, put your faith in Jesus Christ to take you to Heaven. If you are a Christian, get your life right with God today.
Chapter 25

Land of the Locusts

Exodus 10:1-20

A pastor was asked to speak for a certain charitable organization. After the meeting, the program chairman handed the pastor a check. “Oh, I could not take this,” the pastor said with some embarrassment. “I appreciate the honor of being asked to speak. You have better uses for this money. Go ahead and apply it to one of those needs.” The program chairman asked, “Well, do you mind if we put it into our special fund?” The pastor replied, “Of course not. What is the special fund for?” The chairman answered, “It’s so we can get a better speaker next year.” Beloved, life is full of humbling experiences.

The Pharaoh of Egypt will not humble himself even though his nation is being humiliated by plagues. God will humiliate him again, showing this king that he has no power, his gods are powerless, and he is not a god. Does the Lord have to humiliate you to get your attention or to get you to obey Him?

The Lord in this section will again show us that He has a way of using the weak, small things to confound the mighty. Again, the Lord will use a bug to make a fool out of this man. He has used flies, beetles, gnats, and now He will use locust.

I. THE COMMAND 10:1-2

And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: [2] And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord.

God again instructs Moses to go to the Pharaoh, warning him that the king’s heart is harder. Not only is the king harder,
but his servants have become hard-hearted too. This show-down of wills provides another demonstration of God’s power and signs for the purpose of establishing two more things.
1. The authority of God.... I am the Lord.
2. The acclaim of the Fathers.... Tell the sons and grandsons what I have wrought.

The phrase “what I have wrought” is from the Hebrew word ‘alal {aw-lal’} and means “to make a fool or a mockery of someone; to deal with severely.” God made a mockery or made fools of the Egyptians because of their defiance and rebellion. They thought they were smart, ignoring God’s warnings and embracing their own reasoning. Their so called “wisdom” however, was crazy and destructive. These signs would be object lessons to develop faith in the Lord and the fear of the Lord. Some of the Egyptians did get the message. Trouble can wake people up and draw them to the Lord.

* Psalm 119:71 - It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

Notice the testimony of Rahab.

* Joshua 2:9-11... And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. [10] For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. [11] And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

As a parent or grandparent, let me urge you to share with your children the stories of God’s provision and power in your life. They will be blessed.

II. THE CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH  10:3

And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me.

The confrontation begins with a question of rebuke from the Lord, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before men? Let my people go!” This confrontation is typical of the conflict
that each person faces with God. Will I humble myself before Him or be stubborn and proud against Him?

**The enemy of humility is pride.** Humility develops a lowly attitude, pride develops a lofty one. Humility abases self while pride admires and applauds self. Humility reduces self; pride raises or elevates self. Someone said that pride is a most peculiar disease. It makes everyone sick except for the person who has it.

**Humility...**

* hinder hostility, making it easier to get along with others.
* triples our tranquility, and thickens our timidity, making us calmer.
* swells our servility and stretches our stability. The smaller we become, the more room God has to work.
* cultivates our civility, helping us to get along with others.
* nurtures nobility. Living for others brings love and respect from others.

**How do you Know if you are Humble?**

Humility is a strange thing. One loses it the moment he thinks he has mastered it. Many people have humility, but few of us have mastered it. A person with humility is willing and does the following:
1. He apologizes or admits when he has been wrong.
2. He starts over again and keeps on trying if he has failed. Someone said, “If at first you don’t succeed, try to hide your astonishment.”
3. He takes advice and avoids mistakes.
4. He is unselfish, makes the most of a little, and is content.
5. He is considerate, charitable, and respects others.
6. He endures success and is not cocky.
7. He forgives, forgets, and is patient with the faults of others.
8. He shoulders a deserved blame and has a serving spirit. Swallow your pride. It is not fattening.

**Other Insights About Humility**

1. **Humility is necessary in our service for God.**
   * Micah 6:8- He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?
2. **We are to put it on.**
   * Colossians 3:12- Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
3. We are to be clothed in humility.
* 1 Peter 5:5 - Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

4. We are to walk in humility.
* Ephesians 4:1-2... I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, [2] With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; When a man starts singing his own praises, it is pretty sure to be a solo.

* The Consequences of Being truly Humble
1. You will be regarded by God.
* Isaiah 66:2 - For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

2. You will be heard by God.
* Psalm 9:12 - When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.
* Psalm 10:17- Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

3. You will be delivered by the Lord.
* Job 22:29- When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

4. You will be lifted up by the Lord.
* James 4:10 - Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

5. God will exalt you.
* Luke 14:11 - For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

6. You will receive more grace.
* James 4:6- But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.
* Proverbs 3:34- Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

7. You will be forgiven and cleansed by God.
* 2 Chronicles 7:14- If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and
will heal their land.

III. THE CAUTION FROM MOSES 10:4-6

Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: [5] And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which growth for you out of the field: [6] And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

Tomorrow, judgment will come. Again, God demonstrated His grace to give Pharaoh time to think and repent if he chooses to do so. If Pharaoh refuses, the locusts will come. They will cover the earth, consume the vegetation, and crowd the houses. These locusts will cover the ground at a depth of six to eight inches. This is typical in a swarm. The king has not seen anything like this. Notice that Moses delivers the message, but does not wait for an answer before leaving. God warned Moses that the king’s heart would be hard. Moses’ job, however, was to deliver the message. Our job is the same as preachers. We are to deliver His message and say, “Thus saith the Lord!” Don’t be intimidated by scoffers. Let the Lord take care of them and believe me He will if you let Him.

IV. THE COUNSEL OF THE SERVANTS 10:7

And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

Rulers can be blinded by pride, passion, prejudice, and private wishes. These servants knew their king well and they speak up. At the risk of their own lives, they offer counsel to the king.

A. The Counsel of Remembrance

How long will he be a snare to us? This word “snare” means “peril or source of danger.” They have gone through one problem after another. Pharaoh has an amazing knack for not learning from his mistakes. His pride hindered him in this area and it will do the same thing to us.
B. The Counsel of Release

The king’s servants said, “Let them go Pharaoh.”

C. The Counsel of Realization

“We are as good as dead Pharaoh. Don’t you realize yet that Egypt is destroyed?” The king is standing alone more and more.

V. THE CONCERN OF PHARAOH 10:8-10

*And* Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go? [9] And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. [10] And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you.

Pharaoh responds for the first time to the threat of judgment. He says, “Go ahead and serve your God, but who is going?” Moses tells the king, “We are taking everyone.” This should not have been considered an unreasonable request. It was also the custom of the Egyptians in their religious assemblies. Men, women, and children attended them, often to the amount of several hundred thousand.

Herodotus informs us, in speaking of the six annual feasts celebrated by the Egyptians in honor of their deities, that they hold their chief one at the city of Bubastis in honor of Neith or Diana.

* They go thither by water in boats ... men, women, and children.
* During their voyage some of the women play on castanets, and some of the men upon flutes, while the rest are employed in singing and clapping their hands.
* When they arrive at Bubastis, they sacrifice a vast number of victims, and drink much wine.
* At one such festival, the inhabitants assured him, that there were not assembled fewer than 700,000 men and women, without reckoning the children.

Pharaoh however, is worried and resistant when he hears this answer that all are going. He is also inconsistent because the Egyptians worshiped in great numbers too. Pharaoh says, “The LORD will certainly need to be with you if I let you take your little ones! I can see through your evil plan.” He was condemning the same thing that the Egyptians did, but that is the world’s philosophy. Secular society is
consistently inconsistent in their beliefs.

VI. THE COMPROMISE OF THE KING  10:11

_Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence._

In a 180 degree turn, Pharaoh changes his mind, “No, everyone will not go! Only the men may go.” Then Moses was driven out from the presence of Pharaoh in anger. The king was mad and fed up. This was compromise number three offered by the king.

1. Worship in the land.
2. Go, but not far.
3. Go, but leave the kids and women in Egypt.

Such is the trap of the world today. Parents love God, but sometimes they leave their kids in Egypt. They don’t teach them about the Lord, take them to church, discipline them and make them mind, teach them manners and respect for others, or how to work. John R. Rice said, “The best way to get rid of criminals is to stop rearing them.”

Common deceptions of today are, “Don’t force religion on your kids. Let them choose what church they want to go to when they are older.” It will be too late then. Another lie is, “If you bring them up in church, it will turn them away from God.” Beloved, if you don’t bring them up in church, they may never go at all when they are older.

*Proverbs 22:6- Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Someone said, “Children are like canoes. They behave better if they are paddled from the rear.” The Farmer’s Almanac says, “In the old days, a naughty child was straightened up by being bent over.” Thank God if your parents tried to teach you about God, took you to church, or disciplined you. If you choose to get out of church when you are older, don’t blame your parents, pastor, or the people of the church. You are responsible. You are making your choices and you bear the consequences. If you ruin your life because of sin, it is your fault.
VII. THE CONTEST WITH PHARAOH 10:12-15

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. [13] And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. [14] And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. [15] For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

The locust covered the entire land. In a locust swarm, one square mile contains 200 million locusts. A typical swarm is 400 square miles, which means there would be 80 billion insects. The land was covered. Nothing happened like this before.

The land was “darkened.” The locust darkened the ground. Their brownish bodies covered the earth. Vegetables appeared burnt by fire. The vegetation was consumed and the bark was eaten off the trees. Any furniture or baskets made of plants were destroyed. The land was vacuumed of life, leaving a terrible famine.

In Shaw’s Travels, pages 187-188, Dr. Shaw witnessed formidable swarms of these locusts in Barbary in the years 1724 and 1725. He gives the following account of them: "They were much larger than our grasshoppers, and had brown-spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow. Their first appearance was towards the latter end of March. In the middle of April their numerous swarms, like a succession of clouds, darkened the sun. In the month of May they retired to the adjacent plains to deposit their eggs. These eggs were no sooner hatched in June than the young brood first produced, while in their caterpillar or worm-like state, formed themselves into a compact body of more than a furlong square, and, marching directly forward, climbed over trees, walls, and houses, devouring every plant in their way. Within a day or two another brood was hatched.”

God was again showing the impotence of the Egyptian gods.

* Serapis- protector against locusts.
VIII. THE CONFESSION OF THE KING  10:16-17

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. [17] Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

Seeing the locusts, the king gets a reality check. Every minute counts. In haste, he calls for Moses and Aaron and says, “I have sinned.” Does this sound familiar? He continues, “Forgive me this one time and pray for me.”

IX. THE CLEAN UP OF EGYPT  10:18-20

And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the Lord. [19] And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. [20] But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

In mercy, God removes the locusts and casts them into the Red Sea. Someday, the Egyptian army will be here too. The test of repentance is the fruit yielded by it. Pharaoh is not sorry for his sin, just the results of it. He continues to get harder toward God. The same thing will happen to us if we are not truly repentant. May we learn from Pharaoh’s mistakes, lest we suffer for our indifference.
Chapter 26
Ebony in Egypt
Exodus 10:21-29

In a little town in Georgia, a motorist had to pay a farmer $20 to pull him out of a mud hole. The stranded motorist said, “Seems to me that you’d be so busy pulling folks out of these lousy mud roads that you would be doing it day and night.” “Nope, I can’t pull them out at night,” drawled the farmer. “Night’s when we tote the water to muddy the road.”

Beloved, God was going to use the night, ebony in Egypt, to muddy Pharaoh’s road. The king refused to see the light, so the Lord says, “OK, I’ll give you darkness. I’ll give you ebony in Egypt where everything is shut out and you will have only time to think.”

When we wander from the Lord, He might bring darkness in our life, more trials, to draw us back into the light. He may muddy our road making it slick, unstable, hard to steer, and unpredictable to make us desire the Solid Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. The darkness brings out the worst in Pharaoh but the best in Moses. If you are facing dark times, ebony in your Egypt, then this message is for you.

I. THE DARKNESS 10:21-22

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. [22] And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

Have you ever had the lights go out on you unexpectedly? What do you do? Do you look for the lights or the candles? Do you get scared or scream? Stub your toes? Do you play monster and start breathing hard and loud freaking out your kids? That’s fun.

Well, plague nine begins as plagues three and six, without warning. This stubborn king continues to heap trauma on his people by his muleheadedness. The guy is an absolute fool. He who said, “Let their be light” is now saying, “Let their be darkness in Egypt.” It was a darkness
so thick that it could be felt.
* The dazzling sky became darkened and dismal.
* The gleam of Egypt was replaced with gloom.
* The shining sun was covered by shadows.
* That which was brilliant was replaced with blackness.

God’s curtain of ebony covers the land of Egypt like hot fudge over vanilla ice cream. For three days, the light of the heavens was smothered. God was making a final appeal for repentance. They had three days to think, three days to repent before death should eventually come and they live in darkness for eternity.

Orientals greatly dreaded darkness. They leave lamps burning all night in their homes. Light is an emblem of prosperity and darkness of calamity.
* Proverbs 20:20- Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.
* Proverbs 24:20- For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

This darkness was a terrible judgment. They were totally helpless. Everything was shut down. The Egyptians had to stay at home for they had no light. The Hebrews, however, did have light. The darkness was believed to possibly be the khamsin which was a fifty day wind that blows off the Sahara desert at the vernal equinox in the Spring. For two to three days the wind blows with great force and is filled with sand and dust. The sky is severely darkened. This judgment was extremely terrible for the sun was blotted out. Heat and sand can be a darkness that is felt.

This darkness strikes at the heart of the Egyptian religious system. The sun was worshiped. It was the emblem of Ra, Aten, Amun, and Horus. Darkness indicated that these gods were dead and powerless. Nut and Hathor, the sky gods, were also powerless.

Darkness is a picture of the lost and their eternal destiny. If you are without Christ, you are walking in spiritual darkness. You are lost for you are in the dark.
* Matthew 6:23- But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!
* Proverbs 4:19- The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.
* John 3:19- And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the
world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

* 2 Corinthians 4:4- In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

If you die without Christ, you will spend eternity in darkness.

* Matthew 8:12- But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

* Matthew 22:13- Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We are not to live like we are in spiritual darkness. That kind of living is to end in our lives.

* Romans 13:12- The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

* 1 Thessalonians 5:4 - But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

* 1 John 1:6 - If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

II. THE DIFFERENCE IN DWELLINGS   10:23

They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

The Egyptians did not see one another. They had a darkness which could not be lit up. Israel had light that could not be blown out. What a picture of today. Without the Lord you walk in darkness and with Him you walk in the light. Our salvation cannot be taken away or snuffed out.

III. THE DEAL WITH MOSES   10:24

And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.

Pharaoh now offers compromise number four: Take everybody but leave your goods and flocks behind. The animals would replenish Egypt’s demolished food supply. They were facing famine and
death. This would also starve the slaves and force them to return to Egypt. There is a lesson here for us. Satan wants us to compromise in the area of our possessions. Don’t use your possessions for God’s glory is the Devil’s message. Don’t you dare tithe; don’t support God’s work; don’t help others.

For the Christian, all that he has belongs to God and is to be dedicated to the Lord. This is the way it should be, but is not always the case in the lives of many carnal believers. A wife came to the living room one day having answered the front door. “There’s a man at the door who wants to see you about a bill you owe,” she told her husband. “What does he look like?” The wife declared, “He looks like you’d better pay him.” Beloved, give to God what belongs to Him or pay the price for robbing God.

What a difference we see between the first and last interview. In the first interview, Pharaoh yielded nothing. In the last one, he yielded everything except Israel’s property. What made the difference was God’s power revealed in nine plagues.

The roles have been reversed. The master has been mastered. The master is now the slave without anything and the slaves are the masters having all. Jesus put it this way, “The first shall be last and the last shall be first.” The unbelieving rich man was spiritually bankrupt and poor Lazarus was spiritually wealthy in the Lord. God tells us to lay up treasure in Heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt those treasures.

IV. THE DECISIVENESS OF MOSES 10:25-26

And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. [26] Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither.

Moses’ reply was, “No way Hozay!” Moses will not compromise. He was a man of conviction, forged by the desert for forty years. Someone said, “If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.” Everything belongs to God and must be at His disposal.

* 1 Samuel 2:30- Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me
I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. We need this same attitude of conviction.

We need to be like Daniel who would rather enter the lion’s den than deny the Lord. Let that sink “in” a minute. We need to be like the three Hebrews who were willing to burn in a furnace than worship an idol. Moses’ mind was made up. **The men who have moved the world have been men whom the world could not move.**

Moses was a decisive man. A person who is decisive refuses to reconsider a decision which they know is right. They have the right kind of attitude. Beloved, it is not your aptitude, but your attitude that determines your altitude in spiritual growth.

The decisive person also makes present commitments to avoid future failures. David Livingstone put it this way, “I will go anywhere, provided it is forward.” Daniel made a decision to avoid future failure before he was taken to Babylon.

*Daniel 1:8 - But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

The decisive person devotes all their energy to a course that is right. Ruth followed Naomi for it was the right thing to do. The decisiveness of the snail enabled it to reach the Ark.

The treasures found in the darkness of the earth are gold, silver, diamonds, etc. The stars twinkle like diamonds on the black velvet of outer space. In the ebony of Egypt, God’s man sparkled like a jewel. Like a radiant star, Moses has shown brightly in his courage, conviction, and compliance to the Lord’s commands. His mind was made up.

**V. THE DEATH THREAT AND DEMAND 10:27-29**

*But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. [28] And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. [29] And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.*

Pharaoh back tracks again as before. He will not let them go. He doesn’t want to lose his labor force. He doesn’t want to see Moses anymore. If he does, Moses will die. Moses says, “Fine with me.”
Anger has ruined Pharaoh’s life. For every minute Pharaoh was angry, he lost 60 seconds of happiness. Will Rogers said, “People who fly into a rage make a bad landing.” This king was making a number of bad landings. Anger distorted his thinking. Someone said, “I’m temperamental. That’s 90% temper and 10% mental.”

The king has ebony in Egypt because there is ebony in his heart. He has been a fool because he failed to learn from his mistakes, to be teachable, humble, and submissive to the Lord who proved His power over and again to this king. Pharaoh was supposed to be all wise and all knowing, but he by far was far from this. His life speaks volumes to us on what not to do. He is an example of one who lacked wisdom in his life. Such is the problem today. There are very few people who really have wisdom.

I never cease to be amazed at the foolishness or lack of wisdom that people display by their decisions. Evidently, manufacturers feel the same way. The warnings on their products indicate problems in the past. Here are ten classic examples.
* Do not attempt to stop blade with your hand. This was in the manual of a Swedish chainsaw.
* In order to get out of car, open door, get out, lock doors, and then close door. This was in a car manual.
* Do not put in mouth. On a box of bottle rockets.
* Not dishwasher safe. On a remote TV control.
* Caution: Remove infant before folding for storage. On a portable stroller.
* Caution: Do not spray in eyes. On a container of underarm deodorant.
* Do not drive with sun shield in place. On a cardboard sun shield that keeps the sun off the dash board.
* Do not use orally. On a toilet bowl cleaning brush.
* Do not use for drying pets. In the manual for a microwave oven.
* Do not drive cars in ocean. In a car commercial which shows a car in the ocean.

One of the great needs of society today is wisdom. It is a desperate need because men have chosen to reject true wisdom that comes from the Lord. Wisdom comes from the Anglo-Saxon root word wis (wise; understanding truth; knowing) and the word -dom (judgment). Wisdom then is not just mere intelligence. Instead, it is a combining of an understanding of truth with the good judgment to apply that truth. Wisdom is therefore, not just a bunch of information ... it is application...
of truth. Wisdom must be grounded in an unwavering commitment to truth APPLIED in practical life. It is a wise person that sees practical application in what he sees or learns. The true test of wisdom is works, not words. You can teach others far more by your manner of life than by your words. It is our walk that talks louder than our talk.

Wisdom is a character quality that is developed by decisions, not by education. There is nothing wrong with education as long as that education is based on truth and morals. Much of education today is based on Anti-God philosophies and is actually a hindrance to wisdom. The world is oozing with educated men who dribble foolishness from their mouths. They may have education, but not wisdom. Knowledge leads us from the simple to the complex; wisdom on the other hand leads us from the complex to the simple (Psalm 19:7). Vance Havner said, “If you lack knowledge, go to school. If you lack wisdom, get on your knees! Knowledge is not wisdom. Instead, wisdom is the proper use of knowledge.” The wise person lays up knowledge and disperses it (Proverbs 10:14; 15:7). Wisdom comes from God and is centered in God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. For example, His wisdom is seen in the creation of the human body.

The average human heart pumps over one thousand gallons a day, over 55 million gallons in a lifetime. This is enough to fill 13 super tankers. It never sleeps, beating 2.5 billion times in a lifetime. The lungs contain one thousand miles of capillaries. The process of exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide is so complicated that "it is more difficult to exchange O₂ for CO₂ than for a man shot out of a cannon to carve the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin as he passes by."

DNA contains about two thousand genes per chromosome—1.8 meters of DNA are folded into each cell nucleus. A nucleus is six microns long. This is like putting 30 miles of fishing line into a cherry pit. And it isn't simply stuffed in. It is folded in. If folded one way, the cell becomes a skin cell. If another way, a liver cell, and so forth. To write out the information in one cell would take three hundred volumes, each volume five hundred pages thick.

The human body contains enough DNA that if it were stretched out, it would circle the sun 260 times. The body uses energy efficiently. If an average adult rides a bike for one hour at ten miles per hour, it uses the amount of energy contained in three ounces of carbohydrate. If a car were this efficient with gasoline, it would get nine hundred miles to the gallon.
Because wisdom focuses on application, it is therefore learned "in the field"...in the practical everyday circumstances of life. The classrooms of our schools are designed to build knowledge, but more than education is needed to develop wisdom. Classrooms give information which in turn give knowledge of a subject. When a person comprehends and relates different pieces of information, he develops understanding. Wisdom results when a person finds and makes practical application of the lessons of knowledge and understanding. It is hard to find people who we would consider "wise" in this day and age. Someone once said, "When the king dies, long live the king. When the wise man dies, it is not so easy to replace him." Isaiah said, "Where are the wise?" (Is. 19:12).

I like the story of the wisdom of the New York business man. Before going to Europe on business, a certain man drove his Rolls-Royce to a downtown New York City bank and went in to ask for an immediate loan of $5,000. The loan officer, taken aback, requested collateral. The man replied, "Well then, here are the keys to my Rolls-Royce." The loan officer promptly had the car driven into the bank's underground parking for safekeeping and gave him $5,000. Two weeks later, the man walked through the bank's doors and asked to settle up his loan and get his car back. "That will be $5,000 in principal, and $15.40 in interest," the loan officer said. The man wrote out a check, got up, and started to walk away. "Wait sir," the loan officer said. "While you were gone, I found out you're a millionaire. Why in the world would you need to borrow $5,000?" The man smiled. "Where else could I safely park my Rolls-Royce in Manhattan for two weeks for only $15.40?"

Wisdom is rare today because it requires an attitude of humility. It requires humility because wisdom tends to conflict and contradict what we naturally have been taught or believe. Wisdom is discerning the folly that is in my heart, humbly acknowledging it as folly, and overcoming it with wise words, deeds, and attitudes. The person who is maturing in wisdom and decreasing in foolishness is truly wise. Decreasing in foolishness is the hard part for most people. People usually do not like to change, especially their foolish ways. The very essence and nature of wisdom is to learn and to change. As a person applies truth and knowledge in their life, they will change. Wisdom lives in the heart of a learner and foolishness abounds in the heart of the stubborn and rebellious.
Solomon said, "Fools despise instruction." Foolishness is insisting that life conforms to my way of thinking and rejects the application of true wisdom. *Some are wise, and some are otherwise.* The otherwise are foolish in their actions and thinking. One very important aspect of wisdom is understanding the importance and worth of one's time. People with a poor understanding of time are likely to foolishly waste the hours that God has given them. We must realize that our time is limited, that time that is lived and spent can never ever be recovered, and that every day brings us one day closer to the end of our life or to the Lord's return. Folks with this attitude have a much more fertile heart for the growth and practical application of daily wisdom and the wise use of their time and life. God help us not to waste our life away, but to use our life in serving Jesus Christ!

* Fifteen Traits of a Wise Person *

Solomon asked in Ecclesiastes 8:1- *Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.* A look at Scripture gives a number of insights on who is a wise man.

1. **He is Attentive & Regards Instruction:**

Many times we make stupid mistakes because we don't take the time to listen to instructions or apply them.

* Proverbs 1:5- *A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:*

"Wise counsel" is from the word *tachbulah* (*takh-boo-law*). It comes from the word *chabal* which means "to bind or tie as with a rope." The notion of pulling a rope, as in steering a ship or leading a horse, gave rise to the idea of guiding or directing. From this we get the words counsel or guidance. We are going to get direction from someone, it would be best to get it from someone wise. People will seek wise counsel, but fail to implement it. They have accomplished nothing by doing so.

* Proverbs 12:15- *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*

The fool is the master of his own fate. He will not learn from his mistakes. Author Kevin Miller stated, "While staying with my friends Tim and Jill Jones, I watched their hamster, Hammy, in his little cage.
Hammy has a warm nest of cedar shavings to curl up in, a water bottle to drink from, and best of all, a wheel he can run inside of. He has everything a hamster could want or need. But Hammy refuses to run inside his running wheel. Instead, he has come up with what he thinks is a better idea.

Hammy climbs up on top of the wheel, turns over on his back on the top of the wheel, and stretches out. Gradually the wheel starts to turn, and Hammy's entire body rolls with it, head first. The wheel begins to roll and Hammy's head smacks on the bottom of the cage. He gets up, shakes himself, apparently hurt from the unexpected sharp blow on his head, but what does Hammy do? He climbs back up on top of the wheel, turns over, stretches himself out, and gets ready to clunk his head again. Why? Why would a hamster who has everything he needs disregard the wheel's proper use and do something that only hurts himself? And why, even after that, would he do it again? The bigger question is, why do humans, who are supposedly smarter than hamsters, sometimes do the same thing?"

2. The wise man Accepts Rebuke:
* Proverbs 9:8,9- Reprove not a scorners, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Do you take correction from those who are in authority over you such as parents, a boss, teacher, coach or pastor? If you constantly buck at reproof and directions, it is a good indication you are a scorners. This word “scorners” is from the Hebrew word luwts {loots} which means “to make mouths at, talk arrogantly, to boast, scoff, mock or be inflated or have a big head.” Does this describe you? Young people, do you find yourself with this kind of attitude toward your parents?

When John A. Broadus was the president of Baptist Seminary in Louisville, he went to a country church to preach one Sunday. A man approached him after the service and said, "Brother, God kin git along without all your learnin'." Broadus replied, "Yes sir, God can. And he can also get along without your ignorance." Do you seek wisdom or scorn it?

3. He Accepts, Acknowledges & Receives God's Wisdom:
Men struggle to acknowledge God today, yet alone acknowledge or accept his wisdom. In their foolishness, they think they have all the
answers and know more than God, only to end up with egg on their face.
* Proverbs 2:6- *For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. Do you seek the wisdom of Scripture?

4. The wise man Absconds & Retreats From Evil:
* Proverbs 14:16- *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

A wise man is cautious and avoids danger and evil. Fools are arrogant and careless. They plunge ahead with reckless confidence, and throw off all restraint. They think they are invincible.

The scene is a four-engine airliner. The pilot's voice comes across the intercom: "Those of you on the left side of the plane have probably noticed that one of our engines has failed. Do not be alarmed. We can still fly on three engines, but we will probably arrive about 15 minutes late."

A few minutes later the pilot's calm voice was heard again: "Those of you on the right side of the plane are probably aware that a second engine has failed. Do not be alarmed. We can make it on two engines, though we will probably be at least 30 minutes late now." A few minutes later the pilot spoke to the passengers: "It has just come to my attention that a third engine has failed. Please do not be alarmed. We can make it to the airport on one engine. However, we will arrive approximately 45 minutes late."

One passenger turned to another and said, "Boy, I hope that fourth engine doesn't fail, or we could be up here all night!" Like the passenger, the fool just doesn't get it. They do not comprehend danger when it is staring them in the face. Where do you go and who do you hang around? If you are wondering if something is right to do, that is a warning flag already.

5. The wise man Appeases & Relieves the Wrath of Others:
* Proverbs 16:14- *The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it. The wise person knows how to calm down the leader, especially a king. He knows how to tactfully oppose the king or gently break bad news to him. Do you calm others down or get them stirred up and angry?
6. He Arrests & Refrains From Speaking His Mind At the Wrong Time:
* Proverbs 29:11- A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. Fools let their tempers fly without any restraint.
* Proverbs 10:19- In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. When words abound, transgression is inevitable, but the one who restrains his words is wise. Do you now how to bite your tongue and keep your mouth shut at the proper time or do you foam at the mouth?

7. He Avoids & Refrains From Arguing With a Foolish Man:
* Proverbs 29:9- If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

The word “contendeth” usually implies legal contention. If a wise person takes a fool to court or has a conflict with him, there will be ranting and ridicule but no satisfaction because the fool cannot be reasoned with at all. He will explode in a rage or mock and laugh at you. Avoid arguing, especially with a foolish person.

8. The wise man Adheres & Respects God’s Word:
* Matthew 7:24- Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

I want to tell you something that may surprise you. If you're making a trip to San Francisco and you want the safest place to go, you go to the middle of the Golden Gate Bridge according to Ed Palmer. He says that the center of this beautiful bridge will withstand probably 9.0 on the Richter Scale. It's a magnificent structure. It will not fall because it's flexible and it is a marvel of cantilever and suspension in construction. Every piece of metal in that bridge relates to two giant cables, that finally come up to two great piers that go down into bedrock, and two anchors out on each side. It is anchored to rock which gives it stability. Are you anchored to God’s Word? Do you put Bible truths into practice in your life? That is how you grow in wisdom.

9. He has a Righteous Attitude & Actions:
* James 3:13- Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.
When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; When health is lost, something is lost; When character is lost, all is lost. Are you living a godly life before others, especially those who know not Christ as their Savior?

10. A wise man's Anchor & Rudiments Are in the Lord:
* 1 Corinthians 3:10,11- According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Are your serving the Lord daily and making your life count for Him?

11. He is Allegiant & Reliable to the Lord:
* Matthew 24:45,46- Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Are you faithful to the Lord and to your family?

12. He Asks & Requests Wisdom From the Lord:
* James 1:5- If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Do you pray and ask God for wisdom? A convention was called in 1787, in America to revise the Articles of Confederation. For weeks delegates reviewed ancient history and analyzed governments of modern Europe in search of insights, but nothing suited the circumstances of this infant nation.

Finally, one of the distinguished gentlemen, Benjamin Franklin, addressed the group. Referring to their meager progress, he said, "In this situation of this assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarcely able to distinguish it when it is presented to us, how has it happened that we have not once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings?" In other word, "Guys, why have we not prayed and asked the Lord's help?" Those early leaders were not all evangelical Christians, yet many of them believed in God and sought His wisdom in the affairs of state.

13. A wise man Accompanies & Relates with Other Wise Men:
* Proverbs 13:20- He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Do you fellowship with wise
14. He Attempts to Reach Others For Jesus Christ:
* Proverbs 11:30- The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise. Do you witness to others and tell them about Christ and how to be saved?

15. A wise man Assists & Reassures His Family:
* Proverbs 10:1- A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.
* Proverbs 14:1- Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. The wise woman is an encourager to her husband and her family. Do you please your parents and try to be an encouragement to your family? Are you a wise person?
Chapter 27
The Beginning of the End
Exodus 11:1-10

A man who had been a rascal most of his life was in the hospital for surgery. Coming out from under the anesthetic, he found that the blinds to his hospital room were drawn. He complained to the nurse that he could not see outside and asked why they were drawn in the first place. "Oh, calm down," said the nurse. "There's a big fire burning across the street, and we didn't want you to wake up and think that the operation was a failure."

Have you ever had days where you awakened feeling like a failure? Perhaps you failed in an assignment, a job, a relationship, or spiritually you suffered a defeat. What causes failure? How do we overcome it? Some answers come from this chapter. Pharaoh has awakened to failure time and again. He will not learn from his mistakes and rebellion. For him, it is the beginning of the end.

I. THE FINAL PLAGUE 11:1

*And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.*

The body of this chapter deals with what will take place on the night of the Passover discussed in Exodus 12. Bible scholars contend that verses 1-3 are to be in the pluperfect tense and parenthetical. Let me explain what this means. Verse one in the Hebrew text reads, "The Lord had said to Moses." The ninth plague would be followed by another and was revealed to Moses before his last meeting with Pharaoh recorded in Exodus 10. Verses four through ten of this chapter are a continuation of the last conversation between Moses and Pharaoh in
Exodus 10:29. This would explain 10:29 where the king says he will not see Moses anymore.

*Exodus 10:29- And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.*

God says, “One more plague to go! He will not only let you go Moses, he will thrust you out!” The word “thrust” is from the Hebrew word *garash (gaw-rash)* which means “to drive out or expel with force.” He, who would not grant anything, will grant everything. God again would manifest the incompetence and impotence of Pharaoh and the omnipotence of God.

*Proverbs 19:21- There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.* You can make many plans, but the LORD’s purpose will prevail.

*Isaiah 14:27- For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?*

God has His own certain plans that cannot be frustrated. The judgments have accomplished what He set out to perform. This battle with Pharaoh is almost over. He has strategized, organized, and energized his efforts against God, only to be humiliated and defeated. The plagues have:

* magnified God’s authority
* signified God’s wrath
* glorified God’s name
* amplified God’s holiness
* verified God’s word
* sanctified God’s people
* petrified God’s enemies

**Wealth would not provide deliverance from God’s judgment to come.** Weapons would not provide protection. Science would not bring relief. The Egyptian gods were impotent. The same truth still holds for today. Wealth, weapons, wiles, and our will cannot keep you out of Hell. Christ is the only way of escape!

When locusts plagued the Egyptians, Pharaoh asked Moses to pray for their removal.

*Exodus 10:19- And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.* Every bug was removed and cast into the sea. What a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ has done with our sins when we seek His forgiveness and cleansing.
* Micah 7:19- He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Each one of us has to come to grips with the issue of our sins. We can try to deal with them and die or let the Lord deal with them and live. Sin is like a quiet river that begins in a quiet spring, but ends in a turbulent sea. The sweetness of sin soon sours. The fun of sin leads to a funeral sooner or later.

Sin is like the desert breath that drinks up every dew. It drains the life out of people. Sin is folly, devastation, disorder, and death. It brings madness in the brain, poisons the heart, brings frenzy in the imagination, and darkens the soul. It is the moth and rust that consumes the mind.

We are all sinners, but there is HOPE. He who is H- Heavenly, O- Omnipotent, P- The Prince of Peace, E- Everlasting, gives us hope and forgiveness in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have cleansing in Him.

* 1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

* Jeremiah 33:8 - And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

* Sin is a debt. God’s forgiveness is acceptance of the crimson coin of Christ’s blood as payment for the debt.

* Sin is like a cloud. God’s forgiveness is the sun which drinks it.

* Sin is like a stain. God’s forgiveness is the bath which cleanses it away.

* Sin is like dross. God’s forgiveness is the furnace which burns it out.

* Sin is darkness. God’s forgiveness is the light which dispels it.

* Sin is poison. God’s forgiveness is the antidote that eliminates it. Notice what Isaiah and the Psalmist said about the Lord’s dealings with our sins.

* Isaiah 38:17- Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

* Psalm 103:12- As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

* Psalm 85:2- Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.
In the joy of his new-found salvation, a little boy said to his friend, “Jimmy, God has forgiven my sins. He has put them all behind His back.” “Yes,” said Jimmy, “but if God turns around then He will see them.” “No! When God turns around His back turns around too.”

Beloved, when we cast our sins behind our back and try to bury them in oblivion, then God sets them before His face and demands a reckoning for them. On the other hand, when we set them before our faces and confess them with a true penitence before God, then the Lord casts them behind His back. When they are behind His back, then the Lord is between us and our sins. He hides us from our transgressions, instead of our transgressions hiding us from God. In Christ our sins will not be thrown up to us. He has forgotten them in Christ.

* Ezekiel 33:16- None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

* Hebrews 10:17- And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

When it comes to our sins, God’s memory is terrible unlike some folks who have powerful memories. For example:

* Fuh Sheng, at the age of 90 recited the 100 volumes of Chinese history word by word from memory. The books were destroyed by Emperor Whangti, so that Chinese history would begin with his reign. This plan was foiled because Sheng remembered their contents 32 years later.

* Cyrus knew the names of every soldier in his great army.

* Mithridates, who had troops of 22 nations under his banner knew all is 8000 soldiers by their right name.

* St. Anthony, the hermit, although he could not read, knew every line of Scripture by heart.

* Lord Granville, could repeat from beginning to end, the New Testament in the original Greek language.

* Thomas Granmer committed to memory in three months, the entire translation of the Bible.

* Boussuet could repeat not only the whole Bible, but all Homer, Virgil, and Horace.

*Themistocles could call by name every citizen of Athens, although the number was 20,000.

Thank God that His memory is terrible when it comes to our sins when we have sought His forgiveness through Christ.

* Isaiah 43:25- I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.
*Jeremiah 31:34b—... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

How does this forgiveness all come to pass?
1. Being good will not make the “bad” go away.
2. Education cannot teach sin away.
3. Medical skill has no cure for sin.
4. Rockets, jets, or cars cannot out-travel sin.
5. Cleansing is found in the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving by faith His gift of salvation.

All of the plagues, problems, and punishments in Egypt are a result of the pride, rebellion, and stubbornness of Pharaoh. It was time to pay the pauper. It was time to reap again what he had sown and pay the total bill for his disobedience.

II. THE FEE FOR LABOR  11:2

Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

God said, “Let every man borrow of his neighbor.” This word “borrow” is from the Hebrew word sha’al {shawal’}. It is used in 157 verses in the Old Testament and in 99% of the time it means “to ask, to demand or require.” The word “jewels” means “articles including drinking cups, vessels, idols, and ornaments.”

Why would they ask the Egyptians for anything? The answer is this was “back pay.” The Hebrews were entitled to these items in repayment for their past services and labor. Remember, they did not come to Egypt as slaves, but as free people.

Down the road, God uses these items to construct the Tabernacle. Whatever service God requires of His people, He will see they are properly equipped and their needs are abundantly supplied.

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

For years there were no indications they would ever leave Egypt or have any kind of substance at all. The lesson here is we are to learn to walk by faith, not by sight. God promised He would care for His people and that they would leave Egypt with the spoils of victory.

* Genesis 15:14- And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.
* Exodus 3:22- But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Beloved, when God makes a promise, He keeps it! His Word is true. Heaven is real. Hell is real. The second coming of Christ is real. His prayer promises are real. How did God’s people get all these things from the Egyptians? The answer is found in verse three.

III. THE FAVOR OF THE EGYPTIANS  11:3

*Proverbs 21:1- The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

*Genesis 39:3- And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

*Genesis 39:21- But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

*Daniel 1:9 - Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

God promised in Exodus 7:1 to make Moses a god to Pharaoh. His greatness was received without seeking it or expecting it, but by doing God’s work and having God’s power rest upon Him. The Egyptians willingly gave their wealth to the Hebrews, possibly out of gratitude for past benefits or to be in good standing with the people favored by the true God of Heaven. They may have also surrendered their wealth from the fear of God and the desire to get rid of these people as quickly and peaceably as possible. The Egyptians were a broken people.

As the crisis continued, Pharaoh sank in the estimation of his subjects and Moses rose. Pharaoh was:

* thoughtless and careless with the welfare of Egypt.
* ruthless, reckless, & restless in his rebellion and rudeness toward God.
* godless in his greed for power and control over God’s people.
* shameless in his sin and disobedience.
* peerless in his pride and arrogance.
* brainless in his bitterness and badness.
* helpless in overcoming God’s punishment.

Moses, on the other hand, was persistent, insistent, consistent, courageous, bold, patriotic, and dignified in all that he did. Crisis and trials have a way of bringing out the worst characteristics of bad men. Putting a tea bag in hot water doesn’t cause it to turn dark, it only brings out the darkness that is already there. Pressure and problems bring out what is on the inside of a person. Under pressuring circumstances, obstinacy becomes infatuation with self.

* Indifference to suffering develops into cruelty.
* Temper tantrums lead to violence.
* The rash grow reckless.
* The timid become cowardly.
* The hesitant become unstable.
* The proud and selfish become cocky.

Squeezing the lemon does not make it sour, it only brings out what was already there. The pressure of the plagues revealed what was already in the Pharaoh’s hard heart. Complications and trauma can bring out the worst in bad men.

**Crisis can also bring out the best in good men too.** The Moses in Exodus 10 & 11 was different from the Moses we read about in Exodus chapter three. In chapters ten and eleven, Moses is firm, self-reliant, confident, and even eloquent. He has watched God work time and again and keep His Word. He has baffled the magicians and withstood the Pharaoh without wavering. He has never blown up or lost his self control. Moses has consistently and persistently made the same demand of the Lord, “Let my people go!”

**Your trials will test your character and faith.** The flames of fiery conflicts bring out the dross or purity in your character. They reveal what you are. The next time trouble seems to overwhelm you, remember the tea kettle. Although it’s to its neck in hot water, it continues to whistle. Our Lord gives us a song in our heart, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” How you handle your problems by day will determine how you will sleep at night. We can look at our struggles negatively or positively.

Some Boy Scouts from the city were on a camping trip. The mosquitoes were so fierce the boys tried to hide under the blankets to avoid being bitten. Then one of them saw some lightning bugs and said
to his friend, “We might as well give up. They’re coming after us with flashlights.” Do you have a negative outlook right now and feel problems are coming after you with flashlights?

On the other hand, do you have a positive outlook about problems like the guide of a jungle-boat cruise? On one of the jungle-cruise boat rides at a certain theme park, a nervous lady passenger asked the guide if he ever had trouble with snakes dropping into the open boat from overhanging limbs. “Naw,” he drawled, “no trouble at all. See, if you got a snake in the boat, then you got people in the water. You got people in the water and you got alligators in the water. You got alligators in the water, then you got people back in the boat. Ain’t no trouble at all.”

IV. THE FIRSTBORN WILL DIE 11:4-6

And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: [5] And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. [6] And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.

God has given Pharaoh the opportunity of yielding to the Lord under less severe afflictions. The previous plagues gave Pharaoh an opportunity of doing freely what he now is about to be driven to do under severe compulsion. “About midnight I will go into Egypt and all the firstborn in Egypt will die.

The event would happen at midnight. This time of security would be replaced with insecurity. The deep silence of the night would be shattered by screams of grieving parents, grandparents, and spouses. As far as I can tell, if the firstborn was a daughter, wife, husband, son, grandfather, grandmother, father, or mother, if they were the firstborn of their parents, whether those parents were alive or dead, they would die. Death would stare them right in the face because the families would be all together, not separated by the activities of the day time. The horrors of death would not be drowned out by the hustle and distractions of the day.

The phantom of death has been ignored, un-thought of, unprepared for, and thrust into the background by the king. God will bring all of Egypt at the same time face to face with horrendous death. Every home
that did not follow God’s instructions would be affected and touched by its sting. Those who lived as if they had a freehold on life would see they only had a leasehold.

Every rebellious Egyptian home would be affected whether it was in the palace, prison, or poor side of the town. No one would be protected unless they followed God’s instructions. Little comfort would come from neighbors or friends. All would grieve from the sting of death as the firstborn would be taken in death. Why is this happening? Egypt is reaping what it has sown.

*Exodus 1:22 - And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.*

The firstborn of children and beast would die. The firstborn child or beast belonged to the gods of Egypt. The Lord, however, would claim them for His own. Some beasts were regarded as sacred and could not be killed. Their death would be viewed as a calamity. The Egyptians were already short on food. The loss of more animals would hurt them financially, physically, and religiously. Isis, the Egyptian goddess who was the protector of children, would be viewed as incompetent. Pharaoh’s firstborn would be stricken too. This child was considered a god. Whether you were virtuous or vicious, smart or stupid, poor or rich, if you were the firstborn, you would die unless you obeyed God’s instructions.

**V. THE FOSTER CARE OF GOD 11:7**

*But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*

As the country side would be littered with dead first-born animals and people, God’s people would be preparing for departure. He would protect Israel to show this was a judgment from God on Egypt. The dogs would not bother Israel as they departed. The Egyptians would be swallowed up in sorrow, in the blackest grief and bitterest lamentations. The sorrow of each would intensify the heartache of the rest.

God’s people deserved this punishment, but in His grace He cared for them and protected them. Israel was idolatrous too, at this time. The Bible makes this clear.
*Joshua 24:14 - Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

God remembered His covenant with His people. More importantly, Israel followed His instructions as we will see. Because of God’s grace, He gives to us what we don’t deserve. Because of His mercy, we don’t receive what we do deserve.

VI. THE FURY OF MOSES  11:8

   And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

The servants of Pharaoh would come or descend upon Moses and bow down to Moses as if he were the king of the land and pay him royal homage. They would beg Moses to leave. After sharing this with the king, Moses left in the heat of anger. Why was he so angry?

Moses had good reasons to be angry. He could be angry at Pharaoh for perpetuating the cruel slavery of the Israelites. He could be angry at Pharaoh for all his past rejections of God’s orders to let Israel go. He could be angry at Pharaoh for allowing the Egyptians to suffer greatly by his obstinate disobedience to God’s orders. Especially, Moses could also be angry at Pharaoh for being unmoved by the announcement of this deadly last plague.

VII. THE FORBIDDANCE OF PHARAOH  11:9-10

   And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. [10] And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

God warned Moses again that Pharaoh was not going to listen to him. God’s wonders were manifested in the land. The ten judgments made quite an impression on Egypt and the surrounding nations. For three centuries, the Egyptians leave Israel alone.
Chapter 28
The Passover Lamb

Exodus 12:1-13,21-23

In 1938, a man in New England went into an Abercrombie and Fitch store and purchased a new barometer. He took it home and proudly placed it upon a window sill. He consulted it to see what the weather would be like that day. He couldn’t believe it. The barometer said, “hurricane.” Here he was in New England. Hurricanes are usually in Florida. He grabbed the barometer and stalked back down to Abercrombie and Fitch to return it. The store clerk asked him, “What’s the matter?” He said, “The barometer you sold me is defective. It’s reading “hurricane.” The store owner said, “Oh, well we will happily refund your money.” He got his money back and started home. By the time he got home, his house had been blown away by the hurricane that hit New England in 1938. The barometer wasn’t wrong at all.

Beloved, the Bible is God’s barometer for mankind. It is always accurate because it is the Word of God. For men without Christ, it reads, “The Hurricane of Hell.” You can tap it, say it is broken or wrong, but it is still accurate. The barometer for Egypt read, “Death of the First Born.” This was God’s warning, whether you were an Egyptian or Hebrew. As we will see, if God’s instructions were not followed, the firstborn in that house would die.

This Passover chapter is a glorious chapter because it continually points to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb. He is the Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world. This chapter is a treasure chest of insights and Biblical principles for living. Let’s open the chest and lift its jewels into the light.

I. THE DATE CHANGE 12:1-2

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, [2] This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

Exodus 12 is the birth chapter of Israel as a NATION. They entered Egypt as a family and exit as a nation. Their national
existence basically starts from this point. It was the month of Abib (April) which means “green ear month.” It is when the corn is in the ear. After the Babylonian captivity, Abib was called Nisan. The month of Tisri (October), which was the first month, is now changed to the seventh month of the calendar year. All of the other feasts of the year are based upon the Passover.

The Passover lamb begins the chronology of Israel as a nation. They have a new beginning, a new start. In the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the same new beginning! The Passover lamb is a picture of Jesus Christ. The birth of Christ changed the calendar of the world just like the death of the Passover lamb. Anno Mundi which means “year of the world” was changed to Anno Domini which means “year of the Lord.”

Beloved, when you put your faith in Jesus Christ to take you to Heaven, you have a new beginning. The Bible says, in fact, that you have been born again spiritually, going from spiritual death to spiritual life.

* John 5:24- Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are new creatures in Christ.

* 2 Corinthians 5:17- Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. As Israel’s past has been blotted out, so are our sins. When Israel leaves Egypt, they begin their wilderness journey. For us, salvation is not a resting place, but a starting point in our race for Christ.

II. THE DECISION FOR A LAMB  12:3-6

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: [4] And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: [6] And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.
God's people are given instructions for deliverance. A lamb is to be chosen on the tenth day of the month for each household (or two homes if the family was small) and will be sacrificed on the fourteenth day. This lamb points to the Lord Jesus Christ in several ways.

The Lamb was chosen on the tenth so that it might be tested or inspected for four days for any blemishes, defects, or flaws before it was sacrificed. The lamb HAD to be without blemish and a male of the first year. These requirements pointed to Christ who was the Lamb of God that was sacrificed for the sins of the entire world. Notice what Isaiah and John the Baptist said.

* Isaiah 53:6-7 ...All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. [7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
* John 1:29 - The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

As the lamb was tested for four days, so was our Lord tested. For four days He was tested in Jerusalem and asked questions before He was crucified. In Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 11:34, we find that a year can be equated to a day. Jesus' public ministry was just under four years in length before He was crucified.

Jesus was singled out in four Gospel records, yet without blemish or sin. A sinful world needs a sinless Savior. The apostles that lived with Him and knew Him well said that He was perfect and sinless.

* 1 Peter 1:19-20... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: [20] Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,
* 1 Peter 2:22- Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:
* Hebrews 4:15- For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
* 1 John 3:5- And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

The enemies of Jesus claimed He was perfect.

* John 19:4- Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them,
Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Judas, the betrayer of Christ, professed His perfection. Jesus was the Lamb without blemish.

* Matthew 27:4- Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

The Passover lamb was a male of the first year. He was not to be too old or too young. The lamb was not a female, but a male. It was to be sacrificed in its full strength. Jesus died in the fulness of strength, not in His old age, not in His childhood, boyhood, or youth, but in the fulness of His manhood.

The whole assembly slew a lamb for the Passover. It was the sin’s of the whole world that nailed Jesus Christ to the cross.

* 2 Corinthians 5:21- For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

* 1 Peter 2:24- Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

The Jewish Passover lamb was killed in the early evening around three in the afternoon. This was the time that the lambs were slain in the Temple for the Passover. This happens to be near the time when Jesus died on the cross. When the High Priest cut the throat of the lamb, he would say, “It is finished.” Those were the same words of Christ on the cross. The price had been paid for our sins.

It is instructive to note that the day of Christ's death is specified in Scripture but not the day of His birth. Yet, we celebrate His birth on the same day every year while we celebrate His death on a host of different dates. How typical this is of human nature. What God makes certain, we make uncertain, but what God makes uncertain, we make certain.

If a household was too little for a lamb, then two families could join together. They tried to have at least ten if possible. We never find the lamb being too small for the house. Beloved, the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to atone and save the WHOLE world.

Christ did not die for a select few as Calvinism teaches. If this was true, then God would be a respecter of persons, showing favoritism to a few. God is not this way and such actions are condemned.

* James 2:9- But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

* 1 Peter 1:17- And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of
persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

* Acts 10:34- Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

If Christ died for a select few, then technically your witnessing would go out the window. How could you tell a man that Jesus died for Him if you did not know that for sure? You could be lying to Him because you would not know if he was chosen as Calvinism teaches.

If Christ died for a select few, then claiming that He loved the world would be a joke. Where is the love when God could save people whether they liked it or not, but He doesn’t save them. That’s the point for there is no love IF this were true. Thank God it is not.

If Christ died for a select few and condemned the rest of mankind to Hell, then why would God point us to Himself in His creation and in our conscience, if it was not His desire for all men to be saved. Why go to all the trouble?

* Romans 1:20 - For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

* Romans 2:15- Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

If Christ died for a select few, then why does the Lord give all men His invitation to come to Him. Why does He give all men a choice? Beloved, God has made it clear that Jesus did die for the sins of the WHOLE world, not a select few. He desires that all men be saved and none should perish.

* Revelation 22:17- And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

* Isaiah 45:22- Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

*1 John 4:14 - And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

*1 Timothy 2:4,6 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

* 2 Peter 3:9- The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any
should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
*1 Timothy 4:10- For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.
*1 John 2:2 - And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Christ died for the sins of the whole world. The pattern of the lamb in Scripture teaches this.
* In Genesis, the lamb was slain for an individual.
* In Exodus, the lamb is slain for a family.
* In Leviticus, the lamb is slain for a nation.
* In the New Testament, the Lamb of God, Jesus, is slain for the world.

The following verses indicate the pattern to faith in Jesus Christ.

A. A Lamb: Exodus 12:3- Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

For those folks who are without Christ, they look at Jesus as a lamb. They consider Him as one of many gods. There is no beauty, no desire for Him for He is just another man or religion. They are spiritually blind.

B. THE Lamb: Exodus 12:4 - And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

The Holy Spirit awakens the sinner and impresses upon him his need for Jesus. We see Jesus as “The Lamb, the Savior.” We realize the truth of Acts 4:12... *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Do you see this?

C. Your Lamb: Exodus 12:5 - Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: When you put your faith in Christ, He becomes YOUR lamb. Have you done this?
III. THE DINNER 12:7-10

And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. [8] And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9] Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. [10] And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

The blood of the sacrifice was applied to the door posts. We will focus on this point in greater detail, later in this chapter. What we will note here is several insights.

* The Jews demonstrated faith in God’s Word when they applied the blood to the door.
* Knowledge was not enough. By the way, knowing ABOUT Jesus Christ will not save you. You must trust Him by faith, obey His Word, and believe upon Him.
* Faith in God was visible to others as the blood was outwardly applied, not on the inside of the house, but on the outer doorposts of the homes of believing Jews and Gentiles.
* As the Hebrews entered the door of their homes, their thoughts would be upon the blood. As they left the next morning for the Promised Land, they would be greeted by the blood at the door. This would be the reason for their deliverance.
* The abandoned, bloody homes would be a constant reminder to the Egyptians, of their sin, disobedience, and only way of deliverance. They would be reminded of their lost opportunity.

**The lamb was to be totally roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.** As it was the ordinary custom of the Jews to boil their flesh, some think that the command given here was in opposition to the custom of the Egyptians, who ate raw flesh in honor of Osiris. The Ethiopians are to this day known for eating raw flesh.

The “purtenance” or intestines, heart, kidneys, lungs, and liver were also roasted. Again, this lamb points to Christ. The entire lamb that was roasted was God’s provision for those on the inside of the house. The blood on the outside secured their protection from God’s judgment. How wonderful it is that the Lord supplies all of our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
The Hebrews needed food for their exodus from Egypt. Eating this lamb would signify two things.
1. Appropriation- making the lamb a part of your life.
2. Fellowship- fellowship with the Lord.

Jesus Christ is our source of spiritual strength. He is God’s spiritual provision for us. He is the Bread of Life and the Living Water for the journey that we face day by day.

*Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

**When the Hebrews roasted the Passover lamb, it was roasted whole and no bones were to be broken.** No bones were broken in the body of Christ when He was crucified. That in itself was a miracle.

*John 19:36- For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.* The fulfillment of Scripture is from the prophecy in Psalm 34:20.

*Psalm 34:20 - He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

According to the Jewish Mishnah, when the Passover lamb was roasted, it was put on two wooden or pomegranate spits, placed at right angles in the shape of a cross. What a picture of Calvary.

Unleavened bread was to be eaten at this meal. The meal was to be prepared in haste and eaten in haste. Bitter herbs might include wild lettuce, dandelion, or celery which becomes bitter with age. The bitter herbs signified the bitter suffering in Egypt.

**IV. THE DRESS FOR DEPARTURE 12:11**

*And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s passover.*

Verse eleven deals with the dress of the people for departure and provides a number of parallels for today’s believers as they journey through the wilderness of this life.

**First of all, they were to eat with their loins girded.** God’s people were to be prepared to leave within a few hours. Girded loins meant that their robes were tucked in, ready for movement, walking, running, or as a soldier for battle. Ungirded garments would be weights and hindrances. As Christians, we too, are reminded to remove hindrances from our lives. We are to also be ready for service which is typified in the girded loins.
*Hebrews 12:1-2... Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. [2] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Bad habits, bitterness, temper tantrums, addictions, selfishness, pride, and lying are to be laid aside and forsaken. They are weights.

* Romans 12:11- Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

* Ephesians 6:14- Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

The Jews were to have shoes on their feet. This seems particularly mentioned by the Lord because it was not customary at meal time. This custom continues today. As they do not use tables and chairs as we do in America and Europe, but have their floors covered with carpets, they throw off their shoes when they enter their homes lest they should soil those beautiful pieces of furniture.

The Israelites were to have their shoes on, because they were about to commence their journey. Shoes would affect their walk. Beloved, God wants our walk to be right and challenges us to walk with Him.

* Romans 10:15- And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

* Ephesians 6:15- And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

* Romans 6:4- Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

* 2 Corinthians 5:7- (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

* Galatians 5:16- This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

We find that the Lord took care of God’s people as they walked through the wilderness.

1. There was no swelling in their feet.

*Deuteronomy 8:4- Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

2. Their shoes did not fall apart.

* Deuteronomy 29:5- And I have led you forty years in the wilderness:
your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

The Jews were also to have their staffs in their hands. The staff speaks of the pilgrim life. God’s people are pilgrims. Thank God, this is not our final home.

* 1 Peter 2:11- Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshy lusts, which war against the soul;

What is the life of a pilgrim like?
A. Pilgrims travel light. They are not bogged down with great weight.
B. Their encounters are difficult with beasts and dangerous terrain.

* 1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
C. A pilgrim has no permanent home on earth.

* Philippians 3:20- For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
D. Wilderness life also has times of quietness, beauty, and meditation about the Lord.

E. The pilgrim is ready to travel at a moment’s notice. As Christians, we are to be ready for the Rapture of the church when we will be removed within the blink of an eye. This could happen today.

* 1 Corinthians 15:52- In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

* 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17... For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Something else we want to note here. Notice that it is the Lord’s Passover. Emphasis is usually upon Christ’s death manward, but little on the effects Godward. The demand for the death of the innocent to atone for sin glorified God, revealing His holiness and hatred for sin. The lamb appeased Him and satisfied His justice and magnified His holiness. Christ is our Passover, given to us by God. He provided the final lamb for us by giving us His only begotten Son.

* 1 Corinthians 5:7- Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:
V. THE DESTROYER & THE DEFENSE  12:7,12-13,21-23

And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. [12] For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. [13] And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. [21] Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. [22] And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. [23] For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

God warned that HE would pass through the land of Egypt and smite the firstborn in every home, human or animal, with death unless the blood was upon the doorposts. The Lord was going to execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt. Remember that animal worship was important in Egypt. Certain animals were considered as gods.

* Apis- the bull at Memphis
* Mnevis- the bull at Heliopolis
* Kneph- sheep were sacred to him
* Khem- goats sacred to this god
* Athon- cows were sacred
* Pasht- cats were sacred
* Anubis- dogs were sacred
* Horus- lions were sacred
* Set- crocodiles were sacred
* Taouris- Hippos were sacred
* Thoth- Apes were sacred
* Heka- frogs were sacred

This judgment was literally against their gods. Death of firstborn animals was considered a calamity demonstrating the weakness of their
Gods. The only defense against the judgment of death was the blood on the doorposts.

**Grace and mercy was not shown at the expense of righteousness.** The demand for holiness and the price for sin was met. How? A substitute was provided. The sentence of death was executed upon an innocent victim. The difference between the Egyptians and Israel was not a moral one. Both of them were sinners. The sole difference between them was the blood of the lamb known as the “Passover.”

The word **“Passover”** is from a verb *pasach* or noun *pesach*, resembling the Egyptian word *pesh*. The word “*pesh*” means “to spread the wings over or to protect.” The blood protected and covered God’s people from judgment and death. The destroyer passed over the houses with the blood on the posts. Why? Death had already done its work. The price for sin was paid. Justice was satisfied as the innocent died for the guilty.

**God’s eye was not on the house, it was upon the blood.** The house could be a palace, strong, elegant, and beautiful. The doorposts could be gold-plated and adorned with sapphires, emeralds, and diamonds that shined like tiny suns, but this would not do any good. Only the ruby red blood of the lamb would do. If the house was a shack, falling apart from age or decay, it would be safe with the blood. God’s eye was not on those in the house. Power, position, and prestige would not benefit anyone or the lack of these things would not hurt anyone. The focus of God’s attention was the blood! The shedding of the blood of the innocent for the guilty, of the pure for the impure, was a blueprint and object lesson which pointed to Jesus Christ. He who knew no sin died for all sinners, shedding His blood at Calvary.

* The blood, in drops, falling like red rainfall from the cross, was atoning blood.
* The blood, in rills, pouring down like red wine from the crevices of a wine press, was cleansing blood.
* The blood, spreading in crimson pools beneath the cross, was sanctifying blood.
* The blood, splashing like shafts of red sunlight in the face of enemies, was saving blood too.

When you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trust Him as your Savior, His blood covers your sins in the eyes of God the Father.

* *Hebrews 9:21-22... Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. [22] And almost all things*
are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was not enough to shed the blood, it had to be applied to the door posts. It is not enough to know about Christ, you must receive Him as your Savior. His blood must be applied to the door of your heart. If sin is to be paid for, then the finite (us) must suffer infinitely or the Infinite One (Jesus) must suffer for the finite ones. The blood on the door posts was pointing to Jesus death on the cross. Jesus said that He was the Door and He was covered with blood on the cross of Calvary. He was the door to what? The answer is Heaven. He was not a door, but THE Door. There is no other way to Heaven except through Him.

Notice verse 22 again, “And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.”

The lamb was slain at the doorway. The “basin” is from the Hebrew word *caph {saf}* which was a step or hollowed place before a door or threshold of a house. The Septuagint translates this word “before the doorway.”

The blood of the lamb was to be placed on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses. The various locations of the blood on Israel's houses point to Christ on the cross. The blood on the lintel (the upper part of the door) pictures the blood from the thorn-crowned head of Christ. The blood on the two side posts of the door pictures the blood from the hands of Christ nailed to the cross. You will notice, however, that blood was not put on the threshold which would speak of the feet of Christ on the cross. This was so the blood would not be trampled underfoot in gross disrespect. Oh that mankind would so respect the blood today, but the theology of many tramples it underfoot in scorn.

Hyssop was used to sprinkle the blood. Hyssop was used in cleansing people of items that were ceremonially unclean.

*Psalm 51:7-* Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

It is a plant of the mint family. It is woody with a straight stalk and bushy, hairy ends. Its white fragrant flowers tinged with red, open up in the evening. The leaves have an aromatic smell, and a warm pungent taste. The leaves of this plant are particularly recommended in humoral asthma, and other disorders of the breast and lungs, and greatly promote expectoration. Its medicinal qualities were probably the reason why this
plant was so particularly recommended in the Scriptures.

With the hyssop being a small plant, it speaks of humility. With it being used to apply the blood, it speaks of faith. Both humility and faith are vital in the application of the blood in the salvation of our souls. In humility we must recognize our sinfulness. By faith we receive Christ as Savior and thereby appropriate the blood of Christ for the cleansing that is needed for our sins. God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” Beloved, there is power in the blood of Jesus Christ.

* The Power in the Blood

1. It redeems:
   * 1 Peter 1:18-19... Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; [19] But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
   * Revelation 5:9- And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

2. It cleanses:
   * 1 John 1:7- But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

3. It brings forgiveness:
   * Ephesians 1:7- In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

4. It brings us close to God:
   * Ephesians 2:13 - But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

5. It gives peace to us:
   * Colossians 1:20- And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

6. It enables us to be overcomers:
   * Revelation 12:11- And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

7. It gives us boldness to come before the Lord:
   * Hebrews 10:19- Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the
holiest by the blood of Jesus,

8. It gives us boldness in the day of judgment:
   * Romans 5:9- Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

9. It brings justification.
   * Romans 5:9 - Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

   The Egyptians considered bloody sacrifices as detestable and sprinkling the blood upon the door posts as foolish and dumb. The world has not changed much in its thinking about this. Unbelievers today think we are crazy and Christianity is stupid because they are lost and don’t understand the truth of God’s Word.
   * 1 Corinthians 4:10- We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.
   * 1 Corinthians 1:18- For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.
   * 1 Corinthians 1:23- But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
   * 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

   Some have gone so far as to mockingly call the emphasis on the blood a "slaughter house religion," but it is the lack of attention to the blood that slaughters. It would have been a "slaughter house" experience in Egypt among the Jews if the blood had not been applied on the houses, for without the blood there would have been a slaughter of the firstborn. It was the blood that prevented the slaughter and it is the blood that protects the soul from spiritual slaughter in Divine judgment.

   Men can make the choice of doing one of several things today. They can rest upon the word of men, feel secure about Heaven, die with a false security and spend eternity in Hell. They can also apply the blood of Christ by believing on the Lord and worry through life if God will or can keep His Word. They can neglect to rest in His promises. Men can also have security, assurance, and peace by resting in His Word and His promise, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”
Chapter 29
A Meal to Remember
Exodus 12:14-36

Can you pinpoint the most memorable meal of your life? A meal which could be called “a meal to remember.” Mine is the Boy Scout “Order of the Arrow” banquet. To become a member of the Order of the Arrow, for two days you had to work in the woods at Boy Scout camp. You could not talk at all in this period. If you did, you got a notch on the stick you wore around your neck. Three notches and you were out. For five meals, you were fed water and two hard-boiled eggs for breakfast, lunch, and supper. Those 150 men and boys who were already members ate wonderful meals in front of us while the thirty candidates for membership nibbled on their eggs. When the two-day testing period was over, however, they served us a supper to remember. It was a feast and we could eat all we wanted. We were so hungry and when they brought out on the tables roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, hot rolls, and desserts, we were in Heaven. It was a meal to remember. Let’s pray now and go to lunch. Amen!

God’s people were instructed to observe the Passover meal every year to remember what God had done that night. This meal was to be a meal to remember.

I. THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE 12:14, 24-28

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. [24]And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. [25] And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. [26] And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What
mean ye by this service? [27] That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. [28] And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt was not to be forgotten. They were to remember this day of deliverance and celebrate it every year, remembering what God had done for them. They were to explain to their children the meaning of this feast. Let me ask, do you remember the day that you were saved and trusted Christ as your Savior? Tell your kids about this event in your life.

How do the Jewish people celebrate the Passover today? What are their attitudes today about the Passover? The Jews believe that their Messiah will come on the eve of Passover. They are looking for the arrival of their Messiah, not realizing He showed up 2000 years ago. Unfortunately, they rejected Him. We, on the other hand, are looking for the return of the Lord.

After the crucifixion and destruction of the priesthood and Temple, the Jews were left with three choices.
1. Accept Jesus as the Passover lamb.
2. Discontinue observing the Passover.
3. Without God's authorization, they could alter the Passover Feast, and this is what they did.

Some of the elements of the feast point or speak of Jesus Christ, perhaps from the influence of Jewish Christians in the early centuries after the time of Christ. The Seder or "Order of Service" of the meal, as it is called, consists of several elements.

First, there is no lamb or priesthood. Instead, the shank bone of a lamb is used. An egg is used because it becomes hard and strong by cooking it, not soft. The suffering of the Jews has strengthened them. The egg is also a picture of fruitfulness. The egg is dipped in salt water, which is a reminder of their tears and the crossing of the Red Sea. In place of bitter herbs, horseradish is used. A mixture called "charoseth" is used in the meal which is a clay-like mixture of wine, apples, and nuts, reminding them of the mortar used to erect the buildings. Four cups of wine, mixed with warmed water remind them of the blood of the lamb.
The entire house was swept clean of leaven. Not one crumb was to be found in the house or used in the meal. Sanitation wise, this helped to cut down on rodents that spread diseases. The word “leaven” is from the Hebrew word *chometz* which means “bitter or sour.” Leaven is a symbol of evil influence or sin. The nature of sin is what makes people bitter or sour.

A tramp looking for a handout in a picturesque old English village stopped by a pub bearing the name “Inn of St. George and the Dragon.” “Please, Ma’am, could you spare a bite to eat,” he asked the lady who answered his knock on the kitchen door. “A bite to eat? For a no-good bum like you? No way,” she snapped. “Why don’t you work for your living like an honest man? Go away,” she shouted. Halfway down the path, the tramp stopped, eyed the words “St. George and the Dragon,” then turned back and knocked again on the door. The lady angrily answered, “Now what do you want?” “Please Ma’am,” he replied, “if St. George is in too, may I speak with him this time?”

**Bitterness poisons people.** For this reason we are to get rid of it.

*Hebrews 12:15- Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

*Ephesians 4:31- Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

Leaven causes the dough to become puffed up so that the end product is more in volume, but not more in weight. This is exactly what pride does to people. It causes them to be puffed up and to think of themselves as greater than they really are.

*Psalm 73:6-Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*

*Proverbs 11:2- When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.*

*Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

**Pride feeds our egos and expectations, which later lead to disappointment.** Paul Harvey told about a college basketball coach who was shaving when his wife called upstairs to tell him that Sports Illustrated was on the phone. The coach was so excited that he nicked himself shaving. He was so eager for recognition for himself and his school that while rushing to the phone he fell down the stairs and bruised himself. Staggering to the phone breathlessly, he said, “Hello.” The
voice at the other end said, "Yes sir. I'm happy to tell you that for only 75 cents per week you can receive a one year subscription to Sports Illustrated." What a let down for the coach. This is what pride does to a person. It leads to falling down, bruising, and spiritual staggering.

The ancient Hebrews used the sour dough method of leavening bread. A chunk of dough was pulled off and set aside in a cool, moist place. When a new batch of dough was made, the reserved lump was mixed with the new batch of flour and then a new chunk was pulled off for the next batch. Each new generation of dough was linked to the previous loaves. Humanity bares the same kind of link to the sin of the first man, Adam.

* Romans 5:12 - Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

The cleansing of all leaven symbolized repentance, breaking old cycles of sin and starting out afresh from Egypt to walk as a new nation before the Lord. For seven days they were to eat unleavened bread. In this seven-day feast of unleavened bread, they did not put away leaven "in order" to be redeemed, but because they were redeemed. Failure to clean out leaven did not raise questions about security through the blood, but about fellowship with the assembly. As Christians, we are secure in Christ, yet, our sin hurts our walk and fellowship with God and other believers.

* John 10:27-29... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: [28] And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. [29] My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

* 1 John 1:6-7 ... If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: [7] But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

* 1 John 2:9-10... He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. [10] He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

There was a fellow in the South who wasn't very deep in his commitment to Christ, but who loved to go to Revival meetings. Every time a visiting evangelist put up a tent on the outskirts of town, he was there. When the invitation was given at the close of the service this man
would be the first one to the altar. Kneeling at the altar he would spread out his arms and pray loud enough for everyone in the service to hear, "Fill me, Lord Jesus, fill me." Every revival that came to town, he would follow this same ritual. He would be the first one to the altar and he would pray, "Fill me, Lord Jesus, fill me." Finally, a lady who knew him well couldn't take it any longer. Once when he was praying his empty prayer, "Fill me, Lord Jesus, fill me," she stood up and prayed loudly, "Don't do it, Lord. He leaks!" Do you leak spiritually? If so, you will make a mess for yourself and others, just like a leaky roof or drain.

The bread in the Passover meal was unleavened bread called **Matzoh**. Matzoh pictures Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. Matzoh means "sweetness without sourness." It typified the sweetness and wholesomeness of a life without sin. The only one without sin was Jesus. There was no leaven, no sin in His life.

* 2 Corinthians 5:21- For he hath made him to be sin for us, who new no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

* **Matzoh**

The appearance and treatment of matzoh also remind us of the Lord Jesus Christ in several ways.

1. **Three of these bread wafers were used.** These three wafers remind us of the Trinity. They were placed on top of another, separated by a napkin or a square, white, silky bag divided into three compartments. This symbolized their oneness and unity. They are three yet one.

2. **The matzoh had stripes put across them.** Christ was bruised and stricken for our sins.

* Isaiah 53:5- But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

3. **These bread wafers were also punctured with holes.**

* Zechariah 12:10- And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

4. **During the ceremony or meal, the middle wafer is broken, wrapped, and hidden away.** After drinking the third cup, children would hunt for the hidden or concealed bread. When it was found, everyone rejoiced and ate the wafer. The middle wafer reminds us of
Christ, the mediator, the one in the middle between God and men.

*1 Timothy 2:5- For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

Jesus suffered on the cross. He died and His body was wrapped for burial and entombed, but after three days He arose from the grave. Such a picture is seen in the wafer that is wrapped.

5. The fourth cup in the meal is called the “cup of anticipation.” We are anticipating and looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. What wonderful pictures are found in this entire meal.

II. DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN 12:29-30

*And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. [30] And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.*

The screams in the night were shattered by the silent hush of the Egyptian midnight hour. Death came to collect its dues. The echoes of the evening were from voices of horror, terror, and despair. God kept His word. No people in the universe were more remarkable for their time of mourning than the Egyptians, especially in matters of religion. They whipped, beat, tore themselves, and howled in all the excess of grief. When a relative died, the people left the house, ran into the streets, and howled in the most lamentable and frantic manner. How dreadful then must the scene of horror and distress appeared when there was not one house or family in Egypt where there was not one dead and according to their custom, all the family running out into the streets bewailing this calamity!

God’s people did what was right. They may have been made fun of and mocked, but who had the last laugh? Beloved, our responsibility is to obey the Lord and tell others about Christ. Some will listen and be saved and some will think you are strange or weird.

In a recent NCAA cross-country championship held in Riverside, California, 123 of the 128 runners missed a turn. One competitor, Mike Delcavo, stayed on the 10,000 meter course and began waving for fellow runners to follow him. Delcavo was able to convince only four other runners to go with him. Asked what his competitors thought of his mid-
race decision not to follow the crowd, Delcavo responded, “They thought it was funny that I went the right way.” Delcavo was one who ran correctly. In the same way, our goal is to run correctly and to finish our race for the Lord Jesus Christ victoriously, not in defeat.  
* 2 Timothy 4:7-8...I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

III. THE DEPARTURE  12:31-36

And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. [32] Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. [33] And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. [34] And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtrenches being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. [35] And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: [36] And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

Pharaoh concedes defeat and calls or sends out a message to Moses to depart. Possibly around one-fifth of the nation has died, including his firstborn, and maybe his wife. The survival of Pharaoh indicates he was not firstborn in his family. This king could have yielded in the beginning with honor. He has gained nothing, lost everything, and ruined Egypt. He suffered personally from the plagues and death. He has forfeited prestige in the eyes of his people. Those who are rebellious suffer today too.

* Proverbs 13:15- Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.
* Psalm 107:17- Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
* Romans 2:9- Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;
There was no more talk of conditions from the king. He wanted them OUT! The world today cares not, in many cases for the company of Christians.

*Job 21:14 - Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

* 1 Corinthians 4:10-14... We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. [11] Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; [12] And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: [13] Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. [14] I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

In spite of the hassle that we receive from those who are unsaved or backslidden, we are to remain faithful to Christ and do our best in bringing honor and glory to Him. May God help us all to finish our race in victory.
Chapter 30

The March at Midnight

Exodus 12:37-51

An angry reader once stormed into a newspaper office waving the current edition, asking to see the one who wrote the obituary column. He was referred to a cub reporter to whom he showed the column which included this man's own obituary. He said, "You see, I am very much alive. I demand an immediate retraction!" The reporter replied, "I never retract a story. But I tell you what I'll do. I'll put you in the birth column and give you a fresh start!"

God has given His people a fresh new start. The march at midnight has begun. Egypt was surprised in the midst of their false security. None were so high that God's hand did not reach them and none so low that they were overlooked. You cannot escape God's judgment if you are not willing to obey Him. The whole nation of Egypt was steeped in a deceitful slumber only to awaken to a nightmare of truth. God kept His Word. He always does!

Sin had slain their dearest ones. Sin does that. Their sorrow was hopeless. Their grief could not bring back their dead. The same holds true for those without Christ. When death puts its icy fingers around your soul, when your last breath says, "Good-bye" for eternity, when your heart goes on strike and beats it last beat, it will be too late to turn to Christ.

You can be sorry for your sin, scream to be saved, screech for help, but it will all be to no avail. Your cries will hit deaf ears. You will sizzle, scorch, and burn for eternity in the flames of Hell if you reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people have yet to learn that they cannot travel in the wrong direction and reach the right destination.

In Egypt, God smote with His own hand the firstborn of the land. Every soul that would not voluntarily consecrate themselves to the Lord
was under the condemnation of the Lord. This still holds true for today.  
* John 3:18 -  He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.  

Those who put blood on their doorposts were protected and saved. They had a brand-new start. When you are born again, you too have a new beginning.  
* 2 Corinthians 5:17- Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.  

Not everything is rosy for the Christian. You will face new trials and obstacles, even old problems will surface again. During a hectic field campaign in Europe, General Dwight Eisenhower is said to have asked one of his intelligence officers for a brief assessment of the enemy situation. The young officer quickly replied, "Sir, picture a donut. We're the hole!" There will be times that you feel surrounded by trials.  

Realize, however, that God uses your trials to strengthen you and bring future blessings. Many of you are familiar with the airlines' Frequent Flyer programs. The various bonus mileage programs that airlines devised in the 1980s to foster customer loyalty have had some strange fallout. Many companies have denied their employees private benefits from such programs, after discovering that they were sometimes flying the most roundabout routes in order to get more mileage. A rather extreme example of going out of one's way to qualify for bonus coupons came when TWA flight 847 was hijacked in June, 1985, and was flown four times between Algeria and Beirut. Larry Hilliard, regional director of corporate communications for TWA, revealed that Deborah Toga, wife of one of the hostages, had inquired whether these hostage trips qualified under the airline's Frequent Flyer program. They did. Her trial turned out to be a big blessing. Satan does not give up easily. He could not keep God's people in Egypt. He had another plan. Notice verses 37-38.

I. THE OCCUPANTS OF THE EXODUS JOURNEY  12:37-38

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. [38] And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.

Six hundred thousand men depart from Rameses to Succoth. The total number of people leaving has been estimated
anywhere from 2 ½ to 3 million people, possibly more. This would include men, women, and children in the sum total. They brought their flocks, herds, but something else which would be a thorn in their flesh down the road. Accompanying them were a mixed multitude of people. Who were these people? There are several ideas.

1. They were native Egyptians anxious to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh and devastation of Egypt.
2. They were slaves or fugitives of other races oppressed by Pharaoh.
3. They were Egyptians connected by marriage to the Hebrews as Joseph was married to an Egyptian.

Some of these folks were leaving without being redeemed. They were not firstborns, but they did not put blood on their door posts either. They were the tares among the wheat. If Satan can’t keep you in Egypt, if he can’t keep you in the bondage of sin, then he will do what he can to hinder your walk with God. He is a roaring lion and a subtle serpent. Pharaoh was the tactic of a roaring lion. Now Satan uses the tactic of a subtle serpent by using the “mixed multitude” to hinder God’s people. He could not keep them Egypt, so he sent Egypt with them. The seeds of compromise, complaining, carnality, and corruption are sown in them. The mixed multitude did not count upon the trials of the desert. They eventually long to return to Egypt. They grumbled and griped.

* Numbers 11:4- And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

These folks are a picture of carnal, worldly believers or lost sinners. The words “mixt multitude” are from the Hebrew word *'acpecuph {as-pes-oof}*, which means “riff raff or rabble, a mob scraped together.” These people were a bad influence on God’s people. Down the road they will be sick of God’s provision of manna and will crave flesh. They will fall a lusting. Craving will lead to gorging on quail which will lead to plague and death.

Churches today are filled with carnal Christians or unsaved sinners who choke and gag on the manna of God’s Word, craving the fleshly things this world has to offer such as immorality, alcohol, drugs, gambling, and pornography. Their cry is, “Don’t preach against our sin!” When a church becomes carnal, it chokes and becomes weak and sick.

Satan uses the tactic of tares in the wheat all throughout Scripture. 1. God called Abraham alone. Terah and Lot came along and hindered their journey.
* Isaiah 51:2 - Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.
2. The Gibeonites made a covenant with Joshua who did not seek God’s direction before making this agreement. (Joshua 9)
3. The remnant of Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity and the heathen joined them. They separated from them.
* Nehemiah 5:17 - Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us.
* Neh. 13:3 - Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.
4. Balaam’s counsel to defeat Israel was through intermarriage.
5. Judas Iscariot was mixed in with the twelve disciples.

The lesson is, “Be careful who your friends are.” Don’t spend a lot of time with people that are a bad influence upon your life. Resist the temptations of a carnal crowd.

* 2 Corinthians 6:17 - Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

A guy got a job painting a yellow line down the highway. After three days, the foreman complained: “The first day you did great. You painted that yellow line three miles. The second day wasn’t bad; you did two miles. Today, however, you only painted one mile of line, so I’m going to have to fire you.” On his way out of the foreman’s office, the guy looked back and said, “It’s not my fault. Each day I got farther from the paint can.” Someone put it this way concerning our relationship with God: “If we are not as close to the Lord as we used to be, who moved?” Beloved, be alert to drifting away from the Lord. Be aware of what you are doing in your life and of your relationship with Christ.

II. THE OUTCASTS 12:39

And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

Unleavened cakes are made with flour and water. It is baked by taking circular pieces and attaching them to the sides of hot ovens. Others put lumps of dough into the ashes of a wood fire and
cover the dough with coals for a short time. They were to bake unleavened bread because they were in a hurry. They were being cast out of Egypt. There is an important note we will make here: "The pressures from this world have a way of driving the leaven out of our lives. When there is little pressure, the leaven of sinfulness has a way of creeping back into our lives or we tend to drop our guard spiritually.

III. THE OCCUPANCY IN EGYPT  12:40-41

Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. [41] And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

A man was riding in a taxi when he realized he had left his wallet at home. Suddenly he had an idea. About a block away from his destination, he said to the driver, "Stop at this hardware store and wait for me. I need to buy a flashlight so I can look for the hundred dollar bill that I dropped back here." When the man came out of the hardware store, the taxi was gone. His problem was gone.

The trials of God's people have been severe, but they have a joyful end at last. In Egypt, they have been in bondage, suffered, been massacred and now are delivered by the Lord. This trial is ending. There will be others down the road.

Appropriately, now that the Exodus had begun, Moses took a moment to reflect on the total Egyptian experience which lasted 430 years. The Septuagint and Samaritan texts added the words "and in the land of Canaan" to the Hebrew text, thus making the total sojourn in Egypt only 215 years, a figure also allegedly supported by the genealogy of Moses and Aaron in Exodus 6:16-20 and the Pauline statement in Galatians 3:17. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that the genealogy of Moses was intended to be complete. One only needs to consult the genealogy of Joshua (1 Chronicles 7:22-27) to see that there were many deliberate omissions of generations in Moses and Aaron's genealogy, for Joshua's genealogy has ten generations covering the same time span as Moses' four generations!

With respect to Paul's 430 years, it is important to notice that "the law" came "430 years later" as "an addition" to "the promises ... spoken to Abraham and to his seed." The starting point for the 430 years in Paul's thinking would seem to be when Jacob received the last of those
repeated patriarchal promises as he arrived in Egypt in 1875 B.C.

IV. THE OBSERVATION  12:42

*It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.*

This was the night of the Lord. As the Lord watched over Israel, so Israel was to watch for the Lord by observing the Passover Feast every year. It was very important for Israel to remember this occasion. If they did not, it would be a factor in causing them to depart from the Lord. When Israel did decline spiritually, Scripture sometimes points out that it was accompanied by forgetfulness of the important occasions in their history. The Psalmist, as an example, notes this in several places.

*Psalm 106:13- They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:*

*Psalm 106:21-22...They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; [22] Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.*

God had warned Israel not to "forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deuteronomy 8:14). The annual Passover feast was to help them remember this most significant moment in their history in which God did such a tremendous, powerful, miraculous work for them. From this we discern the fact that we are not to forget the blessings that God has given
us. We are not to forget about what He has done for our lives. The Lord is not happy when we do.

* Psalm 77:10-11... And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

* Psalm 111:4- He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

* 1 Chronicles 16:12- Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

* Psalm 28:5- Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

* Psalm 78:11-And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

V. THE ORDINANCE  12:43-49

And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: [44] But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. [45] A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. [46] In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. [47] All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. [48] And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. [49] One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.

The words “no stranger” refer to a foreigner who wished to remain a foreigner and stay uncircumcised.” No uncircumcised servant, slave, or foreigner passing through the land was to partake of the feast. The feast was to be eaten at one house and not taken out of the house. No bones were to be broken in the lamb. Everyone was to keep the Passover which was a symbol of the unity of Israel. These verses show that God wants His directions followed.
VI. THE OBEDIENCE OF ISRAEL  12:50

Thus did all the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

VII. OUT OF EGYPT  12:51

And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

God’s people leave Egypt peaceably. They boldly leave Egypt as the Egyptians are burying their dead.

* Numbers 33:3-4 ... And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. [4] For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.

The Lord won the victory for His people. In fact, not one person was sick or too weak to travel. This was a great miracle.

* Psalm 105:37- He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

There is an old story about a court jester who was once given a wand by the nobleman he served. "Keep this," said the nobleman, until you find a greater fool than yourself." The jester put away the wand and kept it for many years. One day the nobleman lay dying. Calling the jester to his side, he said, "I am going on a long journey." The jester asked, "Where to?" The nobleman shrugged his shoulders. "For how long?" asked the jester. "Forever," replied the nobleman weakly. "What provisions have you made for your journey?" asked the jester. "None," answered the nobleman. "Then," said the jester, "take this," and he handed the nobleman his wand. "For you are a greater fool than I." Beloved, don't be a fool going through life disobeying the Lord. Follow His directions revealed in His Word. Most of all, if you have never put your faith in Jesus Christ to take you to Heaven, then do it today. Failure to do this is foolish.
Chapter 31
Life Without the Leaven
Exodus 13:3-11,16

There was a very wealthy Texas oilman who had an absolutely gorgeous daughter, and he wanted to find her a man who was brave and courageous like himself. He decided to throw a huge Texas-style barbecue as a way of meeting some handsome young men. It was a marvelous occasion. This wealthy Texan had an Olympic-size swimming pool that he stocked with agitated alligators, cranky crocodiles, and huge water moccasin snakes.

After everyone had finished their delicious meal, he gave the following challenge to all eligible young men, who were called to the swimming pool area. The proud parents of the young men were standing behind their sons. The Texan told the men that the first one who jumped in and swam to the other end would be given his choice to pick one of three things: one million dollars in cash, ten thousand acres of his best ranch land, or his daughter’s hand in marriage. He even mentioned that his daughter was the heir to his fortune.

As soon as he got the last word out of his mouth, there was a loud splash at one end of the swimming pool followed immediately by the emergence of a soggy, dripping young man at the other end of the swimming pool. As the young man squished and squashed to the Texan, this wealthy father of the beautiful daughter said, “Well, boy, it’s your choice. What do ya’ll want to do? Do you want a million bucks in cash?” “No sir,” came the reply. “Well, how about the land, son?” Again the reply from the young man was, “No sir.” “Then I guess you want my beautiful daughter to be your wife,” the proud Texan said with a smile. “No sir,” again was the response. “Well boy,” asked the puzzled Texan, “what in the world do you want?” The young man replied, “Sir, I want to know the name of the person who pushed me into the swimming
pool!"

Have you ever been like this young fellow and wondered how you got yourself into a stressful mess that may have seemed worse than crocodiles, alligators, and snakes? Have you messed up your life or become ensnared in a sinful habit or situation? Have you asked, "How do I avoid this from happening? Is there any safety from temptation or falling into sin? How do I survive spiritually or live victoriously?" If you have asked these kinds of questions, you will find that principles and answers to these questions are given in this section as we focus upon the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Notice verse three.

I. THE SEVEN DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD  13:3-8

And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. [4] This day came ye out in the month Abib. [5] And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. [6] Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. [7] Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. [8] And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

Again, God mentions the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The repetition of this subject indicates its importance. It was to be observed for seven days beginning with the Passover. After redemption, God stresses the importance of right living. After belief, God focuses on behavior. After salvation comes sanctification and service. In the New Testament, the Gospels emphasize our need for Christ. The book of Acts and the epistles stress our walk with God. God has given us power for victory and He wants us to use it. The message again is the sanctification of the believer. In the Bible, leaven is a symbol of sin or an evil influence that is very powerful.

* 1 Corinthians 5:6- Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
Little sins have a way of turning into big monsters. Sinful living tends to start out small and then increases its strength and grip on us. As we dabble in sinful living, our influence and example affect the lives of others who follow us. Some of these folks will rationalize and excuse their own sinful actions because of our lifestyle. What you do in moderation, others who look to you as an example will indulge in excess. The Pastor affects his church; the teacher affects the students; the boss influences the employees, and the parents affect their children.

The Jew’s consumption of unleavened bread signified separation from evil. As Christians, we are to resist temptations and abstain from sinful living too.

* 1 Corinthians 5:7-8... Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: [8] Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The corruption of leaven’s lust, lewdness, and licentiousness are reasons why we do not partake of the unleavened bread of purity and godliness in our own lives. When our tummy is full, we are not hungry. When we fill our lives with the leaven of carnality and sensuality, we have no hunger or appetite for godly things. Godly things tend to be foolish, out-of-date or old fashioned to us.

* Mark 4:19- And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

In our pride, we think we can play with sin and not get hurt, burnt, or stung by it. We ruin our lives by our sinful choices. It is not the Lord’s fault you messed up your life. Don’t go around blaming Him for your troubles. You need to take responsibility for your own choices. God is not the one who tempts us to do that which is wrong. That would be contrary to His will. God is NOT the author of sin.

* James 1:12-13... Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. [13] Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

God warns us to live without the leaven of sinful habits, to flee temptation and danger. Pan Am Flight 103 was blown apart over the hills of Scotland. It is hard to forget the shock and horror of such a hideous
act of terrorism by those in the Arab world. *Newsweek* magazine had photographs of the blue and white fuselage lying on the ground of a peaceful, picturesque Scottish village. This 747 jet, when it was over 30,000 feet in the sky with over 250 men and women on board, exploded, and plummeted to the ground.

As an investigation was launched, the findings revealed that there were warnings for people to avoid this flight. It was reported on December 5th that someone called the embassies of our country to warn that someone would place a bomb on the plane in Frankfurt, Germany. Some took the warning with a grain of salt. However, there were people in Moscow that heeded the warning and transferred to another plane. Beloved, heed God’s warnings and stay away from sin. Joseph and David were tempted with immorality. Joseph fled from the temptation and David flirted with it and ruined his life. Joseph was the prey and David was the hunter.

Our attitude should be just like Jonathan Edwards, who at the age of 18, wrote in his journal two key principles to victorious living: 1) All men should live to the glory of God, 2) Whether or not anyone else does, I will. Edwards was a brilliant man. He knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew at the age of 13 when he entered Yale. He graduated from Yale at the age of 15. He was ordained to preach at 19 and then taught at Yale when he was only 20 years old. Later in his life he became the President of Princeton. Harvard granted him both a bachelor’s and master’s degree on the same day. The guy was a genius. He was a tremendous father of twelve children. He was also a brilliant, effective pastor and missionary to the Indians. He led a fruitful life and died in 1758, at the age of 55. His most famous sermon was “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” His most effective sermon was the way he lived before his family.

**Like David, you and I cannot resist temptation when we are looking and lingering in the wrong places with the wrong kind of people.** A little boy scraped a chair across the kitchen floor and climbed on it to reach the cookie jar on the top shelf. His mother heard the noise and called out, “What are you doing in there son?” With his hand in the cookie jar, the boy replied, “I’m fighting temptation!” Beloved, we tend to lose our battles with temptation because our hands are in the cookie jar. We lose because we make provisions for the flesh. We make provisions for failure and defeat. Paul urged us not to do this.

*Romans 13:14*—But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.
According to the 1992 World Almanac, tourists are now welcome to visit Chernobyl. This is the site of the nuclear accident in 1986, that released deadly radiation throughout the area. The tourist bureau has invited travelers to tour the city of Chernobyl and join a bus tour to the place where the actual accident occurred. All visitors would be given a free radiation test at the beginning and end of the tour. If medical treatment was needed, it would be provided at no extra charge.

Most people would think twice before accepting such a dangerous offer. We value our lives too much than to expose ourselves to nuclear radiation needlessly. Along those same lines and thoughts, you and I are exposed to invitations to do things that are contrary to the values and principles laid out in God’s Word and are very destructive to our lives and testimony. Martin Luther put it this way about the Lord’s Prayer: “We cannot keep the birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from nesting in our hair.”

Some people think that God doesn’t want them to have any joy or fun. That is not true. God wants our joy to be full. The Lord is trying to teach us to say, “No” to harmful ways of living and “Yes” to a life of blessing. God knows what gives us true joy and what robs it from us. If we are going to master temptation in our life, then we must yield to the Lord and let Him be our master. Obedience to God’s Word is essential. When we indulge in sinful living, however, we scar our life with sorrow, regret, guilt, and circumstances that sometimes cannot be changed or reversed.

Two little girls were studying a portrait of Queen Victoria. One of the little girls asked, “What is she doing?” The other gazed at the picture and then replied, “Oh, nothing. She’s just reigning.” May that be said of the Lord in our own lives. Let Him reign in your life.

The leaven of sin is what keeps us from letting the Lord rule in our lives. We are admonished to live without leaven.

* Unleavened bread was used in the consecration of the priests to their office and ministry. (Lev. 8:2)
* Unleavened bread was used in the vow of separation of the Nazarite unto the Lord. (Numbers 6:1-12)
* Unleavened bread was used in the food for the priests, especially in the meal and peace offerings. (Lev. 2:4-5)
* It was used in all the feasts, except at Pentecost. (Lev. 23:5-8)
* Unleavened bread was used when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon in his call to service. (Judges 6:11-24)
* Unleavened bread speaks of consecration to the Lord and separation from evil.

   In the New Testament, we read about leaven in several passages.

A. The Leaven of the Pharisees:
   * Matthew 16:6- Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

   This is a reference to superstition and making the Lord void in your life by replacing Him with the traditions of men which included legalism, and working to Heaven. It also involved outward, religious appearances and inward deadness like the painted, white-washed tombs that were filled with dead men's bones. The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy. They say and do not. They do not practice what they preach.

B. The Leaven of Sadducees:

   They were materialistic, denying a spirit within man. Since there was no soul, they denied the resurrection as well as the spirit, the supernatural, and angels. The attitude they had was, "Live for now! Death ends it all." Beloved, death does not end it all, it begins eternity for you. Where will you spend it? Will it be in Heaven or Hell?

C. The Leaven of Herod:
   * Mark 8:15- And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

   The leaven of Herod was worldliness or friendship with a carnal world. It involved adopting a carnal lifestyle.

   * 1 John 2:15- Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

D. The Leaven of Corinth:
   * 1 Corinthians 4:18-19. Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. [19] But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

   * 1 Corinthians 5:1-2.... It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. [2] And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

   The leaven that was in the church of Corinth was sensuality. The immorality in the church was puffing it up like leaven. Paul instructs the church to take drastic steps to purge the sin from the church.
E. The Leaven at Galatia:

The leaven in the church at Galatia was legalism, a mixture of law and grace. It was a mixture of flesh and spirit, bondage and liberty, works of the law and faith in Christ. Paul firmly deals with them to flush this out of the church. We are saved by grace through faith in Christ, not by any religious deeds or works.

*Galatians 3:1-3* ... O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? [2] This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [3] Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

*Galatians 5:9 - A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

All of these things will hurt our testimony and affect our walk with God. Many Christians give the excuse, "I can’t serve God." Some claim to be too afraid to speak up for Christ. The story is told about a fellow walking through a cemetery late at night who fell into an open grave. He didn't know that sometime earlier another man had fallen into the same grave. He felt around the walls of the grave and tried to climb out but he couldn't quite make it. Suddenly, behind him in that open grave he heard a voice, "You can't get out of here." Guess what? He did! Beloved, you can do just about anything when your mind is made up and you get motivated. Get the leaven out of your life and live for Christ.

II. THE SIGN 13:9-11, 16

*And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. [10] Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year. [11] And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, [16] And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt.*

Orthodox Jews interpret this passage literally and bind passages of the law on their arms and foreheads. These are called phylacteries. They are small square cases of black calfskin with separate pouches within. In the pouches were parchments with passages
written upon them such as: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; and Exodus 13:2-10. The calfskin was fastened with long, narrow straps to the inside of the arm between the bend of the elbow and the shoulder. When the arm touched the body, the law of God was near the heart. These phylacteries were worn by the men only, usually for their time of worship. The Pharisees wore them all the time. They became badges to them of vanity and hypocrisy.

Beloved, God intended that His Word activate our lips, our life, our legs, our hearts, hands, and heads. The Word of God was not intended to be trapped in a box. God does not intend that our Bibles sit on a shelf. Fill your life with Scripture and put it into practice. This is how you will find strength to overcome temptation and conquer the leaven of sin in your own life.

*Psalm 119:11- Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.* Live without the leaven in your life.
Chapter 32
A Donkey’s Disposition

Exodus 13:1-2,12-15

A hen and pig were making a long journey. After a time they became hungry. They began looking for a restaurant. Finally, they came to one that had a sign out front: “Ham and Eggs are our specialty.” The hen wanted to go in, but the pig refused. When the hen got upset, the pig replied: “It’s easy enough for you to say, my dear, ‘Let’s eat!’ All they expect from you is a contribution but from me, they will expect a total commitment!”

Beloved, we struggle between two extremes in the Christian life...contribution or 100% total commitment. Contribution Christians hold back, stay on the fringe, are not heavily involved or invested in the ministry of the church. The Committed Christian doesn’t hold back and is totally invested and involved in the ministry, jumping in the work with both feet. God was not asking for contributions from His people, He was asking for total commitment. You are going to have to make this choice in your life too. Choose you this day whom you will serve. Let’s take a look at the passage.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine. [12] That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's. [13] And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. [14] And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: [15] And it came to pass, when
Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.

God’s instructions were to sanctify or set apart the firstborn males of men and beast for the Lord. Why? God said, “It is mine.” He wanted 100% commitment. The Lord was to be number one. Their commitment to the Lord was being tested. The firstborn had to yield but so did the parents. Beloved, a redeemed people become the property of the Redeemer.

The firstborn of Egypt were slain because of sin, and the firstborn of Israel were spared because they were redeemed by the blood of the lamb smeared on the door posts. The innocent lamb died in place of the guilty. God demonstrated His commitment when He gave His firstborn son to us at Calvary to die for our sins. We have been redeemed by the Lord, and now we belong to Him.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20...What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? [20] For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

* Isaiah 43:1- But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

Because we belong to the Lord, He should be first in our life. Paul expressed this truth in Romans 12.

* Romans 12:1-2... I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Beloved, God does not want the left overs of our life. Our life should be set apart for Christ and totally committed to Him. Your life as a Christian does not belong to you. This is an area where many believers struggle between doing their will or God’s will.

The obligation of the firstborn to serve the Lord around the sanctuary was later transferred to the tribe of Levi who became God’s authorized substitute for each firstborn.
* Numbers 3:41- And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the Lord) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.

Notice Numbers 3:40 and 43.

* Numbers 3:40, 43- And the Lord said unto Moses, Number all the firstborn of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. And all the firstborn males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen.

When the Levites were numbered, the sum was 22,000 men at the age of 20 or older. When the entire nation was numbered, there was a total of 22,273 men over 20.

* Numbers 3:46- And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

The additional 273 firstborn men were redeemed with five shekels of silver for each of the 273 men which was put into the treasury of the sanctuary. This money was called redemption money.

* Numbers 3:47- Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:)

* Numbers 3:50- Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money: a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

In Exodus 13:13, the Lord singled out an animal to teach an important truth. The firstling of an ass had to be redeemed with a lamb. If it wasn’t redeemed, its neck was to be broken. That which was unredeemed must die. This is the message of the entire Bible.

* Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**The ass in the Bible is a type or picture of the natural man without Jesus Christ in his heart.** God compares us to the donkey or ass. That’s very humbling, isn’t it? Spiritually, without Christ, we have a donkey’s disposition. Unredeemed man is on the same level as the ass and must be redeemed or die an eternal death in Hell.

Before a person is saved, he has a donkey’s disposition spiritually speaking. How does the ass or donkey picture an unsaved person?
1. The ass is an unclean animal. Man is spiritually unclean by nature. We are all sinners.

* Romans 3:10- As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
* Romans 3:23- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

2. An ass can be very senseless. Aren’t we like this too? We can be proud, arrogant, boastful, but confounded and confused. Without the Lord, we are spiritually blind.

* 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The man without Christ lacks spiritual discernment.
* 1 Corinthians 1:27- But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
* 2 Corinthians 4:3-4... But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: [4] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

An officer in a police helicopter spotted a car speeding down the interstate. He radioed his partner on the ground and the patrolman in the car stopped the speeder and began writing the ticket. “How in the world did you know that I was speeding?” the man asked. The police officer did not say anything, but pointed to the sky. “Do you mean to tell me that He’s turned against me too?” the man moaned. Some folks may feel that God has turned against them. He hasn’t for we are the ones that have turned against Him.

3. An ass can be stubborn and intractable. He can be very hard to move. Sinners can be hard, rebellious, defiant, and unwilling to be saved.

* Job 11:12- For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.
* John 5:40- And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. Does this describe you?

Tracing the history of the ass in Scripture is very enlightening. Again, we see the ass compared to the unsaved carnal man.

A. Genesis 16:12- And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Ishmael was a wild ass man. He was a picture of the flesh, while Isaac was a picture of the spirit.
* Galatians 4:29-30 ..But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. [30] Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

B. Genesis 22:3- And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Abraham saddled his ass. The ass is not a free animal. It is a beast of burden. The man without Christ is burdened by serving the lust of the flesh.

* Romans 6:16-17... Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? [17] But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

C. Genesis 22:5- And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. The ass did not accompany them to the place of worship. The lost man cannot truly worship the Lord Jesus Christ until he first trusts in the Lord to be his Savior. Worship at church, formalism, religion, good deeds or works are all in vain without the Lord as the Savior of your life. They carry no merit with God and will not give you eternal life. Your own righteousness is filthy before God.

* Isaiah 59:2- But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

D. Genesis 49:14 - Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: Sinners are heavy laden with the guilt of sin. God’s solution is found in Matthew 11.

* Matthew 11:28 - Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

E. Deuteronomy 22:10 - Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. The ox and ass were not to plow together. The physical reason was the fact that they were different in size and the yoke would not lie evenly on the animals, thus hurting them. We find a picture here. The ox was a clean animal and the ass was unclean. Can two walk together unless they be agreed? Darkness and light cannot fellowship together. In fact, sin broke our fellowship with God.
A mother had been sick in bed for several days, so her daughter decided to make her some hot tea to make her feel better. The six-year old brought the tea into the bedroom and she waited for her mother to drink it so that she could praise her for her good deed. Her mother drank the tea and then asked her daughter how she went about making it. “Just like you mommy,” replied the girl. “First, I took the tea leaves, boiled them and then strained them,” she went on. The mother then asked, “What did you use to strain them?” The little girl replied, “Oh, I couldn’t find the strainer, so I used the fly swatter.” Sensing that she had said something wrong, the daughter tried to put her mother at ease and said, “Oh, not the new fly swatter mommy, I used the old one.” Can you imagine the sick feeling the mother had? Beloved, when we sin and disobey the Lord, we make God sick too.

Beloved, as the ox and ass cannot plow together, believers and unbelievers are not to be yoked together in marriage, dating, and business partnerships. Many have violated this principle and have lived to regret it. I have warned our people repeatedly about this principle. Those who choose to disobey it and mourned their decision. Why? Because they disobeyed God. When you do this, you pay a price and many times it is very expensive and has long-term consequences.

* 2 Corinthians 6:14-17... Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? [15] And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? [16] And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [17] Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

E. 1 Samuel 9:3- And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. The asses of Saul's dad were lost. They searched but they were not recovered. Beloved, those without Christ are lost too. No human power can restore you for you are guilty before God. Christ is your only hope for Heaven.

A cartoon a few years ago pictured a boy standing before the stationery counter in a bookstore. He was saying to the clerk, “Lady, do you have any blank report cards?” This is the kind of attitude all men
will have when they stand before God one day. They do not want to give an accounting for what they have done. Only Christ can free you from the guilt of sin and blank out your report card of sin. He covers our sin with His blood.

**F. Jeremiah 22:19** - *He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.* When the ass was buried, it was placed beyond the gates of Jerusalem, outside the holy city. Sinners without Christ will not enter the new Jerusalem, but into the lake of fire. Sooner or later, your sin will catch up with you.

**G. Zechariah 9:9** - *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.* Here we find the ass entering Jerusalem beneath the controlling hand of the Lord. The only hope of sinners is to submit to Christ.
Chapter 33

Life on the Zig Zag Trail

Exodus 13:17-22

A pastor was outside sitting on his porch one day and thinking about the unpredictability of life. At any moment, one’s life could change, and so one should live every moment looking to the Lord. As the preacher sat there, his neighbor passed by leading his horse. The preacher called out to him, “What are you doing with your horse?” The man answered, “I’m going to town to sell it.” The pastor said, “You ought to say that you are going to sell it if it is the Lord’s will.” The man replied, “What does this have to do with the Lord’s will? This is a good, healthy horse and it will be sold before you know it.” The pastor said, “Have you forgotten that God is watching you? You need to put everything in God’s hands in order for it to work out. You should say, ‘If it be the Lord’s will.’” The neighbor then said, “This is my horse and I have raised it specifically to be sold. I’ve even gotten a buyer for it. The Lord won’t change anything.”

Later that day, the neighbor passed by the preacher’s house again. He was covered in dirt, his clothes were ripped to shreds, and he was bruised and sore from one end to the other. The astonished pastor asked, “What in the world happened to you?” The man replied, “Well, I talked to you for so long that I was running late for my appointment with my buyer. To get there on time, I took a short cut through a corn field owned by a cranky old buzzard. Well, that farmer saw me trampling through his field and he started shooting at my horse. The horse panicked and fell over on top of me, then it kicked me in the eye. Trying to get out from under the horse, I tore my clothes to pieces. I ran from that old man and his gun and ran smack dab into a barbed wire fence. That’s what happened to me!” The pastor asked, “Well, where are you going now?” The man answered, “Well, I’m going home now...if it be the Lord’s will.”

Beloved, every Christian must realize that God has a plan for their life. He has His own specific will for us, but we must be willing to
follow the Lord and do what HE wants us to do. Sometimes we are like the man who fell from the horse and feel like God’s will is not important. Some do not want to know His will fearing what it may be. We must also realize that God’s ways are not the same as ours. Understand that you and I do not think the same way as the Lord.

* Isaiah 55:8-9... For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

There may be times that the Lord leads us on a zig zag trail instead of a straight and easy path. He will answer a prayer from an unexpected source or lead us to an unexpected destination, through a trial or detour, an exciting adventure, or a traumatic circumstance. What are we to do on the zig zag trail, when the detours of discouragement, disappointment, disillusionment, or death come our way? This section of Scripture provides some answers for us and gives a record of what to do when you are on the zig zag trail. It reveals that the Lord takes care of us. Notice verse seventeen.

I. THE PLACE OF DESTINY  13:17-18, 20

And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: [18] But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.... [20] And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

God’s people were leaving Egypt and a life of slavery behind to plunge into a wasteland of sand and rock which separates Africa from Asia. It is almost impassible. If they head north, they would encounter a sandy desert yielding only stunted shrubs, wide, open ranges and valleys carved out by the raging torrents of last weeks storms. Sand! Sand! Sand! It was everywhere including their sandals, mouths, in their eyes and hair.

If they turn southward, they would find themselves in a labyrinth of twisted wadys and creeks amidst huge granite mountains and sandstone rocks. You could call these mountains the Alps of Switzerland
unclothed. In either direction they would go, one thing they would definitely need is God’s guidance and provision. We need these things too, don’t we? Israel has been redeemed from Egypt and now they are no longer permitted to linger on its borders. It is time to go forward. They will be able to rest when they get to Mt. Sinai.

There are some lessons we will note here. At the beginning of the Christian life, things like delays, pauses, hesitations, and looking back to the old lifestyle are destructive and spiritually dangerous. Egypt or the old habits are still fresh, and returning to old destructive ways tend to be easy. Beloved, God never intended for us to be borderline believers. Our Lord does not want us to be apathetic or lukewarm Christians. This kind of attitude makes Him sick.

* Revelation 3:15-16... I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. [16] So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Trying to serve two masters is also an impossibility.

* Matthew 6:24- No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

We are to make up our mind and serve the Lord. Tell the Lord you give to Him your life, your love, your longings, and your loyalty to do His will. Don’t wait for God to send a catastrophe into your life to get your attention. For example, once upon a time there was a family of wayward church members who had once been very active in the church, but had lost all interest and had fallen away. There were the father and the three sons, Jim, John, and Sam. The pastor and other concerned Christians in the church had talked to them about their backslidden condition. They tried to get this family back into church but to no avail.

One day when the boys were out in the pasture, a large rattlesnake bit John and he became very ill. The doctor was called and after an examination, he pronounced John to be in very critical condition. The doctor said, “All you can do now is pray.” The father called the pastor and told him of John’s condition. He asked the pastor to pray for John’s recovery. This was the pastor’s prayer: “O wise and righteous Father, we thank Thee, for Thou hast in Thy wisdom sent this rattlesnake to bite John, in order to bring him to his senses. He has not been inside the church for many years and it is doubtful that he has in all that time felt the need of prayer. Now we trust that this will prove a valuable lesson to him, and that it will lead to genuine repentance in his life. And now, O
Father, wilt thou send ANOTHER snake to bite Sam, and another to bite Jim, and another BIG ONE to bite the old man. We have been doing everything we know for years to restore them, but to no avail. It seems, therefore, that all our combined efforts could not do what this snake has done. We thus conclude that the only thing left that will do any good and wake these people up are rattlesnakes. So Lord, send us bigger and better rattlesnakes. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.” Beloved, don’t get yourself in a position where a preacher needs to pray this kind of prayer to wake you up.

If you try to live life on the zig zag trail without the Lord’s guidance, you will get lost. You will make stupid decisions and choices that will scar your life for many years or for the rest of your life. If you will let Him, the Lord will lead you always in the right direction.

* Psalm 32:8- I will instrust thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

God led His people. What a privilege for them. What better guide could they have on the zig zag trail? God directed their path and will do the same for us too. His Word gives light and is fire.

* Psalm 119:105- Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

* Jeremiah 23:29- Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

* Proverbs 3:5-6... Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

* Isaiah 42:16- And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

The Lord’s guidance had authority. They didn’t take just any route they pleased. Neither are we to do this as Christians. We are not to live just any old way we wish.

*2 Corinthians 5:20-Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

For Israel, the most direct route home, the shortest and perhaps the expected route was about ten days away through the land of the Philistines. That is not what God intended for His people. He chose a detour into the wilderness on the zig zag trail. God’s people were not
ready to face the Philistines. The problem was not with God, but with Israel. They were still weak in faith, courage, power, and obedience. Their faith was not equal to the opposition they encountered.

* Exodus 14:12- Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

The Lord does not allow us to be in a situation we cannot handle. He can restrain the trial and temptations in our lives.

* 1 Corinthians 10:13- There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

* Matthew 6:13- And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Our security is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Don’t be afraid to follow Him on the zig zag trail. Several old-timers were talking about old days in the West. One of them recalled, “I’ll never forget the time I killed my first Indian.” “Did you shoot him?” asked another. “Nope,” said the old man. “Did you kill him hand-to-hand with a knife?” The reply was, “Nope, nothing like that. I ran him to death.” “How far did you chase him?” “I didn’t,” said the old timer. “I was in front.” Beloved, God wants us to follow Him, not run ahead of Him like this old cowboy.

The Lord was not pampering His people. He was preparing them. The wilderness was a worse place to travel, full of trials and would exact a heavy strain on their faith. See, the Lord leads us on this kind of trail to teach us faith, keep us humble, reliant, and dependent upon Him. Your wilderness may contain:

* stumps and stones of sickness or health problems,
* swamps of financial disaster and drowning,
* serpents of stress from family or job conflicts whose venom poisons your soul with bitterness and anger toward others,
* quicksands of death. A loved one may be gone. In spite of all the obstacles, we are to trust in Him.

So why the wilderness? Why did the Lord take them 200 miles out of the way? Evidently, He intended to do this.

* Exodus 3:12- And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth
the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

There were several reasons for the long journey.
1. As we just mentioned, it was a place to develop their faith as they were humbled, tried, proved, and tested. As difficult the trail is sometimes, this is the laboratory of the Lord which He uses to develop our love, loyalty to Him, learning about His Word and ways, and a life patterned after Christ. Our attitude should be, “What do you want me to learn Lord?”

We need to have the same attitude as Charlie Brown in a Peanut’s cartoon. Charlie was on the beach carefully building a castle in the sand. Standing back to admire his work, he was soon engulfed by a down pour which leveled his sand castle. Standing before the smooth place where his artwork had once stood, he said, “There must be a lesson here, but I don’t know what it is.” Beloved, it is in times like these, we especially need to depend and trust on the Lord’s direction in our lives and find out what He is trying to get across to us.

* Psalm 27:14- Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

2. To display God’s power in crossing the Red Sea.
3. The destruction of Pharaoh and his army.
4. The desert provided a place of solitude to receive God’s laws.

Don’t be overwhelmed by your troubles. They are not as bad as you may think. A crew was unloading a tank car of highly volatile chemicals when it exploded. Two men were killed and a half a dozen were knocked unconscious. As the ambulance attendants were carrying one of the men on a stretcher, he regained consciousness. Just as he did, his hand fell over the side of the stretcher. Feeling nothing but air, he let out a great moan and said, “Oh, no! I haven’t even hit the ground yet.”

You may feel like this guy and feel your troubles will never end. You may be on the zig zag trail in the wilderness and your faith is being strained by problems with your health, finances, family, or marriage. Nothing may be going right for you. God wants you to trust Him. Your faith is developed in your testing times because you have to exercise faith to keep your sanity.

Beloved, God does keep His Word and promises. He does care about your life. A group of soldiers were being trained to parachute. After receiving instructions on how to operate their chutes, they were given one last instruction: “Now, in the one-in-a-million case,” said the sergeant, “if the main parachute won’t open, just bear in mind, you have
a reserve parachute, and you just pull the hook on the right side. It will open gradually. Relax when you land on the ground. There will be no pain. There will be a station wagon there to take you back to the barracks."

One soldier still was not convinced, but the sergeant got him to the door and pushed him out gently. Our hero yanked the cord as he was plunging toward the earth, but nothing happened. Then he yanked the reserve hook, and looked up, but again nothing happened. As he was plummeting down with lightning speed to the ground, the soldier said to himself, "Now, I'll bet you that station wagon won't even be there waiting for me." Beloved, don't get in the cynical mode that begins to question and doubt everything that God has said because you are having one problem after another. He does care about you and will work out your troubles.

When the Hebrews left Egypt, they left harnessed. This word "harnessed" is a picture of the responsibility of the believer. It comes from the Hebrew word *chamush* (*khaw-moosh*) which means "with loins girded for battle." We are to be prepared for service and remove the hindrances from our lives. This word also means "arrayed for battle in fives." They evidently had five divisions: the vanguard, the center, the rear guard, and two wings. It would reflect the shape of a cross. Beloved, as we journey through life, may we reflect the cross. Five is the number of God's grace in the Bible. The only way we can find our way on the zig zag trail is by the grace of God working in our lives.

* Ephesians 3:7- Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. By God's grace and mighty power, Paul had been given the privilege of serving the Lord by spreading the Gospel. We have seen the place of destiny, we will now direct our attention to the pillar of direction.

II. THE PILLAR OF DIRECTION  13:21-22

*And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: [22] He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.*

God was the true guide on the zig zag trail. The pillar was the visible sign of His presence. It indicated that He was among them. Based upon Exodus 14:24, the two descriptions of cloud and fire
are combined.

*Exodus 14:24- And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.*

It seems that the pillar did not change its form. The upper portion was a pillar of fire that would illuminate the skies at night and be more visible at night. The lowest portion of the pillar was a blanket of clouds and smoke, shading them from the sun. This seems to be the description of the pillar.

*Isaiah 4:5- And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.*

The pillar took several forms.

1. It took the form of a pillar.
2. It was a wall of protection.

*Exodus 14:19-20... And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: [20] And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.*

3. It was also a roof or awning.

*Psalm 105:39- He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.*

*Isaiah 4:5-6... And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. [6] And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain*

*1 Corinthians 10:1-2... Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;*

We are led to conclude that this covering cloud was composed of aqueous particles for the cooling of the atmosphere and refreshment of themselves and their cattle. He represents the whole camp as being sprinkled or immersed in the humidity of its vapors.
With the mention of God’s guiding pillar, we are reminded of the work of the Trinity in the book of Exodus.

* God the Father: He heard the groaning of Israel and kept His promises and covenant. He raised up a deliverer.

* God the Son: Jesus is pictured in the spotless lamb whose blood secured salvation, protection from judgment, deliverance and freedom from bondage for those who by faith obeyed God’s instructions by applying it to the door posts. The innocent lamb died for the guilty.

* God the Holy Spirit: The Spirit of God is seen in the pillar of cloud that led them across the wilderness. The pillar is a picture of the Holy Spirit for several reasons.

* The Holy Spirit and the Pillar in the Wilderness

1. It was not given to Israel until they had been delivered from Egypt.

   First, there was the slaying of the lamb, then the giving of the cloud. In the New Testament, the cross came first, then the resurrection, then Pentecost when the Holy Spirit in His fulness of power was given to the church.

2. The pillar of cloud was a gracious gift to Israel.

   No one asked for a guide. It was God’s provision of His grace and mercy. The apostles did not request a comforter either, but the Spirit of God was given to the church after the ascension of Christ.

* John 14:16-17...And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; [17] Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Parakletos which means “one called along side of us to help.” He is also our advocate or defense attorney when we sin. Notice 1 John 2.

* 1 John 2:1- My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: The Holy Spirit also prays for us. Notice Romans chapter eight.

* Romans 8:26-27...Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27] And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
3. The pillar was to guide Israel through their wilderness journey.

The Holy Spirit guides the believer through life if he will let Him.
* John 16:13- Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
* Psalm 32:8- I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.
* Romans 8:14- For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

4. The pillar gave light.

Israel was thoroughly furnished day or night. Travel at night was cooler. The pillar would provide warmth and light.
* Numbers 9:21- And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

The Holy Spirit gives us light. He teaches and reveals insights to us.
* John 14:26- But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
* 1 Corinthians 2:10- But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
* Isaiah 30:21- And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

5. God spoke from the pillar.

* Psalm 99:7- He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.
* Exodus 33:9- And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. The Holy Spirit speaks to our heart today. He especially uses His Word.
* Romans 8:16- The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
* 1 John 3:24- And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

The pillar was “darkness” to the Egyptians.
* Exodus 14:20- And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the
camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

God not only reveals, but He conceals. Those without Christ do not understand the things of God.

* 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

* Matthew 11:25- At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

6. When they went through the wilderness, the pillar was never taken away.

* Nehemiah 9:19- Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

Even when Israel was rebellious and murmuring, the pillar did not leave. The Holy Spirit will not leave the believer either.

* Hebrews 13:5- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

* John 14:16- And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

* Ephesians 1:13- In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. The fact that we are sealed indicates security, ownership, and a finished transaction.

The story is told about a woman who had waited until the last minute to send Christmas cards. She rushed into a store and bought a package of 50 cards without really looking at them. Still in a big hurry, she addressed 49 of the 50 and signed them without reading the message inside. On Christmas Day, when things had quieted down somewhat, she chanced to run upon the leftover card and finally read the message she had sent to 49 of her friends. Much to her dismay, it read like this: "This card is just to say/ A little gift is on the way." Suddenly she realized that 49 of her friends were expecting a gift from her--a gift that would never come.

Beloved, there are many people that are expecting to go to Heaven when they die, but will not, because they have never put their faith in the
Lord Jesus Christ to take them to Heaven when they die. Is Christ your Savior?

III. THE PROPHECY OF THE DEAD  13:19

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Joseph’s faith was verified. He rested upon the Word of God by faith. Joseph preferred to be with his brothers than to stay in the most ornate tomb Egypt could erect for him.

* Hebrews 11:13- These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
* Genesis 50:25- And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

We need to rest in the promises of God’s Word too. Dr. Earl Pierce used to tell the story of a city dweller who moved to a farm and bought a cow. Shortly after he did, the cow went dry. When he reported this fact to a neighbor farmer, the farmer expressed surprise. The city man said he was surprised too. "I can't understand it either, for if ever a person was considerate of an animal, I was of that cow. If I didn't need any milk, I didn't milk her. If I only needed a quart, I only took a quart." Dr. Pierce tried to explain that the only way to keep milk flowing is not to take as little milk as possible from the cow, but to take as much as possible. Is that not also true of the Christian life? Those who only turn to God in need miss the real joy that is the rightful heritage of the Christian. Beloved, we are to live by faith and daily claim His promises.
Chapter 34

How to Live in a Pickle

Exodus 14:1-15

A ticket agent in the bus station of a mountain town kept a parrot for company in the ticket office. At rush times, the ticket agent was overwhelmed with impatient masses of people, pushing to get up to the window and purchase their tickets. Frequently, the ticket agent had to remind them, "One at a time, gentlemen, one at a time." Apparently the parrot absorbed all of this.

One day the ticket agent carelessly left the parrot’s cage door open. The parrot flew off into the nearby woods. Searching through these woods, the ticket agent was attracted to a large tree where a flock of noisy crows were dive bombing at the parrot. Nearing the tree, the agent spotted his parrot cowering among the swollen roots of the tree. As the ebony streaks of screaming crows swooped down towards the parrot, it called out, "One at a time, gentlemen, one at a time!"

We all probably know how this parrot felt. It would be great if all of our problems could come one at a time, but sometimes they come all at once like a huge tidal wave, overwhelming us. Those times of dilemma are given unusual names by us. Sometimes we say we are "in a pinch, backed into a corner, in a jam, up a tree, between a rock and a hard place, our back is against a wall, we’re behind the eight ball, or in a pickle."

Whatever you want to call it, what do we do when we are in a pickle? How do we live when we are in a difficult trial? This portion of Scripture is a record of Israel’s life in a pickle. It gives instruction and insights on what to do and not do when you are between a rock and a hard place or in this case, between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea. Paul tells us why such stories are recorded for us in Romans 15.

* Romans 15:4- For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the
I. THE REASONING OF PHARAOH & GOD  14:1-4

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [2] Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. [3] For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. [4] And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so.

Let me ask some questions here, “Who is giving the orders? Who is doing the leading?” The answer is, “The Lord.” God is allowing them to be in a predicament where there will be no escape without His intervention. Militarily, they were extremely vulnerable, but God was prepared for what He knew would take place next. He knew what was going on in the heart of Pharaoh and would show His power and glory when the king of Egypt chose again to defy God and attempt to destroy His people.

God was leading the Hebrews through this trial for He wanted His people to learn some valuable lessons. They have done everything that the Lord has asked them to do, and He is going to protect them. We will find that this will be the last trial for Pharaoh. It will be the first severe trial for Israel since their departure from Egypt.

Beloved, the trials that we go through are for our benefit, growth, and maturity for these are the by-products of trials when we respond to them properly.

* James 1:3-4.... Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. [4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

* Romans 5:3- And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

* Job 23:10- But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

If Israel could see their Red Sea situation from God’s viewpoint, the “worry barometer” would barely have a reading at all. Unfortunately, we don’t have the benefit of God’s viewpoint of our troubles. The mystery, uncertainty, and inability to understand our trauma create stress,
pressure, fear, and is at the root of our suffering. We must come to a point where we MUST trust in Him. We don’t have God’s viewpoint of our trials, but we do have HIM, and can trust in Him.

* Isaiah 26:3- Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

The names of the cities mentioned in this section are full of meaning. They are in striking accord with what is about to happen in this chapter.

A. Pi-hahiroth

This has been labeled as “the Place of Liberty.” It was this location that proved to be a place of liberty. Once and for all, Israel would finally be delivered from those who held them in cruel bondage. Beloved, we too, have a place of liberty. Our Pi-hahiroth is in the Lord Jesus Christ. He breaks the shackles of addictions, sinful habits, and lifestyles.

B. Migdol

Migdol signifies a tower or fortress. God demonstrated Himself to be a fortress to His people who were helpless and under attack. When you are in a pickle, the Lord will be your security, protection, and fortress.

* Psalm 46:1- To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. This is the source of our peace. It is from knowing that the Lord will take care of us.

C. Baal-zephon

This means “lord of the North.” In the Bible, the North is frequently associated with judgment.

* Isaiah 14:31- Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times.

* Jeremiah 1:14- Then the Lord said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

It was a holy God, who in judgment, dealt with Pharaoh and his army. Verse three reveals the reasoning of Pharaoh.

Exodus 14:3- For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

The word “entangled” is from the Hebrew buwk {book} which means “to be confused, perplexed, or lost.” Pharaoh presumed that the Jews were confused and wandering aimlessly in the wilderness and were trapped or hemmed in by the desert. He believed that this was an
opportunity to either destroy them or bring them back. God demonstrated His reasoning for His command for them to leave Egypt. The Lord would be honored and glorified and the Egyptians would comprehend that God is God.

II. THE REGRET OF PHARAOH  14:5

And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

Pharaoh and his friends said, “Why did we let these people go? What in the world have we done? What were we thinking?” How foolish men can be! How soon we forget the effects of sin and rebellion toward God. Sin can over-power our conscience, making us forget the sufferings we have already endured from sin. Sin makes us disregard every warning. Its terror is forgotten. We become almost determined to destroy ourselves. Have you ever heard these statements?
* I can handle it.
* I’m strong enough to deal with alcohol, sex, or drugs.
* I won’t get caught.
* Proverbs 26:11 - As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

Don’t let Satan cause you to regret leaving the old life of sensuality, cheating, lying, stealing and pursuing what is right. Watch out! Your sin is a great detective, as efficient as Sherlock Holmes. It will find you out. If you play with sin, it will put you into a pickle. Beware of your sin and carnal reasoning. It will blind you to the reality of your circumstances. Your ruin may be apparent to all except yourself.

The Pharaoh made a bad decision again. Decisions made upon good principles scarcely change because they are grounded and settled in truth. Pharaoh makes an impulse decision which sometimes tends to be uncertain, unstable, and based upon feelings and fickleness. Impulse decisions should not be relied upon.
III. THE REACTION & REVENGE OF PHARAOH  14:6-9

And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: [7] And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. [8] And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. [9] But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

Pharaoh recruits his army to attack Israel. Six hundred chosen charioteers may have been from the royal body guards of the king. Herodotus said there were 2000 of the best men in this guard that were chosen every year. The rest of the chariots of Egypt are summoned. Realize that the chariots were the tanks of that time. These chariots usually carried three people, a driver, a defender of the chariot, and a warrior. These weapons were made of wood or metal cabs placed over two wheels. They were powered by two to four horses which were usually thoroughbreds renowned for strength, stamina, and spirit.

The army is one part of Egypt’s strength and glory which has escaped total devastation. This king wants revenge! His wealth and workers are gone. His pride has been trampled and it’s about to get him into a big pickle again. He just won’t learn from his mistakes and he keeps repeating the same ones over and again.

* 2 Peter 2:22- But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Israel departed from Egypt with “a high hand” which means they left Egypt defiantly, boldly, confidently, or victoriously. They did this in front of all the Egyptians and it infuriated this king as he thought about it more and more. His humiliation has heated him up.

* Numbers 33:3- And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

Satan hates it when we are victorious Christians. The new believer comes to Christ and with sins forgiven rejoices in his new found liberty and faith. He walks differently in front of his unbelieving acquaintances, and he lives victoriously over sin and temptation. Then
Satan goes on the attack, endeavoring to devour the believer.
* 1 Peter 5:8- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

IV. THE RESPONSES TO A PICKLED LIFE  14: 10-15
A. The Response of Fear  14:10

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord.

Even when fear is not physically destructive, it adds a great burden to our lives. Panting and perspiring, two men on a tandem bicycle at last reached the top of a steep hill. "That was a stiff climb," said the first man. "It certainly was," replied the second man. "And if I hadn't kept the brake on, we would have slid down backward." Fear does burden down our lives and slow us down! Beloved, when we get into a pickle, it tends to be our first response sometimes. God doesn’t want us to panic when we get into our pickles, but this is what Israel did in their hour of testing and you can understand why.

Clouds are rare in the desert, but tan-colored ones were dancing off desert sands in the horizon as chariots and horses were approaching like a tidal wave. The hoofs of horses sounded like the low rumble of a kettle drum or thunder of a distant storm. A storm of evil was approaching and God’s people were terrified. They are afraid because they have forgotten what God has done for them in the past in protecting and delivering them from the Death Angel. We do the same thing. Our memories are so short. Shame on us. Sometimes no matter what the Lord has done in the past, the power He has shown we tend to forget when those new challenges pop up in our lives. The trial tends to swallow us.

God allows the pressures of a pickled life to help us look beyond ourselves, to put our trust in Him, and to strengthen our faith. When your back is against the wall, the only place you can basically look is UP! This is what He is trying to teach us. Israel cried to the Lord, but they are still afraid. Their cry was not made in faith because they are griping in the next verse. Why? Their eyes are upon the Egyptian army too. The cure to fear is to keep your focus on the Lord, not the pressing circumstances of your pickled life. Do you remember Peter? He was fine on the stormy sea as long as he focused on Jesus. When he got distracted and started focusing on the storm, he sank in fear.
We respond in fear because there are times we doubt the Lord’s ability to care for us. We are all, too often, like the little boy whose mother asked him to go into the pantry and get her a can of tomato soup. The little boy didn't want to go into the pantry alone, and he said, "Mommy, it's dark in there, and I’m scared." "It's all right, Johnny," she said, "You go in there and get a can of tomato soup. I need it for a recipe." He said, "But Mommy, it's dark, and I'm too scared to go in there by myself." "It's okay, Johnny," she said again. "Jesus will be in there with you. Now you go and get a can of tomato soup." Johnny went to the door and opened it slowly. When he peeked inside, it was dark, and he was scared. His hands began to tremble, but he got an idea. He said, "Jesus, if you're in there, would you hand me that can of tomato soup." At times, we may be just like this little boy, “Lord, if you are there...” Beloved, He is there!

**Though afraid, they did the right thing in taking their concerns to the Lord in prayer.** When circumstances go sour—and they often do—we are wise to take the situation to the Lord in earnest prayer. There may be other wise things to do, but wisdom will always go to the Lord in prayer in time of trouble. Note that we should not tarry about going to prayer. When Israel saw their situation, they immediately cried out to the Lord. We gain nothing by delay in seeking God's help. We only lose. So when troubles pursue us, let us quickly take our cares to the Lord for His help.

*Jeremiah 33:3- Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.*

**B. The Response of Frustration and Fierceness  14:11-12**

[11] And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? [12] Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

God’s people are upset with Moses and are blaming him for their predicament. Stress and fear have a way of making people lash out at others. “We told you this would happen! We should have stayed in Egypt and remained as slaves. We would have been better off! What in the world were you thinking? Why have you brought us out
here to die?” Sometimes we respond this way with the Lord or those who love us. Flying off the handle when you are in a pickle will not solve the problem. Many times we tend to attack the person who loves and cares for us the most when we are in a pickle. Israel did this with Moses which was a big mistake.

Moses was supposed to be the leader of the people, but it appears here to natural thinking that he is a very poor leader, for it looks like he is making a great mistake in leading the Israelites down the wrong side of the Red Sea. Not only is he not headed for the wilderness anymore, but he is headed the opposite way of Canaan. The most inexperienced eyes in the whole multitude must have seen the apparent absurdity of the movement. Loud and deep must have been the murmurs and protestations of the people. “Is this the way to Canaan? We know better! How dare you presume to lead us, when your very first tactics prove you to be wholly untrustworthy?”

It is not easy to lead people on a path that seems contrary to human reasoning, but any man who would lead people spiritually will sooner or later find himself having to do this. It is easy to lead people in the way they think is right, but it is very difficult to lead people contrary to their thinking even though the leading is according to God’s will. Pastors who try to lead the church according to the Word of God run into this problem all the time with people who would run the church according to the way the world does things.

God’s people made a wrong presumption. They presumed they were about to be slaughtered. They presumed that God had abandoned them, but He didn’t. They presumed their problems were the fault of Moses, but it wasn’t. God was doing the leading, not Moses. These kinds of responses are what happen when we are weak in our faith, doubt God, and do not trust Him. Unbelief makes false assumptions and comes to the wrong conclusions. We tend to see the worst instead of God’s best.

Faith looks beyond difficulties to the Lord. Unbelief prefers any other circumstances, except the one we are in now. In frustration, the Jews blame Moses, “THOU hast taken us away to die!” God was the guide, however. When you focus on men instead of the Lord, you will get into trouble because you will base your choices on wrong conclusions. When we focus on people, we can become bitter and vengeful. We tend to blame others for our problems and in so doing, never get them solved.
Trials motivate us to blame others if we are not careful. We need to realize they are allowed by the Lord and are His appointments for His blessings. They are opportunities to reveal His power and God’s stepping stones to maturing in faith. The path of faith is not easy and smooth. Faith must be tested that we may learn the sufficiency of God. God wants us to learn the truth of Philippians 4:19.

* Philippians 4:19- But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

* Ephesians 3:20- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

This was Israel’s first trial since deliverance and it revealed they were weak in their faith. The first trials of new Christians can be devastating like an earthquake. Some folks may feel guilty over past sins. In fact, the trial may be a result of old sins or old friends. The trial may possibly be a result of standing for Christ. In Israel’s case, they were frustrated and angry because they were offering faithless prayers from faithless hearts. They lost their reliance and reasoning in the Lord. God wants us to respond positively in faith and to have the right attitude and perception of life and the Lord.

I like the story about a woman who woke up one morning, looked in the mirror and noticed she had only three hairs on her head. “Well,” she said, “I think I’ll braid my hair today.” So she did and she had a wonderful day. The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and saw that she had only two hairs on her head. “Hmm,” she said, “I think I’ll part my hair down the middle today.” So she did and she had a grand day. The next day she woke up, looked into the mirror and noticed that she had only one hair on her head. “Well,” she said, “Today, I’m going to wear my hair in a pony tail.” So she did and she had a fun day. The next day she woke up and looked into the mirror and noticed there was not a single hair on her head. “Yeah!” she exclaimed, “I don’t have to fix my hair today!” She had joy because of her positive perception and attitude about her life. The Lord can help us to have this kind of attitude when we are going through trials. We can be positive like the man who fell of a huge skyscraper. After he passed the twelfth floor, horrified onlookers heard him shout, “So far, so good!” Now that’s positive!

We have seen the responses of fear, frustration and fierceness. Now we will look at a third response, the response of faith.
C. The Response of Faith  14:13-14

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. [14] The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Leslie Weatherhead once used a limerick to illustrate the shallowness with which many regard God's providence. The limerick went like this:

"There was a young lady from Ryde
Who was carried away by the tide,
A man-eating shark was heard to remark
'I knew that the Lord would provide.'"

Beloved, we need the attitude of the shark that the Lord will provide! God's consistent message is, "Fear Not!" We are not to fear tomorrow for God is already there. David addressed the issue of fear in Psalm 23.

* Psalm 23:4 -- Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Isaiah told us how to have peace.

* Isaiah 26:3- Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Moses said, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." God wants us to be patient and watch Him work.

* Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. This word "still" is from the Hebrew word raphah {raw-faw'} which means "to relax, or to sink down, like you would sink down in a chair and relax."

God doesn't want us to be running around in circles, yet this is what many people do, thinking they have to do something. That's frustrating and foolish. He doesn't want us to panic, but to be still and as calm as a glassy lake nestled in a mountain valley. Panic would mean death for God's people here. Let us note here that the same trial which shows one man's faith and confidence in God, may reveal other men's weaknesses. The people were weak, but Moses was strong in faith. He has learned to walk with God. Each Christian is on a different level of faith and maturity.
Moses said, "Stand and see." He was referring to spiritual sight and exercising eyes of the heart.

* 2 Corinthians 5:7- (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)
* 2 Corinthians 4:18- While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We will not grow in faith if our the circumstances of our lives are always cushy cushy and comfortable. Spurgeon said, "Faith knows that whenever you get a black envelope from Heaven's post office, there is a treasure in it. God has treasures for you and me. Some of those treasures are found in the fire. The three Hebrews found the pearl of peace and the presence of God in the fiery furnace.

D. The Response of Forwardness 14:15

And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

We hear not one word of Moses' praying, and yet, here the Lord asks him why he cries unto him? From this we may learn that the heart of Moses was deeply engaged with God, though it is probable he did not articulate one word, but the language of sighs, tears, and desires is equally intelligible to God with that of our words. This consideration should be a strong encouragement to every feeble, discouraged mind. If you cannot pray, you can weep.

Along a Kentucky highway was parked a mammoth motor truck van. The driver was standing by the tractor from which a front wheel had been removed. A pastor stopped to see if he needed any assistance, but the trucker thanked him and said he had already sent for help. He had burned out a wheel bearing, and another one was on its way. As the pastor pulled away, his eyes caught the lettering on the side of the van: Standard Oil Company of Kentucky, Lubricants Division. He had burned out a bearing hauling grease, grease which could have prevented his problem. Beloved, God has given us all we need to go forward through our trials. Our problem is we fail to depend and accept His grace and apply it in our lives.

Prayer is important, but there is also a time for action. Prayer in fact prepares us for action and going forward. When the Lord shows you what to do, then do it. Go forward! There is no progress without prayer. There is no progress without going forward at the right time.
There has to be a balance. We are to go forward in our Christian life, focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ, not our circumstances or problems.

*Hebrews 12:2-* Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Going forward does not contradict standing still.** This is the proper spiritual order. We are not ready to go forward until we have first stood still and seen the salvation of the Lord and got our orders from Him. Before the “command” was the promise of watching for the salvation of the Lord. To go forward in faith, we must see that which is invisible.

*Hebrews 11:8 -* By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Our lives must be entrusted to the Lord and revolve around Him.

God never says, “Forward,” without at the same time opening the way for you to go. He will make a way for you. The law of the Christian life is advance and grow.

*1 Peter 2:2-* As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

*2 Peter 1:5-8...* And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; [6] And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; [7] And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. [8] For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**When you are in a pickle, go forward.** If you are knocked down, get back up. If you are discouraged, disappointed, or defeated, get back into the battle. Help someone else. If you have spiritually fallen and messed up your life, then get back up. Repent of your sin, seek forgiveness and restoration with others, and do your best for Christ. If you are disciplined, accept your discipline, grow, and mature. God is not done with you until you are dead. He can take a broken life and mend it.

Pharaoh thought he had the Lord’s people cornered. I can hear him now saying, “Gotcha.” Satan probably does the same thing with us. God wants us to go forward. He will take care of Satan. Satan probably said, “Gotcha,” with Daniel. Daniel prayed when it was illegal to do so. “Gotcha!” was Satan cry. In the lion’s den went Daniel, but the next day, who was still hanging around? It was Daniel. The Lord took care of Him
and his enemies.

The three Hebrews would not bow to the idol. "Gotcha," was Satan's cry. Into the furnace they were thrown, but they would not burn for the Lord was in the furnace with them. David sinned with Bathsheba and Satan cried, "Gotcha!" David repented and went on to serve the Lord.

* Psalm 51:2,3,10,12,13.... Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Peter cursed and denied the Lord. "Gotcha!" yells Satan. After Peter gets right with God, Peter went forward and was used of God at Pentecost to reach 3000 for Christ. He wrote several epistles too. Satan thought he had the Lord at the cross when He died, but He arose again from the grave. Are you in a pickle? Go forward in your Christian life. God can put egg on Satan’s face when he thinks he has us. Satan may say, "Gotcha" to you, but the Lord can turn the tables and have the last laugh on the devil.

Clarence Forsburg tells a story about a preacher who went out to make some house calls in the afternoon. He knocked at one door where no one answered. He kept knocking, louder and louder. Finally there was a tiny voice from within which said, "Come in. Come in." He tried the door and found it open and stepped inside the living room. He heard the voice again, "Come in. Come in." He followed the sound down the hallway and entered the kitchen. From inside the kitchen he heard the voice saying, "Come in. Come in."

He looked around and found himself face to face with an enormous, ferocious, growling German Shepherd police dog. The dog lunged at the preacher, pinning him against the wall with his enormous paws on his shoulders, snarling and breathing fire and brimstone. At that moment the preacher saw a parrot sitting in a cage over to one side of the kitchen. The preacher, realizing that it was the parrot beckoning him to come in, said, "You stupid parrot! Don't you know any other words?" The parrot said, "Sic'em boy, sic'em!" Beloved, God says, "Sic 'em." Go forward in faith! Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.
Chapter 35
Overcoming Your Obstacles
Exodus 14:16-31

A wealthy family in England, took their children to the country. The children went swimming in a pool. One of the boys began to drown. The son of the gardener jumped in and rescued the helpless one. The grateful parents asked the gardener what they could do for the youthful hero. The gardener said his son wanted to go to college—"He wants to be a doctor." "We'll be glad to pay his way through school," they told him.

When Winston Churchill was stricken with pneumonia after the Teheran Conference, the King of England instructed that the best doctor be found to save the Prime Minister. The doctor was Mr. Fleming, the developer of penicillin. "Rarely," said Churchill to Fleming, "has one man owed his life twice to the same rescuer." It was Fleming who saved Churchill in that pool.

God saved His people in Egypt. He is about to dramatically save them again by overcoming and overwhelming their obstacles, the Red Sea and the Egyptian army. What God did for His people in this chapter, He can still do today in helping us overcome our daily obstacles.

I. THE COMMAND 14:16

*But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.*

God says, "Moses, here is what I want you to do. Go Forward! Lift up the rod and divide the sea." When Moses lifted up his rod at the edge of the sea, he said by this action that he believed God. Many times in the Scriptures when God is working miracles, He orders
the person who is involved in working the miracle to do some seemingly small, insignificant task or action. The task or action is unnecessary, of course, for God to work, but it gives opportunity for man to show his faith. Where there is faith, that is where God is pleased to work. That is what Hebrews 11, the great “Faith” chapter, is all about. So it is here at the Red Sea. Before God works, faith must be demonstrated and Moses demonstrated that faith in lifting the rod to overcome the obstacle of the Red Sea. **Beloved, God provides a way for us through the obstacles of our lives. He gives us direction.**

* Proverbs 15:19- The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.
* Isaiah 30:21- And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
* Isaiah 42:16- And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.
* Psalm 32:8- I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

**Our responsibility is obey the Lord’s leading, go forward and trust God to provide for our needs.** Moses had to put action to his faith and obey. We must do this too, if we are going to overcome our obstacles. God removed the obstacle of water and mud. The sea was parted, but the land was also dried so that the people would not be bogged down in mud. This was a great miracle too. So great, that it is mentioned five times in Exodus and several other times in the Bible. If this was shallow swamp land, the ground would not be dry.

* Nehemiah 9:11- And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land: and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.
* Psalm 66:6- He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.
* Hebrews 11:29- By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.
II. THE CONCRETE HEARTS 14:17-18

And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. [18] And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

God warned Moses that the king’s heart would be hardened, along with the other Egyptians. They would follow Moses and the Israelites to their doom because of their hardness and bitterness. God would be honored and glorified in this ordeal and the Egyptians would have to acknowledge the true God of the universe.

III. THE CLOUD OF CONTRASTS 14:19-20

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: [20] And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

The sufficiency of God is revealed here. Whatever our need is, He will supply it.

* If you need direction, He will go before you.  
* If you need protection, He will go behind you if your enemy is pursuing.  
* If your need is affection, He will be at your side and comfort you. He is our Comforter.  
* If you want salvation and resurrection, He will save you and dwell within you in the person of the Holy Spirit.  
* If you suffer from rejection or dejection, He will be above you to lift you up and encourage you.  
* If you need a foundation to build a stable life, He will go before you, stabilize and strengthen you like a solid rock that anchors a home in a raging wind storm.

The cloudy pillar settled upon Pharaoh’s armies like a fog. It was a darkness to the Egyptians and a light to Israel. The Egyptians were not able to pursue or defeat God’s people. The same principle is found in the New Testament. The eye sees that which it has within itself the
power of seeing. To the godly, the presence of God is a joy and delight. His attributes are a joy and blessing. To the ungodly, however, God's attributes are alarming and awful, hindering their enjoyment and plans. Notice Matthew chapter eight.

* Matthew 8:34- And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts. They wanted Jesus to leave.

God’s omnipotence defends, blesses, and saves the saints, but it is hostile toward the wicked. The self-same blood which purges the believer's conscience and gives him perfect peace, stains this earth and consummates its guilt. The very mission of the Son of God which strips the world of its cloak, and leaves it wholly without excuse, clothes the Church with a fair mantle of righteousness, and fills her mouth with ceaseless praise. The very same Lamb who will terrify an unbelieving world by His unmitigated wrath, will lead by His gentle hand, His blood-bought flock through the green pastures and besides the still waters forever.

God’s eternity is given to the Christian for a dwelling place, but it is a nightmare for the unsaved person who will be tormented in Hell forever. To many Christians, the Word of God is a wonderful treasure and blessing. To the unbeliever and the proud, it is as darkness. They claim to see incredibilities, difficulties, and supposed contradictions. Their problem is they are blind and walk in darkness. The Bible warns of their attitudes and condition.

* 1 Corinthians 2:14- But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. If you want to overcome your obstacles, you need the Word of God in your daily life to give direction, encouragement, strength, and discernment.

IV. THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA 14:21-22

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. [22] And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

The king depended on the sea for the destruction of Israel. It now becomes their defense. The water became a wall of
protection, preventing the people from being out-flanked or surrounded. The Lord at any time, can turn our danger and our obstacles into safeguards.
* In Judges, He turned the swords of the Midianites against themselves when Gideons’s 300 men sounded out their trumpets.
* In Esther, the gallows built for Mordecai were used to hang wicked Haman. The Persian law system which was used to destroy the Jews was used to defend and deliver them from their enemies.
* In Daniel, the lions that were meant to destroy Daniel ended up destroying his enemies. The fiery furnace that was meant to destroy the three Hebrews became a source of blessing and promotion for them. God was glorified because of this trial.
* In WW 2, my father was shot by a sniper on the last day of securing the island of Okinawa. The bullet hit his head, paralyzing his right side. Through therapy and the grace of God, he learned to walk again and live a normal, healthy life. Fifty years later around 1995, my dad was pulling out tree stumps with a tractor at scout camp. While doing so, the tractor flipped back on top of him. Though severely injured, he was able to crawl out from underneath the tractor, get to a phone, contact my mother, and get to the hospital.

He required extensive surgery on his head and face. Before the twelve-hour surgery which was very successful, the doctor showed us the MRI pictures of dad’s head. He showed us the bullet wound in his brain from the war, and then he told us that the bullet wound saved his life that day because it provided space for the brain to move or acted as a cushion when the tractor landed on top of his head. That which was assumed to be destructive 50 years earlier, ended up saving my father’s life. Praise the Lord! He knows everything. There is a reason for the good and bad things that take place in our lives. As of the time of this writing (2007) Dad is still alive and kicking and a stinker. He is a lot of fun and a blessing to me. I love him dearly.

For Moses and God’s people, it looked at first that there was no apparent way of escape, yet, God made a way. Are you hedged in by a problem or obstacles? God will make a way for you.

* Isaiah 43:2- When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
The faith of Moses enabled him to ignore “sight” and inspire his sight-fascinated followers. Our faith would not be strengthened if there were no obstacles to test it. God performed a wonderful miracle. Moses and His people crossed in the midst of the Red Sea on DRY ground. This was not a shallow, lowland swamp. It would be pretty hard to drown an army in a shallow swamp.

It is estimated that the path was at least a half-mile wide to get this large amount of people across the sea quickly. If two million people were ten abreast, five feet apart, the line would be 190 miles long. The first ones would be in Canaan while the last ones in line were finishing their crossing. This is not the way they crossed. They needed a very wide path. The crossing of the sea was also a dark one. It was about seven days after the full moon. Their light would come from the pillar of fire. Beloved, when God leads us, He lights our path.

* Psalm 119:105- Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

So where did they cross the Red Sea? Do we know? I believe the answer now is a definite “Yes.” Based on the findings of Dr. Lennart Moller, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden, we can say with confidence that we know where they crossed the Red Sea. These findings are recorded in his film The Exodus Revealed: Search for the Red Sea Crossing. He is trained in marine biology and archaeology. In the Spring of 2000, he found the answers he was looking for. The material reveals the path that Israel took across the Sinai Peninsula. It is not the one you find in many books or maps. He shows that Moses most likely went straight across the Sinai to the land of Midian where he settled for 40 years and this was the same basic path that was taken when Israel left Egypt. Dr. Moller shows that Mt. Sinai, the destination of Moses, is not in the traditional place of the Sinai Peninsula, but was located in the land of Midian, known as the Arabian Peninsula. Let’s deal with this point first, then we will deal with the Red Sea crossing.

* Evidence that Mt. Sinai is in the Arabian Peninsula
1. The translators of the Septuagint thought Midian was on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba which is the right branch of the Red Sea.
2. The Jewish philosopher, Philo, stated that Midian was east of the Sinai Peninsula and south of Palestine.
3. Josephus said that Mt. Sinai was the highest mountain near the city of Madian.
4. Ptolemy discovered Madian, and it was excavated outside the modern city of Al-Bad near Saudi Arabia’s northwest coast. Fifteen miles east of the town stands the tallest mountain, over 8000 feet, called Jabal al Lawz. The top of this mountain appears scorched with fire. It has a blackened appearance.

5. There is a large man-made altar at the base in accordance with Exodus 32:5 where Israel made a golden calf in the absence of Moses. Upon this altar are many hieroglyphics, some which represent Apis bulls from Egypt.

6. In this area there is a plane of ten thousand acres which could easily accommodate the Israelites.

7. Galatians 4:25, Paul located Mt. Sinai in Arabia. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

* The Location of the Red Sea Crossing

God led His people straight across the Sinai. They turned south on the west side of the Gulf of Aqaba and traveled along river beds hemmed in by steep walls of rock 2000 feet high. They went 18 miles through these wadi’s or dry river beds and then caught their first glimpse of a mouth of a canyon that opened to the sea. This path is called Wadi Wateer. Pihahiroth was the place of their encampment. It means “mouth of the gorges.” It was a perfect description of what is known today as the Nueva Peninsula.

Josephus said of Pihahiroth that it had steep mountains on both sides. God’s people were trapped with mountains north and south, the Red Sea was on the east, and on their west was the Egyptian army. This is why the people were so angry with Moses.

Hebrew manuscripts call this body of water yam suph (Red Sea). The Gulf of Aqaba is part of yam suph. It is very deep, up to one mile and is surrounded by rugged mountains. Seventy miles north of the Straits of Tehran is the Nueva Peninsula where this crossing took place. There is a huge beach area here which could accommodate the Hebrews. How could they cross this area of a mile deep valley that ran through the bottom of the Gulf of Acaba for 50 miles? The answer is at Nueva Peninsula, a very wide, flattened ridge raises several thousand feet at this section of the sea from the sea floor. It has no coral, rock, or mud, but a thin layer of sand. It would be perfect for crossing once the water was removed by God. The depth of the water here is around 275 feet.
If this is the area they crossed, then there must be some evidence at the bottom of the sea. Right? The answer is “Yes.” The key is found in Exodus 14:6-7.

*Exodus 14:6-7... And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.*

Are there any relics of chariots in this area? Yes! In 1997, coral structures in the shape of chariot and axle wheels were found. Man-made structures with 90 degree angles, arches, or circular chariot wheels and axles were discovered by divers and a Phantom 300 robotic camera. A gilded wheel of gold and silver was found. It resembled four-spoke chariot wheels painted on Egyptian walls dated during times of Exodus. These odd-shaped, unnatural coral were found everywhere like junk in a junkyard or like debris that results from a catastrophe. Metal detectors discovered bronze metal in the coral.

Eight miles east of the Nueva Peninsula, on the Saudi Arabian side, the Bible says bodies were found on the shore after the Red Sea crashed upon the Egyptians. This area was also explored and a coral encrusted chariot wheel was found. These four and six spoke chariot wheels were used no later than 1400 B.C. The evidence presented gives one great confidence that we now know the location of the crossing of the Red Sea. (See map at end of this chapter)

V. THE CHASE OF THE EGYPTIANS 14:23

*And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

The Egyptians pursue Israel. Why are they following? There are several reasons we will offer.

1. Pride:

If they can cross, we can cross too! We have horses and chariots and the slaves are on foot. We have come too far to turn back now! We can’t return empty! They are in reach, let’s get them! The Egyptians had gone past the point of no return.

*Proverbs 16:18- Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

2. The Rage of Bitterness:

Bitterness made them daring, reckless, and inconsiderate of danger. There behavior was foolish.
* Proverbs 14:16- A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. The fool throws off restraint, is reckless, and overconfident.

Sin also blinded their eyes to destruction. They were, in fact, bent on self destruction.

* Psalm 9:15- The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

You will not overcome your obstacles with a proud, bitter, angry attitude. It will lead to your destruction and will poison your life.

* Hebrews 12:15- Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

VI. THE CONFUSION AND CHAOS 14:24-25

And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, [25] And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

The Lord looked at the Egyptians in the morning watch. Before the captivity, the Hebrews divided the night into three watches. The first watch began at sunset to 10:00 p.m. The middle watch was from 10-2 a.m. The morning watch was from 2 a.m. to sunrise. In April, the sunrise would come around 5:45 a.m. in Egypt. God “troubled” the host which means He threw them into confusion and panic. How did He do this? He scared them to death with earthquakes, lightning, and heavy rains.

* Psalm 77:16-20... The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. [17] The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad. [18] The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. [19] Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. [20] Thou ledest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

God “took off their chariot wheels.” This means their wheels were clogged, jammed, or bogged down with mud.

* Job 5:12- He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their
hands cannot perform their enterprise.

Confusion and chaos are fitting adjectives describing a life without the Lord. Jesus Christ brings peace, stability, and order in your life. The Egyptians were terrified and wanted to flee, but it was too late. It is also possible to miss the opportunities that God gives you to be saved or repent before judgment comes.

* Jeremiah 8:20- The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

It was almost one o'clock in the morning when the phone rang in the Winters' home. Dr. Leon Winter, the highly acclaimed Chicago surgeon, was awakened with an emergency call. Tonight it was a young boy, they said, tragically mangled in a late night car accident. Couldn't someone else handle it? Not this time. This time his hands were possibly the only ones in the city, or maybe in the whole region, which were skilled enough to save this person. The quickest route happened to be through a rather rough area, but with time being a critical factor, it was worth the risk.

He almost made it through the worst of the neighborhood. Almost. Then, at a stop light, his door was jerked open by a man in a gray hat and a dirty flannel shirt. "I've got to have your car!" the man screamed, pulling him from his seat. Winters tried explaining the gravity of his situation, but the man was not listening. The doctor wandered for over 45 minutes looking for a phone. When the taxi finally got him to the hospital, over an hour had passed. He burst through the doors and into the nurses' station, but the nurse on duty only shook her head. The doctor was too late. The boy had just died about 30 minutes earlier. "His dad got here just before he died," the nurse told him. "He is in the chapel. Go see him, would you? He is awfully confused. He could not understand why you never came."

Without explaining, Dr. Winters walked hurriedly down the hall and quietly entered the chapel. At the front knelt the huddled form of a weeping father, in a gray hat and a dirty flannel shirt. He was the man that stole the doctor's car that night. Tragically, he had robbed his son's chance for life by pushing away the doctor that night. How many today are pushing from their lives the only One who can save them from Hell?
VII. THE COVERING OF THE CHARIOTS 14:26-28

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. [27] And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. [28] And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

All the Egyptians are wiped out, and I believe this included the Pharaoh. Josephus says that the army of Pharaoh consisted of fifty thousand horses, and two hundred thousand foot soldiers, of whom not one remained to carry tidings of this most extraordinary catastrophe.

*Psalm 106:11- And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.
*Psalm 136:15 - But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.

The station of the king was in the front of the army. On every monument, the Pharaoh led the army into battle. There is no evidence of the Exodus in known Egyptian historical records. It was a common practice for Egyptian kings to NOT record their defeats.

The Egyptians reaped their sown seeds. God avenged the blood of the firstborn Jewish babies who were drowned hundreds of years earlier. Egypt destroyed the helpless ones and now they become helpless, losing their defenses.

There are some important lessons here. First of all, those who attempt to do things without faith, what believers succeed to do by faith, will fail. Secondly, those who seek to obtain by their own efforts, what believers obtain by faith, will fail. The Hebrews crossed the Red Sea by faith, but the Egyptians did not. By faith, believers obtain salvation and peace with the Lord. Those who desire salvation outside of Jesus Christ, by their works or deeds, will face certain doom and destruction.

*Matthew 7:21-23... Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out
devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior?

VIII. THE CARCASSES ON THE SEA SHORE  14:29-31

But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. [30] Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. [31] And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.

Josephus records that the winds turned around and blew the bodies of the corpses to the eastern shore, equipping Moses and the people with some weapons. The Red Sea vomited up the bodies of the dead. This was a terrible disgrace for the Egyptians who gave great care and emphasis in embalming and preserving the bodies of the dead. They would become a feast for fowls and bread for the beast of the earth. God proves He is Lord. He removes His enemies. He improves the defense capabilities of His people with weapons. The Lord moves His people through an over-whelming obstacle. The Jews had confidence in God for they did not run in a panic, but walked across in faith.

* Isaiah 28:16- Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Dennis Hensley stated that when he was a newspaper reporter, he did a feature on training procedures for Air Force pilots. One flight condition a pilot must understand is hypoxia or “oxygen starvation.” Students are paired off in an altitude simulation chamber. With oxygen masks on, they are taken to simulated conditions of 30,000 feet. Then one student removes his mask for a few minutes and begins to answer simple questions on a sheet of paper. Suddenly, their partners force oxygen masks on the uncovered mouths and noses of people who are writing.

After a few gulps of normal air, each writer is astounded at what he sees on his paper. The first few written lines are legible, but the last few lines are unreadable. One minute earlier, the participant was absolutely sure he had written his answers in perfectly legible script. In reality, he
was on the verge of losing total consciousness. Remarkably, he did not even know that he was blacking out. Similarly, people can be spiritually starved. They may not know anything is wrong, but unless someone explains how to obtain the “breath of life,” those disconnected from God will never gain spiritual consciousness. Are you “blacking out” spiritually? Get back in the Word of God and get back into church.

The Route of the Exodus * Red Sea Crossing * Mt. Sinai’s Location
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