

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Life of Moses – Mentor of Humility and Tenacity (Part 1 – Exodus)

by

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Hebrews 11:23-29

“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.

24. 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 recompence 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.

28. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”

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INTRODUCTION

Exodus is a wonderful picture of the believer's life through the ages; as it tells us about the way out of slavery from sin into freedom in Christ Jesus. There is great relevance to our walk in Christ in every chapter here. All of us will have wilderness experiences in this life, and the challenge is to deal with them biblically. It does not matter what pressure you have in the Christian life, the principle to apply and be delivered, is in Exodus. Moses remains a great mentor of the "faith-rest life", for he stabilized his life on the truths he received from the tablets received from Abraham, and he set the Israelites a living example of daily walking by faith.

We will see here that the children of Israel enter into the land of Canaan to fight rather than to rest. There was no "Canaan Rest" – but a daily battle against the inhabitants of the land – who were pagan and violent. The picture of the Promised Land is not one of heaven, but the battles of this present life. Spiritual maturity upon this fallen earth does not mean that we sit down and put our feet up and relax. This world is not for relaxing in; it is for serving in. This is when the battle heats up, and you are meant to enjoy the scrapping with the enemy. As it gets hotter and stronger you should enjoy it more. This is our daily challenge; to get our Armour on and fight in the power of the Holy Spirit and defeat the attacks of the enemy. We are introduced to strong and weak characters in this book; each of them teach us something about what to do in this life, or not to do!

Hebrews 3:17 – 4:12

"17. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?"

18. And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?"

19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

CHAPTER 4

"1. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

12. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

John 10:7 – 11. "I have come to give you life and to give it more abundantly", Jesus said. We are called to an "abundantly blessed life". John 8:32, 1 Timothy 1:14, Titus 3:6, 1 Peter 1:3. We have this abundant life through faith alone, for it is only as we walk in the truth of the Word, and apply it in the filling of the Holy Spirit, that we walk where God wants us to walk and do things that God wants us to do.

The life of action in the tough places of this world can be the more abundant life. In the forty years that the Exodus Generation was led by Moses in the wilderness the Lord showed them that there was a way through everything that they faced, and having learned that they were to apply the truth, and seize the land from the enemy. Each challenge we face is the Lord's way of reminding us that he has the power to deal with all things, and our job is to walk in that power.

Exodus is the first of the "wilderness wanderings" books; it is the record of these lessons learned that will be completed in the book of Numbers. It speaks firstly of God's power and secondly that what God has promised, for God is always able to deliver. Paul's message many years later is the same, that his God is able he is able to deal with sin in our life and difficulties in our circumstances. 2 Corinthians 8:14, Philippians 4:19.

Most of the Exodus Generation are believers, and they have obediently come out of Egypt, but Egypt did not come out of them. Their sin is a little treasure/weakness that they keep close to their heart. They have been delivered from slavery, yet they hanker for the security benefits of slavery! Their old sin nature runs them rather than the Holy Spirit. A lot of the people that came out in the Exodus thought that their faith didn't work, yet the problem was they rested their confidence in the wrong object. They spoke of the freedom they had as they followed Moses, and yet they didn't want to fully live and walk in that freedom and take all the responsibilities that are always associated with it.

You will find that many people in Churches today are just like this; they do not think that Christianity works, but that is because they will not walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit, for they love the things of the flesh. They know that the Bible is true but do not think that it applies and works today. In a way they don't want the Bible to work for them, for they want to

name the name of Jesus but not feed upon his Word, nor apply the Commandments to their daily life. They want a religion that makes no demands; they want their freedom to sin, not serve. God says to people that He has got an answer to every question and problem they have, but they look into his Holy Word, apply it into the fabric of their daily lives, and then they will see the know the truth. Psalms 34:8, Hebrews 3:14 – 4:12.

John 8:32-36. *"32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

THE BIBLE AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS

During their time of marching in the desert the Israelites did not have anything personally in writing, but they had the Patriarchal promises of God to show that God does work and what He says is true. They also had the growing account that Moses was writing of the record of God's grace in the past to the Patriarchs. Moses had the tablets, likely written in the Akkadian Cuneiform script, left to him from the Patriarchs, recording all the details that went into Genesis, and he wrote the next books as they travelled, and he taught the people these things.

Moses Bible class in the desert would have been wonderful to attend, but if ever you get depressed about attendance or attention of your students pastor, reflect upon Moses success with the first generation! Of all the first generation who heard his words, only 2 of over 30,000 responded and believed the Word and applied it into the very fabric of their lives – Caleb and Joshua. Exodus is a book about spiritual growth, and spiritual growth centres in the believer's feeding upon the Word of the Living God, and applying it into their daily life.

Romans 6:17. "Let God be thanked, you were once a slave to sin but you believed the doctrine of God's Word which was delivered to you". We must not only hear but respond in our lives; we must have deeper faith than the devils, for they believe the truth about Jesus, indeed they know it thoroughly, and they tremble! We must do more than tremble at truth – it must transform us. This is what made Moses, Caleb and Joshua great men – they didn't stop at trembling at the truth – they took it in, and let it get hold of them!

James 2:14-20. *14. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*

15. If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

The faith that delivered you from sin as an unbeliever is the same faith that will save you from sin day by day as a believer and child of God now. To fail to live by faith is to fail to live up to the Lord's standard for us, and brings divine discipline into the life of the foolish believer who does not advance daily in faith-rest. Hebrew 4:2 is a direct criticism of those who the Word of God did not profit; not being mixed with faith within each day of the people's life.

The Exodus generation is a generation of failures, and the mechanics and dynamics of their failure, and what they could have done to turn this around, is the subject of this book. Up to 99% of the people failed, with only two people succeeding; Caleb and Joshua. This may be the odds in the Christian life. If you, as a pastor, only have five people out of a hundred motivated into serving the Lord you ought to give thanks, as it is far better than what Moses had. Exodus is a leader's manual on building leadership and encouraging the true leader to keep moving forward against the odds.

The Exodus generation was the most spiritually blessed generation before the time of the Cross, as they saw God's power in a unique way, far more than any other generation, other than the one which was in the land at the time of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had Moses as a teacher, probably the greatest person in the Old Testament, yet only two succeeded. If you think you are having a tough time, welcome to the club; both Moses and Paul had a tough time. In tough times the only security is in fellowship with the one who called you to walk that path and no other. Like Moses we must rest in Him.

We must remember the lessons of history in this area, for the greatest of leaders were in tough places. The prosperity gospel movement speak of "living in the palace" as Daniel did, but they often forget the den of lions at the end of his life! They also forget that his contemporaries, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, suffered greatly in their ministries, and yet were equally spiritual.

The message of this book is faith in action, but it is also grace. Even though this generation fails, God does not stop blessing them, as every time they get up in the morning there is manna outside the tented encampment, whether they believe in God's work or not. Grace means that God does the work, we receive the benefits, but we grow spiritually and

in the joy of the Lord only when we apply the grace of God by faith into our daily walk; then alone we grow and really spiritually prosper before the Lord.

When you start understanding the grace of God you ought to start applying His Word into your daily life, and then you will start growing. The path of application is the path of increasing spiritual service, and increasing spiritual blessing. We have a great picture of this at Sinai/Mt Horeb where God meets man. Horeb is the place of the Law, but it is also the place of Grace as we will see.

The next book we will study will be Leviticus, and it is what is said at Sinai, whilst Numbers and Deuteronomy is what is taught after they left Sinai. As the writer of the book to the early Hebrew Christians states, the Law was a shadow of things to come. Hebrews 10:1-14. You will discover that we will learn more about the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross from Leviticus than from the Gospels alone. Remember the principle, never divorce the Old Testament from the New; in the Old the truth is at times apparently concealed, and in the New it is revealed, but we need both to get the full picture.

The prophets wrote as much as was revealed to them, but they all desired to see the Lord's Day. 1 Peter 1:8-12. They had all the indications of what was going to happen on the Cross and desired to see it. What was to follow was a mystery doctrine that was hidden from them, but they longed to know it. Do we have their hunger for the truth? If we do, we will hear the words of the Lord and experience the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, and know the truth and will be set free from the nonsense that blinded the Exodus Generation, and continues to blind fallen and carnal man. Ephesians 2:1-10.

THE LIFE OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:23-29 is a testimony of the life of Moses looking back, referring to both his faith and the faith of his parents. The promises of God's Word were more real to them than the consequence of what might follow from their actions. They all risked death to do what God clearly wanted them to do, and they stepped out and took the risk of standing for truth in the midst of lies and danger.

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They did not have "blind faith", nor were their actions "a leap in the dark". It is not a leap in the dark when you are dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ and the sure promises of His Word. If you are trusting in the Lord you are trusting in His Word on the basis of His perfect Character, and the surety of his plan. He is light, and His Word is light. We do not "leap" anywhere, we walk in the light of his wonderful Word and we embrace all his promises as our own. Psalm 119:105-107, 116, 123, 130-133, 140-142, 161-169, 1 John 1:1-8. He shows you where to go and what to do.

Moses' parents knew, through the moving of the Holy Spirit upon them, that their son was the one who the Lord would use, and they put the survival of him in the Lord's hands, and they all risked their own lives to protect Moses until they let him loose in the floating basket onto the Nile. The son of Pharaoh's daughter was likely to have been Hatshepsut.

The title "the son of Pharaoh's daughter" is a very interesting one, which was only used by one woman who ruled Egypt, and it was this woman. Her mummy has just been identified in recent times (2007). If this belief of mine is correct (and I in no way ask you to join me in this conclusion) it would indicate that Moses' adoption by her made him not only a royal prince, but he could also have been the next Pharaoh. The other people in the picture were the Pharaoh Thutmose II, and the beautiful Neferari.

From the Jewish commentators on this passage they indicate that Moses not only gave up the right to rule but also the love of his life, Neferari, so that he could serve God. I believe that those Jewish traditional writers were probably correct, although we will only know these things finally in heaven, when we hear from Moses himself. As we will see, Moses didn't need to flee after the killing of the taskmaster. He could have stayed and launched his bid for the throne with violence. He chose God's path by faith, not man's path by coup d'etat. **Habakkuk 2:4.**

Exodus was written by Moses and he certainly played down this great faith, as Moses was a very humble man. After Moses left Egypt, Hatshepsut took over and was followed by Thutmose, who then tried to erase all mention of her name and with it any memory of Moses.

We are looking back 3,500 years. Egyptian history is very obscure at this time due to the fact that when a new Pharaoh established a new dynasty and took over, he could systematically deface any evidence of the ruler before him if he had

overthrown the previous Pharaoh. When Thutmose took over he wanted to remove all knowledge of Hatshepsut and her "son" Moses, and he did by defacing every record he could and taking over Hatshepsut's very temples as his own.

I believe that Moses had in his grasp the possibility of supreme power in the ancient world and had a choice to do it man's way, with political intrigue and violence, or "God's way". This is a very important principle and we learn it from a man who faced the real choice and the biggest temptation possible. None of us face the overwhelming pressures that Moses faced, but as we see him face things we learn principles we can all apply.

Hebrews 11:25 states that he could have seized great power "for a season". He may have ruled Egypt for sixty or more years and had the greatest life that the world of the day had to offer, but all the wealth and pleasures would have been dust in his mouth if he had not walked God's way. Just so it is also with us! Let us find God's path for our lives each and every day and fulfil the great eternal plan of God for our lives.

CHOICES

Everything in politics is "for a season". If you have the choice between gaining political power, which will possibly change your country into a so called "Bible based political system", or being a minister at a rural church, which one should you choose? Matthew 4:8-11. Remember the temptation of the Lord, for Satan offered the Lord all the kingdoms of this world and the Lord didn't say they were not his to offer! There is great victory available to those who spiritually take the path of wealth, power and status, but that is rarely God's path, and few are chosen to walk it. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27.

History teaches us that all political attempts to create Christian States have led to hypocrisy or worse, and prophecy teaches us that only the Lord's return at the Second Advent, will bring in a Christian world. Our job is to minister his truth, "until he comes", not be side tracked by what the wealth of the world offers for however long a season we may have upon this temporary planet. 1 Corinthians 11:26, 2 Peter 3:10-14. Having said this, a select few are led to play their part in politics, and we meet them in scripture, and being ready to serve the Lord in the midst of corrupt or great government is also vital for the people so called. Let each walk as they are called to, and no-where else.

Even if we are called to serve in politics, it is always much more important to deal with vital eternal matters, rather than good temporal matters. No matter what good things you do politically, it produces benefit but for a season. Even if you had the best laws in the world, people would break them openly or covertly. What help is it to an individual if she/he lives a good decent life on this earth and then they go to hell because of unbelief, compared to a person who goes to hell having led a bad life? Both are still in hell forever! If you are an evangelist you are giving a message of eternal worth.

Mark 8:34-37. "34. *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.*
 36. *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*
 37. *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

If you decide to change society's activities, for example, about drinking alcohol, and you succeed in giving it up, and then convince all of society to do it, what have you achieved? You have achieved a more temperate nation for a season, and a more pleasant one, but when they die, those sober, unsaved people still go to hell. In this case you have a sober man going to hell rather than a drunk. It is not just morally changed people that the Lord wants, but spiritually transformed people! Let us continue to work for sober and crime free societies for they are wonderful to live in, but let us remember that the Lord seeks more from us than this, for we are "commissioned". **Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Corinthians 5:16-20.**

Moses was looking at all things from an eternal perspective. **Hebrews 13:13-14.** That is why he walked away from the most beautiful woman in the world, and from the greatest power and wealth that his age could know. Moses saw that what was important for him was what was going to last for eternity. He saw, that if it doesn't last for eternity, then it is not worth giving your life and time to now. Make sure that what you do matters eternally, and that it is exactly what the Lord calls you to. Moses was doing this on the basis of his understanding of God's Word, God's policy and plan for his life. Exodus illustrates dramatically the principle that it is important for man to live in the light of the eternal plan of God.

GOD'S SERVANT

In Exodus 1 verse 27 Moses forsook Egypt. This is a big ask for him, but it is God's path for him. You may have to give up a great career, money, rewards, and even respectability if you become a teacher of God's Word, because very rarely do God's men receive great physical rewards in time. In Ephesians it is stated that we have blessings in heavenly places as we walk with our Lord in obedience along the plan for our life. Ephesians 2:4-10.

Moses stayed forty years in the desert, enduring this by faith that God had called him to a great role, and in God's time it would "re-activate", and it was just a matter of timing. If you spend forty years in apparently a barren desert, it either will make you bitter, or it will teach you patience and tenacity. It is hot in the day and freezing at night, and it taught him to endure. Moses needed to earn his "Backside of the Desert" (BD) degree, and so must we all, in the tough places. If God has called you to a great task, expect tough training before you do it, and wait for the Lord's signal to start.

If you are a minister of God's Word you will have to learn how to endure. Do not expect, if you serve the Lord, that it is all going to be smiles, for there will be much pain, and if you are obedient to the Lord, much opposition. Ezekiel 3:4-20, 1 Timothy 1:6-7, 3:1. Moses was a great man but his greatness came with his occupation with Christ, not his preoccupation with his comfort and pleasure. He "saw" the one who was invisible and focused upon his will for his life, not his own.

This is not referring just to the burning bush. He saw God every day in prayer. He drew comfort from the knowledge that the Lord had a plan for his life. During his forty years in the desert he was preparing himself for the day when he was to do the work of God. If you study for the ministry you will find it hard grind, and so you are encouraged to hang in there when things get tough. Moses kept trusting the Lord, studying, applying to his life which gave him real joy and peace. This remains the path to glory for all who would serve as the Lord's under-shepherds.

IN GOD'S WILL

In chapter 12, verses 11 -13, and then 21-30, Moses commanded them all to sprinkle the blood of the Passover lamb upon the lintels of their door posts in case He who destroyed the firstborn would destroy them. It is thought that the angel of death may well have been Satan, and he would slay all the first born for sheer malice; only the blood of the sacrifice could stop him, and praise God, the blood of Christ still stops his power over us still today. 1 John 4:4.

In the power of God Moses stood before Pharaoh and said again and again, "let my people go". In the ancient world you never walked into Pharaoh's presence, you crawled, or were killed. If anyone had done what Moses did they would have been killed on the spot. No one looked at the Pharaoh because he was considered to be the God man. He wore a crown on his head, which spoke of his being as if he was a god.

Moses lived because he was God's man in the right place at the right time. If you are God's servant doing God's work in God's will you are invincible in your obedience, right up until the time the Lord has for you to come home into his presence. You are not going to die until the second that the Lord wants you to die. We rest in His Plan, for it will always work out and the enemy cannot prevail against it. **Psalm 68:20, 116:15, Jeremiah 24:4-7, Matthew 16:18.**

Even Satan cannot take you without the permission of God. If God wants you to do any thing, and you do it, are you in danger? No, unless God wants you to be a martyr. **Acts 7:55-60, 12:2, 5ff, Romans 8:26-39.** Clarity on these matters brings strength of mind and body, and will also bring courage, in and through our faith in God's Plan for our life. The Filling of the Holy Spirit meets our needs and encourages our hearts and stabilizes our minds. **Ephesians 5:15-21.**

We can always apply Romans 8:28, which reminds us that nothing can separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus, as long as we walk in his plan, in love and worship towards Him. Paul could even say that Satan arranged for him to be stoned to death, but the Lord raised him up because it was not his time to die. **2 Corinthians 11:23 – 12:10.**

Exodus introduces us to all these dynamics of the Christian life. The same power that worked in Moses and in Paul is available to us all as we walk as they walked – in faith-rest in the promises of the Word of God, and through the filling of the Holy Spirit. If you are in the Lord, through faith, then the Holy Spirit is in you, and then, you are able to do everything that Moses and Paul did.

Moses was great because he had his eyes off himself and his abilities, and on to the Lord and his purpose/plan and power. He was a very humble man and worked his great works in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 5:19-21, 14:11-14. Let us live and work in the power that the Lord gives through the Holy Spirit. Moses is a great mentor for all leaders who face great pressure, for this man faces the greatest pressures any political figure every faced and came through to the glory of God – so can we in the Holy Spirit's power.

Notes

CHAPTER 1**EXODUS 1: 1-22**

“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. 6 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. 9 And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 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. 11 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 rigour: 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 rigour. :15 And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphras, 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. :17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. :18 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. :20 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. :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.”

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 7. Moses provides the linking verses here to continue the story begun in Genesis, by recording the key points; the people and the numbers that entered the land, but then the great blessing upon their families and their fruitfulness. They grew in numbers to such an extent that the land was full of them. God’s promise had been to multiply them, and this promise was fulfilled within 300 years, for they now outnumbered the locals in this area of Goshen. God’s promise had been for their growth to be a blessing to the people amongst whom they dwelt, but a pharaoh will come to rulership who does not see this at all, nor does he seek God’s way through the problem he perceives these people to be. Genesis 12:2-3, 13:14-16, 15:4-6, 17:2-8, 16, 22:17-18, 26:1-5, 28:3-5, 12-15, 35:9-13.

The promises made to the Patriarchs involved going down to Egypt at Joseph’s request, for it was there that God had arranged to expand them into a nation. Genesis 46:1-4, 47:27, 48:3-4, 15-16, Nehemiah 9:23, Psalms 105:23-25, Acts 7:17-18. Moses begins this new scroll of the story of the nation by reminding the hearers that God’s plan has been the source of their blessing and the sure ground of their prosperity all through the years in Egypt. They were there according to God’s Plan and they will be called out at exactly the right moment in time. We are in exactly the same place – wisely seeking the timing of the Lord in all our ways.

Proverbs 3:1-7. *“1. My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
2. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
3. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
4. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
5. 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.
7. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”*

The Exodus Generation have become so comfortable and complacent in their slavery that the majority will not want to leave Egypt and take up the inheritance of the land of Canaan, for that means leaving a place that has been home for 400 years. It is not a small thing that Moses is going to ask them to do. The only way they will even contemplate it is for their comfortable nest in Egypt to be stirred up, and the Lord, knowing their hearts, is about to do exactly that. The harsh slavery that the last Pharaoh institutes is exactly what is required to get them out of their slavery “comfort zone”.

The eagle stirs up it’s nest, when the young need to leave it, for by throwing out the soft down that the eaglets rest upon, it exposes the thorns at it’s foundation, and so it forces the young to fly away. Just so the Lord will do to the Israelites; and the method will be to let them endure terrible and even genocidal slavery for a generation, so that they cry out for deliverance. Deuteronomy 32:11-12. If they accept the stirring of the nest, and cry to the Lord, then they will soar like an eagle, and will know the wings of the Lord under them. Deuteronomy 33:27, 29, Isaiah 40:27-31, 46:3-4, 63:7-9, Hebrews 11:1-3.

Verses 8 – 10. The new pharaoh is not named and speculation will not assist our narrative here as to who he is, for at this distance, and with the uncertainties of Egyptian chronology we cannot be sure. This new man will have been of a new dynasty, and while he will have known, from the Egyptian's excellent archives, of Joseph's service to Egypt, the concern he had was the immediate threat to Egyptian sovereignty posed by such a large group of Semitic-Canaanite type people within the fertile land area of the Delta.

The threats through this period were from the so called "Sea Peoples", who may have been the Mycenaean Proto-Greek peoples. They would settle on the coastal region of Canaan at some time around this time frame (they may have started arriving during Joseph's life time but certainly by Moses day they are strong in Canaan). With the Delta region thickly populated by these Hebrews any invader landing on the Delta might find both a fertile land and a people who were ready to join them to take over Egypt.

The Hebrew people have not been active in their support for, or service in, the Egyptian government through these centuries and have simply been living off the land as settlers, focused on agriculture and trade. None since Joseph have risen to serve Egypt and keep the memory of Joseph alive. They have become vulnerable to being targeted as "threats to the nation".

While it is clear that they could have done more to keep their involvement in Egyptians government stronger, this also is an irrelevancy in the end, for they have a destiny else-where, and the Lord had to call them out from the comfortable life of Egypt to inherit the land he had for them. Even if they had been valued servants of Egypt, they would have come to the time when they had to leave.

As it will unfold through this pharaoh's life, and the next, the attacks upon the Hebrew people will become more and more satanically inspired. The enemy will throw all his malice at these people, but the Lord will ensure they survive the first great genocide attempt in their history.

What will unfold in this book is the first great satanic attempt to destroy these people and eliminate the line that will lead to the Messiah who will defeat Satan on the Cross. In this book we confront the working out of the plan of God under the worst that Satan can throw at the people of God, and we confront the truth of God's protective hand within his plan, and while allowing the enemy the opportunity to attack his people. Job 1:6-12, 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, 10:11-13, Romans 8:28, James 3:14-18.

Verses 11 – 14. The people of Israel had been free to live as serfs upon the land, but now they are formally enslaved. This must have come as a shock to all the people and especially the sudden harshness of the task masters set over them. Behind these verses is the sadness of Moses as he thinks of the great suffering of his parent's generation, as they faced the traumatic change in their circumstances from free men to slaves overnight. The slavery was of the worst kind, with twelve to fourteen hour days of hard manual toil in the brickyards and then in the building of the storage/fortress cities of Pithom and Rameses.

These two cities are about 24 (30 kilometres) miles apart, and the children of Israel lived between them both, so this worked for their labouring and their control by the Egyptian guards set over them. They were being dealt with as if they were prisoners of war facing forced labour. This is an indication that the nation was either expecting, or under attack, and the strengthening of these great Delta metropolises was a priority, and the control over these possible allies of their enemies was to be achieved also.

In spite of the hard task masters, and the murders of many of the people by over-work or punishments, the people of Israel kept on growing in numbers. The slavery of the Israelites was clearly a phenomenon that lasted more than one hundred years (at least ten to twenty years before Moses was born, during which these events in verses 11 -14 occur, then forty years while Moses was a young man in Egypt, and forty years afterwards, while he was in Midian). Several generations of Israelites know nothing other than terrible slavery before they are ready to be delivered by the Lord.

Verses 15 – 17. Having failed to lower the Hebrew birth rate by harsh slavery and the murder of adults, the Pharaoh seeks another method to lower their population, but this time through the birthing process. He calls in the two chief midwives of the Hebrews. This in itself tells us that the tribes were well organized and had social and health care in place, and controlled by people who knew what they were doing. These two named women are the leaders of the midwives for all the tribes, recognized as the experts in birthing by their people. They control a network of midwives who they will refer to in verse 19.

Because the Egyptians are paranoid about the numbers of the Israelites, these women were probably responsible to report the birth rates to the authorities regularly, just as the Egyptian mid-wives were. The Egyptians kept records of everything for taxation purposes. The genocide plan of this pharaoh was ruthlessly simple; abort/kill all the boys, let the girls live. The reason behind this was to lower the numbers of males who could raise rebellion later, and increase the numbers of girls without men, so they could be sold as servants and hand maids on the open market. The girls would then "breed" with Egyptians and quickly the "Hebrew" gene pool would disappear into the Egyptian. There were both financial and military reasons behind this order. Boys were to die by being euthanized as they came out of the birth canal.

These verses also give us insight into the birthing processes of the ancients also. Firstly it was controlled by women who were experts in the natural birthing process, not by doctors. Egypt was a very medically advanced culture with great

learning in this area, however the birthing process was not medicalized, but looked upon as a natural thing that may require assistance at times, but was then to be enabled, not overwhelmed by interventions. It also tells us that the birthing was accomplished on a special stool, on which the woman squatted, rather than on a bed on which she lay.

Examples of these “birthing stools” have been found from various periods in history within different cultures. The actual word used in the text describes a potter’s stool that was able to be turned around and was in a quarter moon shape so the baby could easily slip out into the hands of the mid-wife. This method had a good success rate and was the best form of natural childbirth all through history.

Attacks upon mid-wives by the churches in the Middle Ages and Renaissance and the medicalization of the birth process led to great evil that reflected badly on the Christian faith. The so called “witch trials” in the medieval period often were simply attacks upon midwives, and brought the Gospel into disrepute. The taking over of the mid-wife’s function by doctors through the last five hundred years led to great loss of life in the early days because the male doctors did not take the care that the mid-wives had taken with hygiene.

Doctors regularly killed their patients by poor hand washing right up to the 19th century. We need to be corrected by scripture on many matters, and the matter of birthing was well dealt with by the female midwives for thousands of years. The attacks upon this group of women by the churches of Europe from the 12th century through until the 19th were great evils and had equally satanic origins to the attack that pharaoh launched against the Israelites in this day before us here.

These mid-wives feared the Lord and so decided what they would and would not do in their obedience to the orders of pharaoh. They were clear as to their obligation, and it was to obey the orders of the king as far as they did not conflict with their responsibility before the Lord. Just so it is with us today. We have the solemn obligation to pray for our government and obey it in so far as there is no conflict between the orders of the State and those of God. We are “as far as possible to be at peace with all men”, Romans 12:18. We are to obey the king/authority structure of our nation up to the point where it conflicts with God’s clear Commands. Romans 13.

These women have no ethical problem with lying to pharaoh also. This is a matter that has caused agony for foolish believers down the years; but only for those who do not know and believe scripture! Here we see these women’s logic, and it is doctrinal logic. An evil person is to be obeyed if they rule in all things except in violation of Gods Law. When they demand obedience to something that cannot be done, then the believer is to decide what is the best course of action to save the Lord’s people alive, even if it hazards their own lives. Psalms 31:19-20, Proverbs 8:13, 16:6, 24:9-12, Ecclesiastes 8:12, Daniel 3:16-23, Matthew 10:26-31.

They are to take any action to protect others, not be concerned with themselves. They are to lie if required, for this pharaoh is not entitled to the truth, for the truth will cause him to commit greater evil. These women will lie and plot to save the children, and they are declared righteous in their actions, for they are godly in their desire! If this is a problem for you, and you couldn’t do this, then you have not studied the Word of the Lord long enough, or you are not in touch with the reality of the Angelic Conflict.

There are evil people who are **not entitled to any truth that will be used to hurt others**, and they should not be given the truth, for they will commit evil with it. For example; if an evil person breaks into your house and demands you tell them where your children are, you are supposed to lie with a straight face to such a person, for they are not entitled to know the whereabouts of your children. We protect the innocent any way we can, and lying in such a situation is no sin, indeed not to lie to evil men is sinful and stupid. Joshua Chapter 2.

Verses 18 – 22. The pharaoh calls the women in as the figures start to come in and he sees no drop off in the live birth rate of the boys. It is clear that the boys are surviving the birthing process. He asks for an explanation from the two women.

They refer to their teams of midwives and indicate that the report they have is that the Hebrew women give birth too quickly and there is not the chance to pretend that the baby has died in the birthing process, which is what he wanted, for the children are already in their mother’s arms and their killing the baby then would destroy the reputation and role of the midwife and uncover pharaoh’s plan for all to see. Pharaoh’s plan had called for the apparently “accidental” deaths of the male children, which could be blamed on some strange phenomenon.

He had not initially wanted to directly kill the children, for that would be too ghastly and too unpopular, even with his own people, but that is what he will now order. The mid-wives are blessed by the Lord for their actions by God, so it is clear that ethically their lies here are rewarded and praised. Psalms 41:1-2, 61:5, 85:9-10, 103:10-14, 111:5, 145:17-19, Proverbs 11:18, 19:17.

The Lord “built their houses”, which is a way of saying their families prospered and grew also. The general population of the Israelites grew also, and so in exasperation the pharaoh gives the order to his own soldiers and officials to begin an open genocide program and throw all baby boys into the Nile for the crocodiles to eat. The order is given to all Egyptians as the ultimate birth control method for controlling the Israelites.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What God says, he will perform. Any promise of the Word of God will be fulfilled, and if it has not been yet, then wait, for it will be. God keeps his word and his plan is successful.
2. It is a dangerous thing to become too comfortable in this present world, for the Lord calls us to service, and that means a readiness to move out and go in any direction he calls us to. When the Lord moves us forward, at times it will be with some discomfort. Let us look for the Lord's leading in any time we feel we are being made uncomfortable where we are.
3. We are not called to simplistic ethics, but God centred and other-centred ethics. We are called to stand for righteousness and if that means we must deceive an evil person then we deceive them in the Lord's name. Let us reflect upon the actions of the mid-wives here, for it was, in a similar way, repeated by all who hid innocent people from the Nazis in World War 2, and in many places it is required again. Let us be strong in the Lord, not weak in our spirit.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE NATURE OF "SPIRITUALITY"

1. All Christians have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. When we allow Him to control our lives, we are said to be "filled with the Spirit" or "walking in the Spirit".
2. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be lost by
 - a) Grieving the Spirit - by sin
 - b) Quenching the Spirit - by not submitting to His leading
 - c) This is called being carnal, or controlled by the flesh, the old sin nature.
3. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be regained by
 - a) Confessing sin (1 John 1:9)
 - b) Surrendering your life to God (Romans 12:1-2)
 - c) This is called being spiritual, or controlled by the Holy Spirit.
4. Only the Holy Spirit in us can produce good works acceptable to God - anything in our own strength is unacceptable (Romans 8:8-9, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15)
5. The spiritual believer
 - a) Imitates God. (Ephesians 5:1, 1 John 3:9)
 - b) Glorifies Christ. (John 7:39, John 16:14)
 - c) Fulfills the Law. (Romans 8:2-4, Romans 13:8)
6. In the Bible the human race is divided in three Categories:-

[a] Natural Man - A person born physically alive, but not regenerated. He may be highly sophisticated, civilised, gentle and kind, but is completely ignorant of any spiritual phenomena. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Equivalent to the cold person in the church in Laodicea.

[b] Carnal Man - A person regenerated or born again but living his life under the power of his old sin nature. Prolonged activity in this area produces a Christian who is still a baby. (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). Equivalent to the lukewarm person in the church of Laodicea.

[c] Spiritual Man - A person regenerated and living generally in the power of the Holy Spirit. He discerns the difference between the things of God and man. (1 Corinthians 2:11-13) He has fellowship with God in his daily life. (Ephesians 5:18-20) Equivalent to the hot person in the church of Laodicea.

7. **Carnality**

- [a] The believer possesses an Old Sin Nature after salvation (1John 1:8, Romans 7:14,15).
- [b]. The Old Sin Nature is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).
- [c]. The believer under the control of the Old Sin Nature is called carnal (1Corinthians 3:1-3, Romans 7:14).
- [d]. The Old Sin Nature frustrates bona fide production in the life of the believer (Romans 7:15).
- [e]. The Old Sin Nature is acquired at the point of physical birth (Psalm 51:5).
- [f]. We are therefore considered spiritually dead at the point of physical birth (Romans 5:12).
- [g]. The Old Sin Nature has several facets: areas of weakness produces sins, areas of strength produces human good. It has trends towards asceticism or lasciviousness. In many cases asceticism is considered to be spirituality.
- [h] The Old Sin Nature is not found in the resurrection body.

REFLECTIONS UPON CHRISTIAN MATURITY

Categories of Believers

1. Standpoint of Spirituality:

- a) Spiritual believer - the Holy Spirit controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6b).
- b) Carnal believer - the sinful nature controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6a).

2. Standpoint of Growth:

- a) Baby - one who has just received Christ as Saviour.
- b) Adolescent - one who has learned some doctrine but is not yet in the application state.
- c) Mature - one who knows and applies doctrine and spends a maximum amount of time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

3. Relationship of Maturity and Spirituality:

- a) Spirituality is an absolute. The Holy Spirit either controls or He does not. One cannot be a little bit carnal. If he is carnal he is NOT spiritual.
- b) Maturity is speeded up by spirituality, but a baby believer can be either carnal or spiritual, and a mature believer can be carnal or spiritual.

REFLECTIONS UPON MATURITY: THE CROSS TO THE CROWN

1. Salvation is only the beginning of the plan for man. After salvation the believer's objective is to advance in stages of spiritual growth on the path from the Cross to the Crown.

2. At each stage the believer faces increasing intense tests that can only be passed by faith. Paul in Romans 1:17 says believers progress from faith to faith. The five Hebrew words for faith illustrate the five stages of growth described in the New Testament.

a) The Babe - 1 Peter 2:2 - AMEN - the leaning faith of Genesis 15:6

All believers enter the family of God as infants when they exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After the tremendous stress of birth, of coming from darkness into the light the infant's impulse is to nurse. The objective is nourishment but the baby also receives great comfort in feeding. God's objective for the spiritual infant is for growth, but He commences this with comfort. Not much is expected of a baby in his first few years, he cannot feed or change himself. Spiritual infants are just as helpless and need a great deal of nurturing, encouragement and patient encouragement and patient instruction.

b) The Adolescent - 1 John 2:13-14 - BATACH - the wrestling faith of Psalm 37:3

Adolescents young, strong and eager believers. This is the stage where people have grown to the point at which they understand some of the principles of truth and are beginning to apply them to their lives. But like most adolescents, they have the growing pains of arrogance and rebellion against authority; they are sometimes too eager to act on their own, and this often gets them into trouble. They have knowledge which they mistake for wisdom, but they lack the experience. Their tendency is to want to apply the truth to other people's lives. Adolescents may be troublesome, but at least they are not apathetic. They must be patiently trained and encouraged to channel their energies. No one makes it to maturity without passing through adolescence.

c) The Mature - Hebrews 5:14, 6:1 - CHASAH - the confident faith that takes refuge in the Lord - Psalm 57:1

The mature believer is able to take meat, the advance doctrine of the Word. A believer who has arrived at spiritual maturity knows enough about the Bible to take responsibility for his own life. He knows how to apply the Word of God to himself so rather than airing all his problems he knows how to solve them. He is not ready to take on every one else's problems but he can take control of his own life. He understands that God has a plan for his life and sets about fulfilling that plan. He gives himself to training and discipline, exercising himself and building spiritual muscle.

d) The Hero of Faith - Isaiah 53:12, Hebrews 11 - YACHAL - the healing faith of Job 13:15

Heroes of faith are men and women who have gone beyond maturity and have learned to fight the good fight. They have advanced beyond simply taking responsibility for their own lives to becoming responsible for the lives of other people. They are always willing to pick up fallen comrades, to treat their wounds, to encourage them and supply their needs. Heroes of the faith still make mistakes, they still fail but they always stand back up and go back into battle.

e) The Friend of God - James 2:23-25 - QAWAH - the enduring faith of Isaiah 40:31

The highest of all possible achievements in life is to become a friend of God. Every believer has the potential and the assets necessary to reach this point, but very few Christians do. It takes persistency and tenacity. The only people who make it this far are those who absolutely refuse to quit.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE BIBLICAL SIGNS OF MATURITY (ROMANS 15:1-15)

1. Helping others (v 1-3) The mature believer should bear the infirmities of the weak (v 1; cf. Galatians 6:2). Paul includes himself as a believer of mature strength.

a) A mature believer is characterised by:

- i) Knowing doctrine.
- ii) Knowing promises.
- iii) Spending a maximum amount of time by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

b) A weak or immature believer may be:

- i) A new believer.
- ii) An ignorant believer who does not know the Word.

c) A mature believer bears the infirmities of the weak believer by:

- i) Giving information about the Word (doctrine, promises, procedures). This may be in private conversation.
- ii) Giving advice based on the Word.
- iii) Exercising grace; listening to and helping others with problems.

d) The mature believer is not to "please himself" (v 1,2):

- i) He is not to feed his ego or brag about helping others. It should never be done for self-glory or self-stimulation, but for God's glory.
- ii) Christ as the supreme example (v 3):

He did not please Himself; but as a man He received more pressure than we will ever have. The Old Testament says, "the reproaches of Israel ('them') that reproached the Father ('Thee') fell on the Son ('Me') on the cross." Paul quotes a Messianic Psalm (Psalm 69:9). Christ was under maximum pressure when He bore our sins on the cross.

2. Knowledge of the Word of God (v 4)

a) The Old Testament ("things written aforetime") was the only scripture existing at the time Romans was written. The canon is now completed.

b) The purpose of the Word:

- i) Learning - doctrine God wants us to know.
- ii) Patience - faith in the long distance race. Believing moment by moment.
- iii) Comfort - in trials and difficulties of life.
- iv) Hope - for the future. Believers know where they are going.

3. Attitudes (v 5-6)

Believers are to see others from the divine viewpoint and be "like-minded one toward another". Their one purpose in life, after salvation, is "with one mind and one mouth, glorify God" (v 6). This is only possible from the divine viewpoint.

- i) We are all saved by grace. Christ died for us when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8).
- ii) We all have the same spiritual privileges and responsibilities (except spiritual gifts).
- iii) Every believer has a sinful nature but have different ways of expressing it.
- iv) We all get spirituality the same way (filling of the Holy Spirit) and all grow the same way, by the Word.

v) God loves each believer with the same amount of love, whether we are in or out of temporal fellowship.

4. Fellowship as the basis of grace (v 7)

- a) Believers are to receive one another as Christ received them.
- b) He received them in GRACE to the glory of God.

5. Ability to distinguish between Israel and the Church (v 8-12)

a) Christ was a minister under the Law (v 8).

- i) He was born, ministered, died, arose and ascended under the dispensation of the Law.
- ii) Therefore all He said (except Matthew 16 and John 14-17) amplified the Mosaic Law, confirmed the four unconditional covenants to Israel and the future of Israel with Him as their King. Some principles He gave are re-stated in the Epistles as the Christian way of life.

b) Before the Law was given (v 9) the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants promised blessing to the Jews, that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy.

c) Paul quotes (Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117; Isaiah 11:1-10). (Jesus Christ as the root of David and Jesse, is to reign over the Gentiles too.)

6. Faith that appropriates (v 13)

- a) The God of hope is to fill the believer with joy and peace in the sphere of believing. Faith is the means.
- b) Faith appropriates salvation, restoration to fellowship, filling of the Holy Spirit, doctrine, promises.

7. Knowing the operation of grace (v 14,15)

a) A mature believer realises all he has is because of God's grace and he operates his life on the basis of grace.

b) Grace is manifested in the believer in:

- i) Salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9)
- ii) Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)
- iii) Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- iv) Releasing power (2 Timothy 2:1)
- v) Growth and stability (2 Peter 3:18)
- vi) Restoration and fellowship (Hebrews 12:15; 1 John 1:9)
- vii) Producing works (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 9:9)
- viii) Christian way of life (2 Corinthians 1:12; Hebrews 12:28).

REFLECTIONS UPON THE CHARACTER OF GOD

1. Whilst God is three persons all three persons have exactly the same essence or character:

a) SOVEREIGNTY

The Father (Ephesians 1:11, cf Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 6:10, Hebrews 10:7, 9)

The Son (John 5:21, Revelation 19:16)

The Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11, cf Hebrews 2:4)

b) RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Father (John 17:25)

The Son (Luke 1:35, Hebrews 7:26, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Spirit The Holy Spirit

c) JUSTICE

The Father (Job 37:23, cf 8:3)

The Son (Acts 3:14, John 5:22, Revelation 19:11)

The Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20)

d) LOVE

The Father (John 3:16)

The Son (Ephesians 5:25, 1 John 3:16)

The Spirit (John 16:7-11, 1 Corinthians 2:10)

e) ETERNAL LIFE

The Father (John 5:26)

The Son (Micah 5:2, cf John 1:1-2, 1 John 5:11)

The Spirit (Isaiah 48:16)

f) ALL-KNOWING

The Father (Hebrews 4:13, cf Matthew 11:27, 1 Peter 1:2)

The Son (John 18:4, cf Matthew 9:4, John 2:25, 1 Corinthians 4:5)

The Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, cf 1 Corinthians 2:11)

g) EVERYWHERE

The Father (2 Chronicles 2:6)

The Son (Matthew 28:20, cf Ephesians 1:23)

The Spirit (Psalm 139:7)

h) ALL-POWERFUL

The Father (Mark 14:36, cf 1 Peter 1:5)

The Son (Hebrews 1:3, cf Matthew 24:30, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:21)

The Spirit (Romans 15:19)

i) UNCHANGEABLE

The Father (Hebrews 6:17, Psalm 33:11)

The Son (Hebrews 13:8)

The Spirit (John 14:16)

j) TRUTH

The Father (John 7:28, John 17:3)

The Son (1 John 5:20, cf John 1:14, 14:6, Revelation 19:11)

The Spirit (1 John 5:6, cf John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13)

NOTES

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

Remember, as we enter this chapter, that one of the powerful and encouraging messages of Exodus is, God can be trusted. If we look at the story of Moses and the people he worked with, the predominant doctrine that emerges as the believer's "First Aid" doctrine under pressure is, the sure knowledge of and confidence in the Character of God. Getting to know the character of God should teach us the security and stability of our own position.

We stand "in Christ Jesus", and that means we are in relationship with God, and we are able to depend upon His faithfulness and absolute stability. Your life as a Christian is going to be powerful for the Lord within His plan for your life, or powerless before your Old Sin Nature. It all depends upon how much, and how well you know the Character of God and rest your life upon the reality of His absolute holy love towards you. Deuteronomy 33:27, Hebrews 13:8.

MOSES THE MAN OF GOD

The traditions of the Israelites record that before his call to lead the Israelites, Moses was a great Egyptian Military General, and a great civil engineer, as he oversaw major building projects; possibly the building of the cities mentioned earlier. The attitude of the Israelites of his own day towards Moses was sadly very poor. Later generations would venerate him, but his own day was a different matter altogether – they raised at least thirteen specifically reported rebellions against his leadership. The way Moses records these tells us great things about his character.

He didn't think much of their character, courage, or nobility, and he knew that if there was a war for control of the Egyptian State, he couldn't have depended upon them. The Exodus Generation were slaves in their bodies and in their souls and spirits also, and they moaned and groaned from the beginning until they all died in the desert. There were only two exceptional men, Caleb and Joshua, but the rest were "castaways". 1 Corinthians 9:27.

Moses stepped out of the plan in killing the cruel taskmaster, Exodus 2:11-15. Once that rash act was done however there was no turning back. He made the decision, after killing the task-master, that rather than go and seize the throne and use power to free these people, he would flee to Midian (Arabia). He didn't think that they would support him, and he didn't believe he had the resources to achieve the coup d'etat that was theoretically possible. He couldn't do it in his own human, general's strength, and in this he was right. Romans 8:28 will apply, for Moses heart was for the Lord's Plan.

God must teach him in the desert, that all his human attributes and strengths, although useful, are not going to achieve the victory needed in the greater task ahead. All his victories were with well trained and drilled men, all specialists in their roles, but with Israel he had a people group who have been slaves for over 100 years, and only God's grace and doctrine over forty years is going to prepare them for the taking of the land. Moses is going to be their leader, but much more than that; he will be their teacher of Bible doctrine. Even then, this first generation is going to fail to apply the lessons learned and they will all die in the desert, but though the adult Bible Class fails to learn the youth Bible Class does learn, and this second generation will enter the land under Joshua.

He went into Midian (now Saudi Arabia) for the very reason that the Egyptians controlled Sinai and Canaan, and only in Midian would he be away from the patrols that would be sent after him. There he met the seven daughters of a desert priest of Midian who were trying to water their flocks. A group of local shepherds came and drove them away; these were men who placed women below the status of a camel. Moses stood up to the thugs and got the women's flocks watered.

This act of honour and bravery was relayed to Jethro, the father of the seven daughters, and he then entertained Moses in the hope that he would stay with them and join the clan. This priest of Midian was a worshipper of the true God. He gives Moses not only food and lodgings, but also one of his daughter's, Zipporah, as a wife. Her name means "little bird" showing that this woman was as gracious and beautiful as a little desert bird.

Many of the birds in this area have beautiful colours and this woman was beautiful and strong in nature. For forty years they are married, but then the spiritual test comes there was a problem, and as we will see, it was with her spiritual status. When finally Moses must follow his spiritual destiny, she cannot and will not support him and walk with him. When Moses is called out to do God's work his wife does not go with him. Moses must now move away from the second beautiful woman in his life to serve the Lord. When we get to this place we will comment upon this, but Moses faces many hard choices, and like John Wesley must walk forward and leave a wife behind who cannot follow him in God's path. These great men see the truth - God's will alone, God's path alone, God's blessing alone, and walk alone if called!

His first child is called Gershom, which means "a stranger". He says that even though he loves the child and he recognises him as his son he is a stranger here in Midian. Moses saw that he did not belong in Midian and that God had something else for him to do elsewhere. Moses is thinking about God's Word and Plan; he is not distracted by even the legitimate joys of family life from the path he knows he must one day walk. Moses was preparing in the vastness and wildness of the desert, praying, reflecting, studying, and waiting for God's timing to move again.

What we are doing in the Bible classes of the local church today is preparing ourselves to follow God's orders, and waiting for those orders to come in clearly. We are at times in this life in the desert places. It is at times in our walk, just

as it was for Moses, both dry and hard! Testing times will come through our time on this planet. Some believers will become casualties in the angelic conflict because they will be distracted by the details of life, or discouraged by the dry testing times. Our challenge is to feed on God's Word and apply the doctrines we learn into our daily lives by faith, and keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Hebrews 12:2.

We are to remember that the great saints of the past, and our own godly ancestors in faith look on and cheer our application of the truth under pressure. Hebrews 12:1-3. God has the plan in His hands and our job is to follow orders, and trust in the Lord's timing for things, not our own plans and dreams.

In God's time Moses was spoken to and directed as to what the Lord wanted him to do. In line with this same concept, when we have faithfully completed the challenge before us now, then the Lord will guide us into what he wants us to do next. The next big decisions are to be made once you have completed the task in hand. "One day at a time" is to be our motto as it was Moses resting point of truth.

Moses is there in Midian, to wait, learn and prepare his mind. He spent forty years in the wilderness of Midian before he led the children of Israel in the wilderness. Take comfort believer, for the Lord will not test you in this way unless you have a great task to do for him that requires Moses like abilities. Whatever the task you are to fulfil within the plan, he will make sure you have had advanced training in it. Whatever the apparent delay in the advance of the plan for your life there is, pause and reflect upon Moses here, and know that the Lord is preparing you for his work, and the longer the delay the more important it is to study and prepare yourself for the work ahead.

2 Timothy 2:12-16. *"12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*

13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

THE DEATH OF THE PHARAOH

In Exodus 2:23-25 the King of Egypt dies. The Israelites cried out to God because of the bondage they suffered. God remembered his people, as he always had, for God does not forget His people. 1 Corinthians 10:13 shows us that God is faithful, and will not allow us to be tested above what we can bear and will make a way of escape, or give a solution at the right time. Why do you claim the promises of God? The reason is, because God keeps his promises. If God says He will do it, then He will. Every request we make to the Lord should be prefixed by a promise.

God knew what the Israelites in Egyptian slavery were going through, he felt their pain, and his response had been prepared since eternity past, and in the right time he responded with their deliverance. Prayer power is based on the certainty of this knowledge; that you claim the promises of God, because they are based upon the eternal plan of God, and you know that you can trust the character of the Lord to accomplish all things in accordance with His Plan. Moses found his greatness in playing his part in the Plan of God, accepting God's orders and God's timing in all things. We will find our greatest glory in exactly the same place.

TEXT

2:1 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 no 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. **4** 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. **7** 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. **9** 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 women 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. **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. **12** 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? **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. **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. **16** 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. 21 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. 23 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 unto the Lord, and their cry came up to the Lord, by reason of their 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

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 3. The actions of ordinary people who listen to God's Spirit within them is what makes history flow down the right paths. We are often distracted in our history books by the actions of the wealthy and humanly powerful, and yet the most important things are often done by the nameless and ordinary individuals, who simply do what the Lord requires of them. Spirit led people change the course of history away from what Satan desires, to what the Lord has ordained. It's never the majority, or the so called "powerful" who move mountains; it's the spiritual people!

Moses' parents and his older sister heeded the leading of the Holy Spirit and hid their son/brother from the Egyptian authorities and he escaped the genocide by their extensive efforts at covering up his birth and early months. Any one who has stopped a three month old baby crying loudly knows that you must be super alert to its needs and meet them before it bellows!

Moses' sister Miriam, and Moses' mother both show commitment to him that is above and beyond the normal limits. They go without sleep and rest to ensure he does not make any sound that will betray his birth and life, for the guards of Egypt prowled the Israelite quarters with orders to kill all boys. The days, months, and years of the genocide would have been a terror and great grief to every Israelite couple longing for their first child, for it was doomed if a boy. Pharaoh was determined to destroy the male lines of every family and reduce the nation in one generation to female slaves, who they could be sold to the highest bidder.

The family of Moses had faith, and it was courageous faith. Acts 7:20-29, Hebrews 11:23. It was faith that worked out with perspiration, and all genuine faith is of this sort. James 2:14-26. We often under-value the commitment of parents over their children and yet the safe arrival and upbringing of a child may change a nation's destiny down track. Do not ever undervalue the role of mother, sister, brother, father and grand-parent, for you never know the destiny of the child you care for.

This family took extra-ordinary care, risking their own lives to save their son, ensuring that he never cried long or loud enough to draw attention to the house. It appears from Moses' words here that anyone hiding a child was executed also, so the risks were extremely high for everyone. This family is although slaves, comfortably off, with Miriam working in the palace and their life was lived close by to the palace, so they could enjoy themselves in their place, which was not in the brickyards with the majority. The temptation when all is comfortable is to sit and enjoy it, but they chose the path of God rather than the path of ease.

They hid Moses for the first three months and then he was carefully placed in a little wicker boat with a lid to cover him. It was covered in naturally occurring pitch or bitumen, (obtained by trade from the Dead Sea region) thereby made waterproof, but also the smell of the oil product disguising the smell of human flesh. This latter point was a vital one, for crocodiles infested the ancient Nile River and would eat anything close to the river, let alone floating on top of it. The family will pray a prayer like that of Nehemiah many years later as they place the basket in the best possible place, for only the Lord's overruling will see the child saved, rather than handed over to the guards for death in the river. Nehemiah 1:4-11.

The family had faith that God was going to do something special with this child, and that he could indeed be the deliverer of his people. They looked at a baby, but they saw the potential of what God could do with this little boy. They didn't just see a beautiful child, they saw a God-anointed child, and the man he would become once he had grown. They did all they could, even to the placement of the little wicker basket in the tall bulrushes by the royal walkway at the river's edge, within the palace grounds, where it was more likely to be found by a member of the Royal household. They had a sense that Moses was to be brought up by the royal household, and they risked death in/by the river to place the basket where it could be found by the right person. This is Holy Spirit-guided and directed work. By faith they act and do something that on the surface makes no sense at all.

Did all the women, or Miriam at least, work in the palace? It would appear so, for Miriam is spoken to by the staff of Pharaoh's daughter as if she belonged there as the maid servant of this great woman. It may be that she was positioned by the Lord as a servant in the household of this princess well in advance, so she could place the infant Moses in the right place. Did she know that Pharaoh's daughter was looking for a son? Possibly she did, the Lord having ensured she was promoted to the right place, in the right time, to overhear the right conversation, just as God would position Nehemiah and Mordecai in later days. Nehemiah 1:11, Esther 2:5-11. God is the weaver/potter. Isaiah 64:8, Jer 18:1-6.

All these things are exciting points of speculation, but the central point is to be seen clearly; the family members all looked at what God wanted them to do, and they did the task set before them. They used their positions of service to

serve the baby Moses. They saw their place of service as God ordained, and sought by faith to use it for the glory of God, in accordance with the Lord's plan, not their own plans. They sought the Lord's path for their life, and they were obedient to his leading within. This is our task daily also; to be "hungry" for what it is that the Lord wants to achieve through our place of service in our living quarters, and in our work place. Psalms 9:9, 12:5, 46:1-3, 76:10, Proverbs 21:1-2. As spiritual, rather than carnal believers, we seek to be of use in the Plan of God on our journey through space-time.

Verses 4 - 6. The risks taken here were great. If Moses cried too early the guards would find him and kill him. If he was lifted by the River current, his basket would become dislodged from the tall reeds and he would drift further into the delta region and be found and killed by man or beast, or in the sea beyond. If a crocodile entered this area of the river, either Miriam who placed him there, or the baby himself would have been killed.

Miriam may be only ten years of age at this time, and she shows great determination to serve the Lord, and her family, and real courage. It would have taken raw courage to place the baby in the river by the pool where the women of the royal household bathed. Their bathing pool was secure from crocodile intrusion, but the surrounding bulrushes were not!

The excitement I have within me is great as I read this story, like those of Nehemiah, and Mordecai and Esther, for in these accounts of events we see the hand of God guiding and protecting his people as they follow the leading of the Spirit. God protects us in our obedience, and guides the actions of others to weave together his plan. All that is required of us is quick and full obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit within. Ephesians 5:18.

Miriam waits out of the direct view of the women as they come down to bathe in the pool that was there at the River side of the Palace. You would not bathe in this river now, at any point, but in these days pollution would have been slight. The Egyptians collected all the animal dung from fields and roads, and moved it onto the fields, to ensure it soaked into the soil rather than being washed into the river, and toilets were also emptied onto the land, away from the river. Dead animals were dealt with hygienically, unlike today.

There was then, and is now, little or no rain on the land, and so no run off of the wastes from men or animals, and no litter polluted the river in that day. The river was clean for bathing, and this area was walled off from crocodile intrusion. It was the belief of the ancient Egyptians that bathing in the Nile (which had god status in their land) would prolong life and produce fruitfulness in childbearing. Guards would also be there, facing away from the women, but very alert to the River for danger from assassins or the ever present crocodiles.

This woman who comes to the river is left unnamed, but her title was only ever used by Hatshepsut, the only female Pharaoh, and my suspicion is that it was her who found Moses, but this is only to be known in heaven when we meet this queen. As has been mentioned above, speculation about the exact dates and identities of the rulers of Egypt is made particularly difficult due to their habit of erasing evidence of the previous pharaoh's deeds and their years of reigning, at times apparently claiming their predecessor's work and reign as their own. From the story that unfolds, it appears that Miriam has placed the baby just before dawn, and then waits until the women come for their morning bathing.

The women walk along the river's bank and they see the wicker basket and the queen asked one of her maids to go and get it. This is quickly done, and as they open the lid Moses, right on cue, cries softly. He is a beautiful baby and the queen has compassion upon him, and loves him. She knows exactly who he is, for no-one else would go to such lengths to hide their son. She has already determined to save this little boy and bring him up as her own. The Plan of God is working out, and Miriam and her family's faith is being seen to be well founded in the Holy Character of God, as he weaves the events into the right order with the right people and time frame.

Miriam is ready to move forward and does so as Moses is found. She is clearly a member of the household, as will be seen from the next interchange, and she is bilingual, and able to be respected by the Egyptians, speaking their language fluently, and clearly having a reputation as a good serving maid already, for her advice will be heeded. Had she not been a member of the household, nor had a good reputation, she would not have been listened to, but rather killed as an intruder to the palace. It is a reminder that our humble service is always to be solidly good and noble in our work place, for we do not know when we will be called upon to stand for God and speak up. At such a time we must be recognized as a good person and trustworthy, and so worthy to be heard.

Verses 7 – 10. Miriam has moved close in to the group now and she speaks, asking the question that she is ready to answer. This plan has been well thought/prayed through, and the Lord has ensured that it is fulfilled. She is able to ask the question about a wet nurse, and the queen agrees to the suggestion. Miriam runs straight home and calls her mother to come and be introduced to the palace as the wet nurse for the child. Moses' mother becomes his paid wet nurse and brings him up for the first year or two of his life.

Her faith is rewarded by her seeing his first two years at least, (weaning was around the second birthday, or even the fourth, in the ancient world) and then knowing that he will be brought up with the education of a pharaoh. Acts 7:22. God has been his protector. Psalms 27:10, Isaiah 46:3-4, Ezekiel 16:8. The baby boy is given the Egyptian name Moses, which in their language means "drawn out". The name in Hebrew becomes "Moshe", which means "drawer out".

Verses 11 – 12. The day moves rapidly onwards, and Moses by passes all the great deeds he did as a prince of Egypt, and moves only to that time when he confronts his discovery of his Hebrew origins and his wandering about amongst the Hebrew slaves in one of their building projects. Tradition records that he was forty years old at this time. Acts 7:23. Slavery has been the norm now for well over fifty years, and the cruelty of the task masters is casual and

routine. They beat the slaves without mercy, for they have been authorized to kill any who slack on the job, for the policy remains to slowly destroy the male work force over time, and so reduce the Hebrew people to women who can be intermarried amongst the lower classes of Egypt and so within a generation disappear as a people. Its genocide!

Moses feels righteous indignation at what he sees. Now the question must be asked, as to why he feels this, for he has been brought up as Egyptian, and must have been used to this sort of thing? The clue to the answer may be given by Moses here in verse eleven. He went to "look upon the burdens" of his people, and the implication is that this visit was for the first time. He had not seen his people for nearly forty years, being kept away from them, probably deliberately by his adoptive mother, and kept busy in other places of the Egyptian Empire.

The Hebrew slaves are working in confined projects and the majority may be living in separate camps, so like the Genocide of 1942-1945 in Germany, most people in the land were unaware of the mass murder being perpetrated on their door step. Even for those who lived intermingled with the local population, the poorer local people would have studiously avoided knowing anything that might cost them their lives at the hands of the guards. Their guilt at this may be a factor later in the readiness to give the Hebrews their gold and silver as they leave. Exodus 12:35-36.

Moses would have been used to having absolute authority, and being able to order anything he wished stopped immediately stopped, but on this visit to his old people he has apparently gone alone, and possibly in disguise. He observes an assault and takes immediate action, which as a prince of Egypt would be treated as the act of a god and he would have been in no danger of justice from pharaoh, had he acted as a prince of Egypt.

This day however, he is not there as a prince of Egypt, and he possibly is there against the orders of pharaoh, and he is acting as a Hebrew, not as an Egyptian. Worst of all he is acting in anger and outrage, not in accordance with the plan of God. God always seeks from us quiet thought, prayer and obedience to his plan. Our personal anger, even if righteous, does not bring praise to God, nor does God need our emotional actions to accomplish anything. We are called to act in obedience to his holy plan, not in accordance with our emotions at any time! All of us have an Old Sin Nature and are capable of great rage, and it will rarely be "godly", for anger is rarely godly!

Moses acts, kills the Egyptian and buries the body in the sand, but he forgets there are two witnesses to his actions; the self centred Hebrew he has saved, and the righteous God. Moses will learn, as many do to their shame, that saving someone from great evil does not win their loyalty. It is a weird but common psychological trait of the self centred, that they resent those who save them. It is a surprise to us at times, but many people who are delivered by the hand of another actually resent their rescuer and later turn upon them. Acts 7:23-26.

Verses 12 – 14. Moses looked every way except up as he buried the Egyptian official, but he also didn't understand human nature, for the man he saved will spread the story, and the truth of his actions will be dropped to a spy who will recount the story to Pharaoh. There has also been a power shift in the land by this time and the pharaoh seeks opportunity to remove Moses and ensure his candidate for pharaoh follows him, and not Moses. Tradition records that Moses was in line to be pharaoh had he secured the right support. It also records that he loved the great beauty Neferari, who was to be wife of Pharaoh and so next queen of Egypt, and his love was returned by her.

He faces the choice now as to what to do; does he stay and fight for the throne and the girl, or does he flee? Both options were live options for him. He would have had supporters in the palace, but much blood would have been shed, and he decides that the Hebrew's character, if these two men are an example of it, is not ready for the battle that would be fought to set them free. If his deliverance of one man creates this attitude of resentment and arrogance amongst the rest, then they are not worth the risks he would be taking.

In truth, he is right, and in God's plan they are not ready to be delivered yet, and Moses is also not ready to lead them yet. Moses sees that he has "blown it", and the only option is to flee. He has acted in haste, and he has forty years leisure to regret that haste! Even though he will beat himself up for his folly that day, the plan of God has actually continued without any hesitation, for Moses has things to learn, just as the Israelites have, and Midian is the Lord's teaching zone for Moses. There is no delay in the plan due to Moses actions – no-one was "ready" for the Lord to move – but in forty years they all will be ready. How many are there in many generations who seek the Lord? Few at times!

Verses 15 – 17. Moses heads for what is now Saudi Arabia; the biblical land of Midian. These people are also descendents of Abraham, but through Keturah. Genesis 25:2-4. He arrives there after a very fast and frantic journey, but still after many days, for he must move fast to escape the wrath of pharaoh. The pharaoh has taken the opportunity the murder of the official gives him to slay Moses, for then any claim to the throne from anyone other than his candidate is over. Moses flees for his life, but is still wearing Egyptian clothing when he arrives at a desert oasis and rests by the well.

Under Arab law he must not drink at the well until invited to do so by the well owners, or he will be killed, so he sits and waits for the owners to arrive. They arrive in the form of a number of herds and flocks in the evening. Moses is learning patience and self control already, for he must sit for many hours in the sun without water and wait. This prepares him to act without anger, but with appropriate violence, when the scene unfolds before him. He deals with the desert thugs and then draws water for the flocks of the girls, just as Jacob had many years before and he receives a similar blessing. Genesis 29:10. How he must have chuckled as he read the tablets when he received them later and wrote the Genesis account, for he saw the way God had prepared each of his men.

Verses 18 – 21. Moses father in law has two names given in scripture; both Rague/Reuel, and Jethro/Jether are used for this man. Exodus 3:1, 18:24, Numbers 10:29. The explanation is likely that Jethro / Jather was a title rather than a proper name, much like “Imam” in later history. It is his title as a priest or theologian of the One True God.

The girls are so excited to be delivered from the thuggish shepherds that they run back to their father the many miles to his hidden camp site, and tell him about this “Egyptian” who delivered them. Their father tells them off for leaving the man with the sheep, and sends them back to invite him back to their camp. Moses accepts his hospitality and stays with him, and the deal is, he gets the youngest daughter Zipporah for his wife, and with her, membership of their clan.

Verses 22 – 25. Moses now recounts the events in both places; his place of exile, where he has his first son, Gershom (meaning stranger/sojourner), and the events in Egypt where the Pharaoh dies. Even the death of the pharaoh does not change anything for the Israelites, for the genocide program rolls on through the years, with the people of Israel now seriously groaning for the burdens placed upon them. Think upon Moses family at this time, for they had hoped he would be the Lord’s deliverer for them, and now he has fled and they may have heard nothing of him for the next forty years.

It was possible to send a message in these days through traders, but it was most unlikely that Moses did keep in regular contact, for Egyptian spies would then have discovered him, and sent an army to locate and destroy him and his new family. The faith of Moses natural family is sorely tested by this silence, yet they hold true to their belief in the promise of old Israel, and Joseph, that they will be delivered and blessed, and become a great and independent nation in Canaan. Genesis 49:28ff, 50:22-26. Some message gets through, for his brother is ready to walk into the desert to meet him when he is called, but great care must have been taken in this matter. Only in heaven will we hear these amazing stories.

The people of Israel as a whole may think they are forgotten by God, but God never forgets his people, nor does he forget his promises to them. They are remembered all through this time, but the problem is they do not remember Him, nor express faith in his promises. They have Joseph’s coffin to go to each week and pray for the fulfilment of the words of the Lord to their ancestors, and that coffin is their “gospel” encouragement through these dark years of suffering.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God is not honoured by our anger, nor praised by emotion without thought behind it. Emotions are to be enjoyed when pleasant, and controlled when dangerous, but at no point in this life are they to be the guide to anything for action. We are called to think and pray and act upon what the Lord God shows through His Word and Spirit, never to do things because they “feel” right. Feelings are to be tested by doctrine and approved or disallowed. Emotional pleasures are provided for us by the Lord within our marriages and families and sporting life, but we are to be guided by our thought processes at all times. Philippians 4:8-13.
2. God provides the right people to meet us at the right time, when we are on the right path. The daughters of Rague/Jethro were there at the right time, and Moses was in the right place as part of the plan of God. The Lord provides the right people to assist us on his path. Let us be alert to all meetings with the people of God, for from each meeting may come a person who the Lord will weave into the fabric of our path and bless us and assist us.
3. Moses acts in haste, but this does not stop the plan of God. Moses didn’t look up, but God was looking down, and even though his actions were wrong, they did not stop the plan working out in his life, for he quickly deals with his sin, recognizes his fault, and makes the decision to forgo rebellion and bloodshed and seek the Lord’s face in the wilderness. He accepts his exile with great sadness, for he has lost, in human terms everything of value, yet he retains the most important thing; he remains in the plan of God for his life. This alone is to be our focus through this life.
4. Spirit led people, as man sees it, change the course of history, and fulfil their destiny before the Lord. God requires of us the courage to stand before Him with obedience and truth as our guide, and to do the things that are ahead of us on our path. We are not to live other’s lives, but seek and find and fulfil our own destiny before the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. The family have prayed about baby Moses and they have taken extra-ordinary care over him in the wicker basket, with Miriam standing by to be of use in the plan. Their prayer and their preparedness bring about the miracle of preservation that we read of here. God requires of us thought in all our actions and prayerfulness followed up by courageous action at times. Moses has a date with destiny, but each family member plays their part and rejoices in the grace and mercy of the Lord their God. If we would sing like the family of Moses did, we must be ready to serve and pray and step out on the faith path, as they did.
6. Moses must decide his destiny after the killing of the Egyptian taskmaster is discovered. Does he raise rebellion and seek by violence to do the Lord’s work, or does he admit the defeat of his human works plans and seek the face of God in the desert, and there gain further training in the solitude of the nights. He has been trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians but he needs the further training that God alone gives in the quiet places of the desert. God uses all our experiences.

REFLECTIONS UPON CONSECRATION

1. Consecration means full surrender of self to God. (Romans 6:13)
2. This is the attitude of "denying self", and this means that our prayer is, "not my will, but yours be done". (Matthew 16:24, 26:39, Galatians 2:20).
3. This attitude is the only acceptable gift to God. (Romans 12:1,2)
4. The consecration of the Temple is a picture of the believer's life: the Outer Court (the body), the Holy Place (the soul) and the Holy of Holies (spirit).
5. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and therefore must be set apart as a holy vessel for God's service in this life. (Romans 12:1-2 cf 1 Kings 8:1-11)

REFLECTIONS UPON OBEDIENCE

1. Obedience is better than offerings (1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3; 28:9). If we are not in God's will, any "worship" we offer is unacceptable.
2. Obedience is something you have to learn. The basic training in obedience has to start in childhood. As it says in (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) "Honour your father and your mother. " (Proverbs 4:3,4; 22:6; 29:15-17; Hebrews 5:8)
3. Teaching your child obedience is an act of love (Proverbs 3:12; 19:18; 23:13-14).
4. We have to obey those who are in authority over us (Exodus 20:12; 22:28; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16; Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-5; Colossians 3:18-22; Titus 3:1).
5. Those in authority have been put in that position by God (Romans 13:1).
6. Obedience to those in authority is obedience to God (Proverbs 24:21; Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 13:5).
7. Disobedience to those in authority is disobedience to God (Romans 1:30; 13:2).
8. But when we are ordered to do something that is against God's Will we have to disobey (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).
9. The fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) is the only commandment with a promise (Proverbs 10:17; Ephesians 6:1-3). Social life in a society is only possible when the people in it have learned to obey.
10. If this commandment is ignored, if the authority of the family is denied or not exercised, society will quickly slide into anarchy (Isaiah 3:12; Proverbs 29:21; 30:21-23; Romans 1:30).

REFLECTIONS UPON MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL STABILITY

1. God is able to keep us and bless us (Ephesians 3:20, Hebrews 7:25).
2. Stability comes when we know God; when we have grown up in his Word. Maturity brings with it stability (2Peter 3:18, 2Timothy 1:12).
3. The alternative to a stable life of faith is to be tossed about by every pressure; this occurs when there is no doctrinal application in the life (James 1:6, Ephesians 4:14, Revelation 3:8).
4. Believers need stability to stand fast against the wiles of Satan who is a danger to those with no doctrine: We are told to:
 - a) Stand fast in the word 1Corinthians 16:13.
 - b) Stand fast in our liberty Galatians 5:1 cf. Romans 14:1ff, 8:9-13.
 - c) Stand fast in one spirit (no pettiness) Philippians 1:27.
 - d) Stand fast in the Lord (in fellowship) Philippians 4:1.
 - e) Stand fast in doctrine 2 Thessalonians 2:5, 16,17.

5. Strength and stability comes in a close relationship with the Lord. By faith we stand: 2 Corinthians 1:24, Psalm 59:17, 62:7, 144:1.
6. God has supreme power at His fingertips for us. Isaiah 59:1.
7. Our faith should stand secure in this power, for we are kept by it in all things, therefore we should be confident. 1Corinthians 2:5, 1Peter 1:5, John 16:33.
8. God is able to make us stand through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the word in our lives. Romans 14:4, Jude 24.
9. Strength and stability come from the impact of the Holy Spirit's work upon the word in our life as we believe and apply it. e.g. Sarah Hebrews 11:11, Paul 2 Corinthians 12:8-10.
10. Profile of the stable believer under pressure 2 Peter 1:3-16.

REFLECTIONS UPON GOD'S COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS

1. God is in control. Nothing will ever happen to you as a Christian that you have not had the opportunity to develop resources to deal with. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
2. God's character is stable.
 - (a) if God is for you who can be against you. (Romans 8:31-34)
 - (b) no matter what happens God's love is stable. (Romans 8:35-39)
3. God's promises are secure for he is always with us. (Matthew 28:19-20, Jeremiah 1:19)
4. God's power is always the same:-
 - (a) He will always keep us. (John 10:29, 2 Timothy 1:12,)
 - (b) God does not forget us or lose His power to keep. (Jude 24)
 - (c) Even if we fall away from fellowship we still are saved. (2 Timothy 2:13)
5. God knew before time what we would need in time and has provided for the supply of all our needs. (Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12,)
6. God has the power to bless us. (2 Corinthians 9:8)
7. God is able to make all grace abound towards us. (Ephesians 3:20)
8. We should grow to the place of real confidence and blessing. (2 Peter 3:18)
9. We do this by feeding on His Word. (John 6:29, 33, 63)

REFLECTION UPON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

1. God's faithfulness is based on his unchangeability - Hebrews 13:8
2. God's faithfulness is renewed "every day" - Lamentations 3:21-24
3. His promises are sure. - Hebrews 10:23
4. The faithfulness of Christ continues even when we are unfaithful. - 2 Timothy 2:13
5. Christ is a faithful and merciful high priest - Hebrews 2:17
6. God is faithful to forgive sins - 1 John 1:9
7. God is faithful to keep us saved - 2 Timothy 2:13
8. God is faithful to deliver us through temptation - 1 Corinthians 10:13

9. God is faithful to keep His promises to us - Hebrews 10:23
10. God is faithful to us in suffering - 1 Peter 4:19
11. God is faithful in fulfilling His plan for us - 1 Thessalonians 5:24
12. God is faithful to strengthen us - 2 Thessalonians 3:3
13. God is the faithful partner of our union with Christ - 1 Corinthians 1:9
14. Christ is a faithful and merciful high priest - Hebrews 2:17
15. Jesus Christ is synonymous with faithfulness - Revelation 19:11

NOTES

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

THE CALLING OF MOSES

In Chapter 3 we have the burning bush incident. Here Moses said, "Here am I – I am ready now to be used under your orders". When the Lord calls you for a task, like Moses, you can be sure that He will provide plenty of education and practise, to enable you to be his missionary, teacher, preacher, mentor, or to be involved in leadership. He will provide you with the doctrinal support, the Holy Spirit's power, and the training program to ensure the learning is practical, not just theoretical. As Moses was trained and prepared, and encouraged by God, so will you be. At the right time you will receive the order to "move out" into service, and then you do so.

Moses was a very meek, or humble man, who did not think he was anything special, and was aware of his own smallness in the scheme of things, but he knew that God could do great things. He knew that God could do great things with him if he utilized God's power in accordance with God's plan. God says to us all, that we alone are nothing, but with his power and plan, we are going to be something. In Christ we are part of His plan from eternity past to eternity future. God said to Moses not to be concerned.

God promised that Moses would not be killed by Pharaoh, as He would bring him and the people he leads back to this mountain, Mt Horeb. In the wilderness journey for the people every point they will pass through will be a test for them; firstly there is too much water, the Red Sea, then too little water, then water that was bitter, that was turned miraculously into sweet water. Everywhere there was a test. Everywhere the people complained. What did Moses claim? He was able to claim the principle he would later record in Exodus 3:12.

In verse 13 Moses is full of questions about the task and about the one who sends him, including clarity over the name of God. In verse 14 God tells him that "I AM" has sent you. The name for God is given as JHWH, four letters in the Hebrew alphabet that when put together are difficult to know exactly how to pronounce, but which mean, I AM that I AM; I will always continue to be the one who I am. I AM the ever existing one. This name expresses the vast difference between God and Mankind. None of us can say I AM in this sense as only the Creator can say it. We are in space and time. God is beyond space or time, as the creator of both. Pause and reflect upon any worry in light of this fact!

In this verse we have the reflection of the eternity of the Lord which is also given in Genesis 1, John 1 and 1 John 1. As no one had seen God at any time the Lord Jesus Christ came to reveal Him to us. These verses encapsulate the mystery of the universe, and underline the need for the incarnation. Only as God makes himself known in human terms can we even talk about it. All talk about Him must be on His terms and rest on the basis of his revelation to us. We must rest in the truths the Lord reveals to us, and recognize our creature status – limited at this point in the history of the universe – limited by space and time.

THE TASK AHEAD

In verses 15-18 - Moses is starting to think about what he will do and say when he meets the Pharaoh. God gives Moses the whole agenda to follow for the process. If you are a teacher of God's Word you will have specific instructions as well; for as you study the text before you, the Holy Spirit will enlighten the message from the text, and it will be a specific message for you to pass on. Your call to be a preacher at the beginning of your walk will also be specific, as to what you are to teach and how you are to teach. What you need to do is to study God's Word and He will specifically teach you things from it and show you how to communicate it simply and directly in Holy Spirit power.

In the Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus, specific instructions regarding how you should conduct yourself as a pastor-teacher are given. By systematic examination of these and other Scriptures, God's way to conduct ministry will be made plain. We have God's instructions in writing just as Moses heard God audibly. Your job is to give out what God wants you to give out, nothing more, but also, nothing less.

The founder of the "Thru the Bible radio" network, Dr McGee had a great motto; it is, "The Whole Word for the Whole World". If you do not know what to do as a pastoral worker, it is because you are either, not called, not teachable, have not studied enough yet, or you are not ready to hear the Holy Spirit. Deal with any sin in your life that may be blocking your path, walk in the Spirit, and walk in and feed upon the Word of God, and so you will find out what God's will is for you. If it is to be a pastor, then the Lord will train you as he trained Moses, by providing the doctrinal truth and the opportunities to apply them into daily life.

The Character of God is the doctrine that can be applied to any situation. If you allow the truth about the wonderful and dependable character of God to overwhelm you and get to know him, then no matter what you face in life you will find the answer here in the Character of God. You should carry around a picture of the Holy Character of God in your mind. This is your spiritual survival kit.

TEXT

“3:1 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. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 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. 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. 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. 7 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. 9 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. 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? 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. 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? 14 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. 16 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. 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. 19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. 21 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.”

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 2. Moses is keeping the flocks of his father in law. He has become part of his clan and is in charge of the flocks, with possibly other shepherds to assist him, but on this particular day he is alone and close to a mountain called Horeb, which means “the dry and desolate place”. This mountain was identified in the fourth century as Sinai, but it’s most likely place is in what is now Saudi Arabia. It is in the midst of a vast pastoral area, for there is enough fodder for the animals of many flocks here, as we saw in the last chapter.

The Arabian Peninsula, even now supports many herds, and in the days of Moses was far more fertile and lush in the growing months, after the rains. We must keep remembering that even the Sahara desert in this day was less than 10% of what it is now, and vast areas now desert sand were once lush and fertile pastures with cities and villages dotting the landscape. Remember the identification of “Sinai” as Mt Horeb was made by Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, at least 1800 years after Moses! The most likely site for the real Mt Horeb is well within the borders of Midian/Saudi Arabia.

Moses is drawn to this great mountain and goes up it’s slopes, well away from his flocks on the plains below, but able to over see them. He may have been seeking a place for prayer, or simply a place for a better view of his herds and the neighbouring ones. As he looks at a bush before him it spontaneously catches fire before his eyes. This is not unusual in the desert there even today, but the event he witnesses is unlike any he has seen before, for the bush burned, but the leaves and twigs of the bush were not consumed in the fire. The fire was in the bush, yet the bush was still lush and green and untouched by the fire that burned within it. This was the sign that God was here, for only God could leave a bush alive and healthy after having a fire in the midst of it. Daniel 3:22-28.

Many of the servants of the Lord have been called from the sheep fold, or their work place in which they have learned patience, tenacity, logical thought and courage to follow through their task. Shepherds in this day spent the vast majority of their time on the hills under the sun and stars with their sheep and goats. They learned the lessons of patience, and the things that being alone under millions of stars teach a man. They learned their smallness before the creator God, the greatness of God, and the fragility of their human life.

In these desert places death can come quickly to the unwary, and the shepherd knew how to flee danger, and fight the wild animals that would prey on the sheep. He learned what was real and what was a mirage, and Moses knows that what he sees is not trick of the light, nor mirage, nor is it a sign that he has been to long in the sun; this is the call of God, as it had come to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Psalms 78:70-72, Amos 1:1, 7:14-15, Matthew 4:18-20.

From the midst of the fire, as will be seen later by Nebuchadnezzar, as is recorded in the Daniel 3 passage quoted above, the Angel of JHWH speaks to Moses from the midst of the fire. Who is the Angel of the Lord? The Biblical references to the Angel of the Lord make it clear that it is the pre-incarnate Christ.

He speaks from the midst of the fire as a sign of what he will do for us all; he will go through the fire of judgement for sin for us all. Genesis 16:7-13, 22:15-16, 48:16, Isaiah 63:7-9, Hosea 12:4-5. The promise given by the angel is that given to Abraham and the Patriarchs, and the angel’s message is that the time has come for the promise of God to be fulfilled and Moses is the chosen vessel to fulfil the promise. Acts 7:30-34.

Verses 3 – 4. He hears the crackling flame and sees it in the distance, and says to himself, that he will draw closer to see this strange and awesome sight of a bush burning, yet remaining unburned. Deuteronomy 33:16, Psalms 107:1-2, 8, 111:2-4. As he draws near he hears the Lord’s voice to him clearly calling his name. His answer is the appropriate, “Here I am”, which is best understood as, “I am here and listening to you Oh Lord!” 1 Samuel 3:1-10, Acts 9:3-7, 10:3, 13.

Verses 5 – 6. Moses is advancing towards the bush, and even after he has heard his name, he keeps looking intently at it, as men who are stunned by an event tend to do. All this stops when the order comes to him; “stop in your tracks, do not come any closer!” Not just this, but then, “take your shoes off, for you stand upon holy ground”. At that point Moses bows himself towards the earth and does not even dare to look back towards the bush, lest he see the face of God and blow apart. It was the firm belief of the ancients that to see God was to be face to face with death; that no-one could see the creator and survive. In this they were right, for they saw that when the infinite one touches time, time dissolves! It was common to take ones shoes off on entering temples and holy places, and so that was not a surprise, and is a habit maintained by the Moslem faith today in all Mosques.

The Lord then makes it clear that he is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Remember Jesus’ words in Matthew 22:29-32. This is an important thing here, for this is the Angel of JHWH speaking, and indicates that, if this is the Lord Jesus Christ in pre-incarnate form then the Lord Jesus is the God of Israel, and the ancestors are “alive” in heaven watching on! Zechariah 9:9, 14, 12:10ff, 13:7ff, Hebrews 12:1-3. This is Zechariah’s point, and his confident expectation is that one day the people will recognize the one who they pierced and accept him for who he is. Moses immediately accepts him as his Lord and does not lift his head again until the Lord stops speaking. He experiences the power and majesty of the Lord his God, and like Daniel he is awe struck. Daniel 10:7-9. Also refer to Isaiah 6:1-7. What a contrast to those who claim to have seen visions today.

Verses 7 – 8. The Lord’s message to Moses is that he has heard and has answered the prayer of his people, and that answer involves Moses. God has seen their suffering, heard their now genuine prayers, and has moved now to start the process of deliverance. Moses is the chosen agent. Moses hears that the Lord will now move to deliver

his people and that it will be accomplished, for it is to be done in God's power and not man's. God is the deliverer of his people. Psalms 18:9-19, 20:5-9, 22:4-5, 34:8-11, 91:14-16, Isaiah 64:1-4.

The Lord's promise is to deliver them into the land of Canaan, but also there is a warning, that it is presently inhabited by the Canaanites, who will not be happy with their loss of the land. The land was given in the days of Abraham, Genesis 15:18-21, but the "iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full". Genesis 15:16. There was hope for salvation for these people and the Lord used Abraham, and possibly Jacob also, to lead some to faith, but by the date of the Exodus, there were few who could be saved; such was their decision making regarding spiritual things.

There will be people saved from amongst these people even yet, (Rahab and the Gibeonites) reminding us that the Lord does not write off all the people of a corrupt group, but seeks to save the lost, no matter how bad their surrounding evil. Every person's fate hangs in the divine balance, and the Lord judges all individually, according to their choices. **Isaiah 1:18, 38:17, Jeremiah 15:1-4, Ezekiel 16:51-52, Daniel 19:16-24, Matthew 18:11, Luke 19:10.**

Remember, in the midst of the carnage of war, that any children killed are automatically with the Lord; there is no ritual required for the children to be delivered through death to the arms of the Lord. The evil of man that leads often to the death of the innocent does not stop the grace deliverance of God. 2 Samuel 12:15-23, Matthew 18:2-6, 10.

Nehemiah, over a thousand years later, reflects upon this phase of their history in Nehemiah 9, and the battles that must be fought to obtain the Lord's promise. They do not just walk in and take possession, but have to fight for their inheritance and deal with the enemies they find there. Life is not handed to us on a plate, but it must be fought for and agonized over at times. We are here to work, not put our feet up and relax. This is a reminder of the need to daily have our armour on for the battles in this life. **Ephesians 6:10-18.**

Verses 9 – 10. Moses is stunned by this. His shock and paralysis is indicated by these verses, for in effect the Lord says, "get moving". In verse nine he is told, "behold", and the message is repeated that the cry for deliverance of the people is heard by God. It is as if Moses has not taken it all in, and so the Lord is saying to him, "Get this clearly – I have heard!" Moses is the author of this book, and as we go through we will see examples like this that show him to be a humble man who did not shrink from exposing his own weaknesses to his audience.

Whereas the pharaohs of Egypt never spoke of their failures, Moses will speak often of his short comings, for his focus is to educate those who he leads, not pretend he is beyond personal problems. Moses is just like us, and we can all be slow to learn and apply the Word at times. Moses life is a message of grace and forgiveness; of failure and power. Like Paul he urges his people to follow him into the path of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:1ff, Philippians 3:12-17.

At times it may appear that there are no godly people left, but that the evil people rule and predominate in society. Certainly the Psalmist felt that. Psalms 12:1-8. The Lord however hears the prayers of those who are oppressed and he leads them through to the victory he has for them. 1 Corinthians 10:13, Romans 8:28. It is a foolish thing to oppress the poor and steal from those who are weaker, for the man who thinks he can prosper this way will be unhinged and overturned. Proverbs 22:16, 22-23, then read, Proverbs 21:29-31.

God is going to deliver his people, in accordance with his promise, and Moses is a part of this plan. He is challenged to hear the words of the Lord, take them in, and be ready to move straight back to Egypt and confront Pharaoh. Moses does not hide the fact that he is still in shock as he hears these words, and he will seek support for this mission, for he fears that he is unable to do it by himself.

Now he is right in this fear, for he does not have the human strength to do this, and we also lack the human strength to do what God requires. The Lord will strengthen him, and he doesn't need any human help. He will, in grace, be granted help, but the human help he receives (from his brother Aaron) lets him down, and poor Aaron fails to stand for truth under pressure. Exodus 32:1-6. As we will see, the Lord's challenge to us all is that we do not allow ourselves to be seduced into easy error, but stand for truth, even if we stand alone. **Mark 13:31-32, 2 Timothy 2:1-10, 3:1-17, 1 John 2:21-28.**

"Come now therefore", the Lord tells Moses, "you are going to speak to Pharaoh". This is a direct way of saying, "let's get moving now Moses!" It is clear from Moses response to all this that he doesn't like the idea at all. He has got used to his quiet life in Midian, and does not seek the excitement of the Exodus. Moses will be a reluctant deliverer, and this in itself can give us all hope and encouragement.

The Lord does not expect us to be totally motivated and excited about the path forward, because the Lord does not need our emotional commitment to anything! God seeks our obedience only, and he will add the joy later. **1 Samuel 12:6-9, Psalms 77:13-20, 103:5-17, Isaiah 63:11-14, Hosea 12:13, Micah 6:3-4.** He seeks our quiet and systematic obedience to his plan, not any excited babblings and pretend "hallelujahs". Moses is worried and he takes his worries directly to the Lord. He knows that he needs God's strength to succeed. 1 Peter 5:6-7.

Verses 11 – 12. Moses is humble, not arrogant, and yet in human terms he had every reason to be filled with good pride, for he had been a prince, had been a great general, had served as an architect. He had won battles, built great buildings, but all he saw was a man who needed God's strength or he would fail again, as he did in the killing of the taskmaster! Moses must learn a principle of service that each of us must learn if we would accomplish the great things God has before us.

Biblical service is rooted and grounded in the power and plan of God, and the humility of the servant! Let us examine some examples of this; firstly David. 1 Samuel 18:18, 2 Samuel 7:18-25. Solomon in his early days also had this humility, and he was great while he had it, and fell when he started to believe in his own publicity! 1 Kings 3:4-15, 11:1-10. Isaiah also had to see that his birth and intelligence were useful but not the cause for any pride, but that the Lord in grace had chosen him. Isaiah 6:1-10.

Jeremiah also had to learn that he was to serve in the Lord's strength, not his own, and that fear is no excuse to hold back. Jeremiah was told bluntly that he was to let the Word of the Lord loose amongst the people, and then he would see what God's mighty power would accomplish through it. Jeremiah 1:1-12, 17-19. Note also Paul's words about whose power he needed and rejoiced in. 2 Corinthians 2:12-17, 3:4-6.

Moses asks for serious help. He sees that he has no right to stand before Pharaoh, indeed he would expect to be executed immediately, let alone have any chance to deliver his people and lead them out of the greatest nation upon the earth. The Lord gives him the assurance that he will be with him, and gives him a faith promise to cling to through the months ahead; that he will lead the people, and he will bring them to this very mountain. The promise that, "I will be with you", is that given to the patriarchs, and passed on to Joshua and the next generation. Genesis 15:1, 31:3, Deuteronomy 31:23, Joshua 1:5-7. This is the promise of God to all his servants. Isaiah 41:9-10, 13-15, 43:1-13, Matthew 28:20.

Verses 13 – 14. Moses is now thinking about the task, and thinks of the things that could go wrong with these people. He has experience that they challenge and moan, and so he knows he needs to come with his credentials ready to be placed before them. He needs to know the Lord's given name to use before these people, for if the elders have detailed information from Abraham and want to check Moses out the first thing they will check out is the way God identified himself.

At this point Moses has no access to any of the tablets that will form part of the books of the Pentateuch, and it would appear he does not even know the proper name of the Lord God who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is an encouragement to all who believe that unless they have a significant degree in theology that they cannot speak to God or of God, and nor can they hear from God. God needs our submission/humility/obedience – not another degree! We learn.

From Genesis 32:29-30, Exodus 6:2-8, and Judges 13:6, 17, it would appear that the Lord God was known by the proper title "EL", but that the angel of the Lord made it clear that his name was a secret one at that time. The Lord will now give Moses a new name to call him by, and for the people to ponder on and reflect upon it's meaning.

That name is JHWH, a name which, as we identified in the introduction, was a holy name, and not pronounced aloud, but understood as signifying the absolute otherness of the creator God. The Lord spells it's meaning out for Moses. It means the "self existing one", the one who is by nature of His own being; the only one who is what He is, whereas all other life forms are as they were made by Him.

It is a philosophical confrontation with the limits of man and the infinity and eternity of the Creator and Saviour God. The people need to confront their limits and bow before the one who is, and was, and is to come! Psalms 8:1-9. Only when they confront their limits will they be ready to stop moaning and start obeying. Many names of the Lord are used throughout their history; each signifying different aspects of the Lord's character, plan and power. Psalms 68:3-4, 90:1-2, Proverbs 30:1-6, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 44:6-8, Jeremiah 23:5-8, Matthew 1:20-25, 28:20, John 8:54-59, Revelation 1:4, 8, 17-18.

Verses 15 – 16. The exact phrases to use with the elders are now given by the Lord for Moses to use. He is to use the continuity of the message and plan that flows through the Patriarchs as his starting point, and the fact that God is going to bring them out of Egypt as his end point. Genesis 17:1-8, 50:24-25.

The anchor point for the people is the promise made to Abraham, and Moses is to base his message upon that and remind the people that the Lord repeated that promise to each of the Patriarchs, and that finally Joseph expressed his faith in this and left his body unburied as a testimony to his faith in that. Moses remembers the call he received many years later and it forms the start of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 1:5-13. God's name will be the reminder of his call to Moses and to his people, and the special name given here will remind them through the centuries that they have a role to play in the plan of God. Psalms 72:17-19, 135:13, 145:1-13. This last Psalm is a worthy song of praise to the glory of the name, and person, and work of the Mighty God.

Verses 17 – 18. God's promise is specific and sure; they will be brought up out of their affliction in Egypt and they will be brought through to a land flowing with all the good things they desire for life and health and agricultural prosperity. Genesis 15:13-21, 46:2-4, 50:23-24. The challenge for the Exodus Generation is to believe the promise and follow through on it with the expectation that what God has said, God will do. They are to be challenged in the desert places to move through the temporary hardships and suffering of the long march and see the promises that the Lord will deliver them and bring them through to the place of blessing. They are to express faith in action and move forward and seize the land. Sadly, they will lack the faith to follow Moses through to the end, and sadly, even later generations will fail to live up to this legacy. Jeremiah 2:1-8, Hebrews 2:6-10, 3:16 – 4:11.

The message to the pharaoh is also specific. Moses is to go to see him with all the elders of Israel backing him up, and is to ask for permission to journey three days into the wilderness in order to worship the Lord there. They are to request this

directly of pharaoh. Now pause here and ask, why would the Lord ask them to say this, for the plan finally involves permanently leaving Egypt? Why just request a three day journey and religious festival-worship time, then a return. Why ask for a two week religious holiday? (Three days out, seven days on the ground there, and three days back). As we go through the story of the Exodus we will see the answer to this question.

The initial request to Pharaoh is this reasonable one, and had it been granted, there would have been blessing for pharaoh and for Israel, and their eventual return with mutual blessing. The plan calls for pharaoh to be offered this reasonable request after 100 years of slavery, but his heart will become hardened, and so the demand for total emancipation will emerge over time. The offer is legitimate, but God knows it will be rejected, and so the final demand will be total release of all slaves; the first request is educational for both pharaoh and the Israelites. This request prepares the way for the Israelites to see that there is no compromise with the pharaoh; that no reasonable solution is possible, and that they must then leave and never return.

Verses 19 – 20. Moses is now told that this initial request will not be granted; pharaoh will not let them go for any religious festival, nor will he tolerate the thought that they might leave permanently. God is absolutely sure of this and makes Moses see that he is to ask for something that will not be granted, but he is still to ask for it. The plan is to be followed, even though there is no chance of this happening initially.

Why doesn't Moses skip this then and go straight to the final and real request? The reason for this is clear above; the pharaoh must learn about what it is to argue with God, and the Israelites must learn that their God is the ruler of the heavens and the earth. They both must learn who they are dealing with through Moses. Pharaoh sees his own "mighty hand" and he lifts it up against the people, but God's hand is mightier. Nehemiah 9:9-10, Psalms 105:27, 37-38, 106:6-7, 136:10-12, Isaiah 63:11-16.

It will be a power confrontation that is to be played out between the God of the universe and the gods of Egypt. As we will see below, each and every major god of the Egyptian pantheon will be judged by the Lord God through the plagues that come.

Verses 21 – 22. The promise of the Lord is that they will not just slink away from Egypt, but will go with blessing from the Egyptians, who will pay them their back wages for the last 400 years in gold and silver. As the Israelites go they will plunder their Egyptian neighbours and take their gold and silver, but they will not have to use violence to do this, for the Egyptians will happily give them their wealth just to get rid of them. They will finally be happy to see them all go, although pharaoh will hate the very thought of their departure to the last second, and will lose an army as a result. Psalms 105:37ff, 106:46, Proverbs 16:7, Acts 7:10.

The word used here translated "borrow" in relation to the gold and silver is a Hebrew word meaning more "demand, or earnestly require", than borrow, for there is no indication of return in this word. They are told to decorate their children with the jewellery they seize on that last day. Exodus 11:2, 12:35. These goods are back wages and they are entitled to seize this wealth, as they have made it for the Egyptians and have been robbed of their wages for 100 years at least. Remember God hates those who do not pay their workers correct wages and short change those who they owe money. Exodus 21:19ff, 22:7-8, Leviticus 19:13, Jeremiah 22:13, Malachi 3:5.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God is able to get our attention, but the more dramatic the manner is the more demanding the task will be. Many today seek dramatic encounters with the Lord, but they do not realise what such a thing entails. Few get spoken to like Moses, for few are asked to do what he was asked to do. The Lord still speaks directly into the heart of each believer, and our job is daily to submit ourselves to the discipline of Bible study and so let the Holy Spirit loose in our life. Then we are to simply obey all that is revealed without seeking drama.
2. Moses learned humility under the stars of Arabia. He learned, as did David and records in Psalms 8, that real service begins when you realise fully who you are and who God is. True and powerful service begins when you depend on the power of God in accordance with the plan of God, and put away all your plans and schemes.
3. Awesomeness is a mark of a true encounter with the Lord, for He is holy. Moses learns to quickly take his shoes off before the Lord. He learns that the Lord is holy and he needs to bury his face in the dirt and listen to the words of the Lord in quietness and concentration. We take our faith as to casual a thing in today's world, and we need to rediscover the holiness of God if we would find the power that drove Moses forward in the plan of God for him.
4. God hears and answers our prayers, but it may not be on our time frame, for He answers prayer in accordance with His plan and purposes. The people of Israel are heard, and so are we as we pour our heart out to the Lord. Our task in our moans and groans is to seek the Lord's path through the troubles we face, for we have God's Word on it; there is a path through every situation, for if we are on God's path for our life it is "His path" – His Plan, His Provision, His Power.
5. Moses needed serious help to complete the task and so do we to complete the task before us, and he and we are given that in the person and power of the Holy Spirit. Let us advance through this day with the confidence of the power of the one who can carry us through all things.

REFLECTION UPON THE TRUE NATURE OF SATANIC RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgment, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26)
2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly, for they speak his nonsense, not God's truth. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-
 - a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
 - d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-
 - a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
 - d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
 - e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
 - f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
 - g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
 - h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

NOTES

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

Moses was a great man, and he had his failures, as well as his successes, and his honesty and humility meant that he recorded these alongside his triumphs, for he saw all his life as a testimony to the grace, mercy and power of God. Moses and the other great believers we will meet through the Pentateuch are not like plaster cast saints, being stable and powerful all the way through their life, and never making a mistake. These were men and women like us, who had bad days and failed to be the people they could have been, yet were still trophies of God's grace, just as we are.

They were the type of people you could sit down comfortably with, and share your heart with. If these great people made the errors as they recorded them in the Scriptures, we should be encouraged, for there is hope for us all. Moses message to us is that when we fail God, and fall into stupid sin, that He is not finished with us, but will knock upon the door of our heart to get us to repent and be restored to fellowship with him again. Romans 8:26, 1 John 1:5-10, Revelation 3:19-22. To achieve this we have to confront and confess our sin, put it behind us, and get moving forward again in obedience to God.

David for instance, like Moses and Abraham, was called a friend of God, yet he also sinned badly. None of these men were cast away by the Lord and sent to hell for their failures, but were restored after their confessions to grace and life, and have been enjoying eternal life with the Lord ever since. They recognized their sin and confessed it and returned to the place of blessing.

Our view of the Lord our God is often far away from the biblical viewpoint of a loving father. We can be too easily influenced by past preachers who loved "hell fire and damnation" sermons, where as judgment is God's strange work, and salvation and mercy is His preferred work. Exodus 20:6, Isaiah 28:21, John 3:16-17. Let us not follow after the fashions of men, but the grace, mercy, love and plan of God.

God does not expect you to be always perfect, but he does expect you to be honest about yourself, and be obedient to his holy demands. **Psalms 26:2, 90:12, 103:14, Isaiah 41:8, 1 Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5, James 2:23.** To be honest with God means we deal with our sins and shortcomings and we speak to our Lord in prayer knowing that He knows we are dust, and meets us where we are.

FACING OUR FEARS

In Exodus 4:10 Moses is found to fall short of the faith needed to advance in obedience alone to do the work the Lord has called him to complete. God had already given Moses three signs that there was enough power to accomplish the task; the rod into the snake, the leprous hand, and the water into blood. Moses now says that he is not eloquent. Moses was scared and so low in self esteem that he doubted his ability to follow through, even with the Lord's power behind him. He had lost his former arrogance and confidence as a prince, but has swung too far into the humility area to be, at this point, unable to apply faith into his own life experience and see himself as God sees him.

2 Timothy 1:7 tells us that God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and sound mind. When a believer is in fellowship and, through faith in Bible doctrine, has confidence in God, there is no fear, only a focus on the plan for their life. Fear, when not eliminated by faith, will always lead to failure to achieve the best God has for us. **Romans 8:15, 1 Corinthians 16:10, 1 John 4:18, Revelation 1:17.**

Fear comes when you lack doctrinal understanding, or faith in the truth; this is in itself the evidence of disobedience. To operate under the influence of fear is therefore a sin. It is one of the key sins in God's view point, for it means that you do not believe in God's Word; you do not trust the one who went to the Cross for you. If God says something, then He is going to do it. If He gives you a task as a believer He will give you the strength and tools to do it.

As a Christian our job is to do what God has told us to do and not to worry about it. He is the one who gives us a job; it is His job not ours, and that means supply of resources is His responsibility. He is responsible for us to be able to do the job, give us the resources and keep us alive, and bring us through to victory. We are ambassadors here, and the ambassador of a nation does not support themselves, the home government does. We are supported from heaven with all the resources of the one who made the universe at our prayer request.

MOSES FEELS THAT HE IS INADEQUATE

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you cannot die until the Lord wants you to die, therefore why do we worry about dying? Our lives are in the Lord's hands, so why do we act many times as if we are in danger that God cannot handle within his plan for us? Moses says to the Lord that he stutters, and his anxiety disorder will hinder the work he is to do. Now the Lord God has made it very clear that He the Lord God wants him to speak to His people. Having called Moses to this task, he is well able to solve the stuttering problem, and if he does not solve the problem, then the Lord will be glorified in the stutter. 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Moses obviously was not slow of speech in Egypt when he was a prince of Egypt, but after 40 years in the desert, he apparently had lost confidence in his earlier eloquence. What was Moses' mistake here? He is tongue tied. The Lord

says to him, "Who made men's mouth"? God has given Moses the job. If God knew that he could not do the job, would He have given it to Moses? The doctrinal answer is clear, and it is a resounding "no, of course not!"

Do we tend to think this doctrinal way? Sadly the answer in most of our lives is, "no", we are often just like Moses, and so we tend to panic. This is Moses recording his failure, and for most of us it will be a real encouragement. God tells him to go and when the time comes, He will look after him. Moses says, send someone else Lord, not me. God replies that if that is the way that Moses wants it he will miss out on blessing and Aaron will do the speaking, and so he will receive the blessing. Aaron will tell the people what Moses tells him to tell them; that is what God has told Moses.....

When you lack faith and falter the Lord is not going to hang on and wait for you, nor are you going to miss out on His plan, but you will lose the best He has for you. You are either moving with Him, or He is moving around you. You are either going to go with Him and be blessed, or someone else is going to get the blessing that could have been yours. Our lack of faith and follow through on the instructions the Lord gives us, leads to our living "second best" lives. We are saved, in the place of joy, and blessed forever, but we have not got the full blessing that was there for us in the plan.

The vast majority of believers end up sitting on the shelf, when they should be walking out in faith. Moses' excuse made sense, unless you remembered who you were dealing with. By grace you are saved and by grace you live. If the door opens for service in front of your nose, then walk through it in the strength of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Do not moan that you lack resources, walk through in faith and pray for the Lord to meet your needs on the way.

You can tell the Lord that you do not feel worthy of it, but then acknowledge, "Lord, you have opened the door and you are my Lord, I want to walk through it in your strength. If you do not want me to go here, then please close the door. Lord please provide all I need on this journey of faith through the richness of your grace plan. Amen (Lord make it so)." You recognise, as you say these things, that while you cannot do the tasking of the Lord in your own strength, in Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and the grace provision within the Father's plan, then all of the things you are ordered to do are possible.

Moses, who has failed the Lord when he killed the Egyptian, is now ready to obey, and even though it is with reservations and fear, he is moving forward, and he will be blessed in his faith. When you fail it does not stop the Lord's work if you recognise the problem, confess your lack of faith as sin, and keep moving forward. Recognise, confess, move on in faith and obedience, and so learn the lessons that will enable the Lord to lift you up again.

Moses has "mustard seed" faith at this point, but he applies it and moves onwards now towards Egypt and his date with destiny. As he moves forward the Lord will strengthen his faith. This is how the Lord works with us all. We grow stronger as we exercise the spiritual muscles of faith. Matthew 17:19-20, Luke 17:5-10.

TEXT

"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. 2 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 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. 4 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: 5 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. 6 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. 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. 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. 11 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. 13 And he said, O my LORD, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send."

REFLECTION

Verses 1- 4. Moses is desperate about the request the Lord has made of him. We could even say he is beside himself with fear that the people of Israel will not believe him at all, or even remember him as an Israelite, except as a loser who fled to escape certain death. Moses is of course right from a human perspective; for his introduction to his people was at best report a disaster the last time he made himself known to them. He has had forty years to feel a loser and a failure and he certainly feels it on this day.

His feelings are absolutely understandable, for he had failed to make any mark at all upon the people when he walked amongst them forty years before, at his prime as a prince, and was simply a fugitive by the third day of his visiting with them. Moses feels that they will never accept him, and he is right; unless the Lord opens this door by his own mighty power, then there will be nothing but a big yawn from the people if Moses comes back.

Moses is clear in his mind; they will say, "God has not spoken to you!" He knows that unless there is supernatural evidence that he is a changed and that he is a divinely powerful man, that there is no way that he will be accepted as anything at all, other than a "has been". Moses knows that these people are even more sceptical of divine things than they need to be. Now it is important for people to be sceptical of claims that a person has, "come from God with a divine revelation", and that all who claim divine appointment are checked out.

As Jesus said, "by their fruits you shall know them". Matthew 7:13ff. We are to check out all who claim to speak for the Lord, and we are to test their lives for righteousness and their words for biblical truth. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 John 4:1, 2 John 7-11.**

The Lord will give him three definite miraculous signs to use when he speaks with these people to certify his credentials as a prophet before the Lord. It is important that he be certified, and by more than his word that the Lord has spoken to him. If the Lord has indeed visited a man, then that man will be transformed and be able to manifest specific power and influence to demonstrate to all that he is indeed a God anointed man. The Lord will give him three very specific signs of his anointing.

The first is the ability to turn an inanimate object into a living and dangerous snake. This is a powerful indication that the Creator of all things has sent Moses. The snake was the symbol of Lower Egypt, where the capital of the nation was in this day, and so the sign of a snake being "made" from a piece of wood was of special significance to these people.

When the miraculous transformation occurs for the first time Moses runs from the snake, for it is a deadly variety that God makes from the staff. Each time the Lord does this the snake that is formed is a killer, and each time Moses casts his staff down it must be picked up by the tail to return to its form as a staff again. For those who think Moses is a sissy here, remember his staff is at least six feet (2 metres) high and the staff becomes a snake of the sort that is worshipped in Lower Egypt; it becomes a 2 metre long Egyptian cobra! This is a snake, that if you don't get out of its way quickly, then you are dead! Moses must express faith to pick the snake up immediately.

The rod, or staff, in the hand of Moses was his sign or symbol of rulership, just as the snake was the sign of kingship amongst the Egyptians. Moses will still prove himself a prince amongst the Egyptians, but by God's power, not by pharaoh or his daughter's power. His adoption as a prince of Egypt is now an irrelevance, but his membership of the royal family of God is now his passport to rulership over the nation of Israel that God will form under him.

Moses must formally put aside his background as a prince, and also all his fears that centre in his being a fallen hero, and see that he is now a new creation in his Lord, and he has a new hope and direction in his Master's Plan for his life from this point onwards. **2 Corinthians 5:17.**

Verses 5 – 8. The purpose of the sign is that the people may believe that the Lord God of their fathers has spoken to him and sent him to them to deliver them. A sign has a purpose and it is not to entertain but arrest attention and focus the mind on the speaker's words. The people are to be commanded to hear, believe and apply the truth. The sign is given to them that they might have evidence of the truth spoken by the man who picks up the snake by the tail.

In case they think this is a trick of a magician the Lord will give them another two signs which will certify Moses as who he claims to be. They need at least two or three witnesses and as they will not be able to wait long enough to check out his life witness these will be the grounds for their immediate belief in his words. **Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15, 2 Corinthians 13:1.**

The next sign was one of disgust and despair to all in the ancient world. The incurable disease of the day was leprosy, and once it had infected even the slightest area of skin the person so infected was separated from society and had to wander away from civilization for the rest of their life. It was the symbol of sin and evil's effect upon man and always led to death. A cure of leprosy was a miracle by definition.

To give yourself leprosy and then cure it again was another great challenge to faith, for once leprosy was on the body you were unclean, and the last thing you did was bring the infected arm into contact with any other part of the body, let alone bring it back into the chest. Moses is challenged to place himself outside the society of his day and give himself an incurable disease and then act to cure himself of it again. This is another faith challenge; Moses is challenged to believe that the Lord can heal, and wipe away all the stain of sin and the legacy of evil and disease. The Lord can handle all man's needs. Moses will not need to use this sign, but the Lord will directly use it to certify him! **Deuteronomy 32:36-41, 46-47.**

The Lord makes it clear that if the people do not listen to Moses with his first sign, then they are to be shown the second one and they will believe that one. God will use this sign to certify Moses when he gets under attack from Aaron and Miriam, who get offended at his marriage to an Ethiopian woman during the Exodus. Moses is humble and quiet about his life, but these two attack him and the Lord strikes Miriam with leprosy from head to toe and she stays that way for seven days outside the camp before she is healed and restored to them, and the people learn that Moses is their prophet and leader from God indeed. Numbers 12:1-15. The disease of leprosy had special sacrifices that were to be offered when a person was healed. The disease will sometimes spontaneously remit, but the cure of leprosy was a messianic sign, such was the rarity of it. When the Lord Jesus himself cured the Leper these sacrifices were done and the entire nation would have heard – such was its significance. Matthew 8:2-4, Leviticus 14:1ff.

Verses 9 – 13. The third sign is given if the first two fail to catch the attention of the people. The Lord is going all the way to get these people of His to hear the truth and respond to it. Many feel the Lord is too harsh and tough on His people, but the evidence of His gracious love is here; three signs are given that no-one can be in any legitimate doubt about who Moses is. Reflect upon this for a minute and remember that the Lord gave more than thirty evidences of his Messiahship through miracles, let alone through his teaching and life example.

The third sign is a judgment of the sacred river of Egypt itself. The river Nile was the place Moses began his life and was delivered from the river by the actions of his parents and sister. It was sacred to the Egyptians and for it to become blood was for the sacred to become unclean and polluted. Of course with the baby Israelites being thrown in the river for the crocodiles to eat the river turned to blood in places at times as the children were eaten, but as they had done so would be done to them. Moses was to pour the water upon the dry land away from the river and there it would become blood. It was a sign that God's judgment was to be upon the land and waterways of Egypt and that He was ruler over all the natural forces of the land and river.

Having seen three great miracles of deliverance from death, from disease, and over all the powers of nature, Moses is in the right place to ask for healing for his speech impediment. It makes sense for Moses to ask the Lord to heal him of his speech problems, for the Lord has demonstrated mastery over all the powers of the created world as their creator and Lord.

As baffling as it reads the next thing Moses says is very common amongst foolish men. They can apply the lessons of faith to others but not to themselves. Moses makes a right fool of himself here; why not ask for healing? He has difficulty speaking, so what!

God made him and can heal him. Moses misses the opportunity for healing, for the Lord is gracious and will give him what he asks. He asks for help to speak and so Moses assigns Aaron to help him. Aaron will let him down and finally die under judgment, although as a believer, but he will not be the best man he could have been for Moses, even though he is his brother. A number of key times Aaron will fail, but he will teach us about grace and forgiveness, and encourage.

Moses didn't need Aaron, but he fails to ask for healing for his stutter, so he gets what he asks for, and the Lord really chides him for not asking for healing here. When we face such choices, what is our heart's desire? Do we seek the lifting up of the Lord, or do we seek the support of a man? Always seek the miracle of the Lord when He has called you into mighty service, for the Lord wants us to express our faith in expectation of the miraculous whenever it is needed.

The Lord delivers in accordance with His mighty plan and purposes, and He directly orders Moses to move out and trust the Lord to open up his mouth and make him the eloquent prince amongst men that he used to be when he was an Egyptian. Moses doesn't shut up at this point and still asks for help! When God says "move out", we are wise to move out in faith and trust the Lord to deliver. Moses fails here, and we can also if we do not move in the power of the Holy Spirit, but his failures (and Aaron's at times) do not stop the plan of God, and neither do ours!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. When we need a miracle, then we are to ask for one from the Lord. If the Lord has placed us in an impossible place, then we are to in confidence go to prayer and expect the miracle of God's provision. The Lord is able to do all things and expects us to believe that and move out into the place of called service with that confidence. If you face an impossible situation today, praise the Lord and move forward in faith that He will open the door of provision and pray with God's people for the Lord's deliverance.
2. When God calls, He will always provide all we need to meet the requirements of that call. If there is not the support or finances to advance, then we are called to prayer and focused work in the field of endeavour and simply keep moving forward in the faith that the provision will arrive in time.
3. Signs are given to certify the Lord's key people. If one is needed, then one will be provided. If no sign comes when we think we need one, then we do not wait around, but simply apply ourselves to the work the Lord has given and leave the timing of things to Him. We are called to work, and so let us do so.
4. Moses staff is the symbol of his ruling authority over the nation. He must cast it down before the people who would cast him down as a fake leader. Those who reject his staff rulership can face then the Egyptian Cobra and deal with that, for rejection of Moses means they select the Egyptian Snake who has been killing them for 100 years! Moses will have victory over the Egyptians by "seizing their tail", and they will be paralysed and become like wood in his hands.

The sign makes the people face their choice of path in this life and the next. The sign of God's power resting upon Moses was a prophetic picture of exactly what Moses would do. Let us cast down our symbols of authority at the Lord's feet and then pick them up again to serve him; let none of us serve for honour, glory, or wealth, but for the sheer joy of casting our crowns before the Lord. Revelation 4:10.

REFLECTIONS UPON CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

1. Forgiveness is by the death of Christ (Matthew 26:28, Revelation 1 :5)
2. Divine forgiveness is to all who believe in Christ (Acts 10:43, Acts 16:31)
3. The penalty of sin was paid by Christ on the cross. (Hebrews 9:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
4. When a believer sins his fellowship with God is disrupted. God forgives these sins upon confession and cleanses from the unknown sins in the believer's life as well as known sins. (1 John 1: 9).
5. Jesus Christ is our propitiation. (1 John 2:1,2)
6. In human forgiveness we are told to forgive others even as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). This can only be accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23)
7. Steps towards restoration of fellowship
 - [a] Examine yourself for genuineness of motivation. [2 Corinthians 14:5]
 - [b] Act on what you see [Romans 4:7-8]
 - [c] Deal with any sin by confession. [1 John 1:9, Psalm 66:18]
 - [d] Forget the sin which you have confessed. Do not proceed into a pattern of guilt.[Philippians 3:13-14, Psalm 103:10-12]
 - [e] Resume your active spiritual walk. Avoid areas where you might be tempted by the sin which so easily besets us. [Hebrews 12:12-13]
 - [f] Be reconciled to others once you have been reconciled to God. [James 5:16]
 - [g] Get moving and grow up. [2 Peter 2:17-18]

REFLECTIONS UPON THE MINISTRY OF A PROPHET

1. The gift of prophecy and the office of the prophet are distinguished in scripture. In the Old Testament there were those who had the office of prophet, and served in an official capacity within the worship system of Israel but there were also those who at times were given the gift of prophecy to give a special prophecy even though they were not full time prophets. Elijah was a man with the office and the gift, where-as David had the gift at times but not the office.
2. The roles of the person with the office of prophet were many and varied:
 - a) Aaron was a preacher (Exodus 7:1).
 - b) In Nehemiah's time the prophet-preacher had a role to exegete the Word of God clearly so that the people would know the truth (Nehemiah 6:7, Hosea 6:5).
 - c) As revivalists they were to call people to repentance (Judges 6:7-12, Zechariah 7:7-12).
 - d) They were to oppose apostasy so that those who were likely to be misled by a false teacher would have no excuse (1 Kings 18:36-39, 40, 2 Chronicles 25:15, Ezekiel 2:5, 2 Kings 20:11).
 - e) They were encouragers of the people (Ezra 5:2).
 - f) They were sometimes song/worship leaders for the people (1 Samuel 10:5).
 - g) They led in prayer at worship (2 Chronicles 32:20).
 - h) They were the advisors to the kings and they were associated with coronations (1 Samuel 10:1, 1 Kings 11:28, 29, 2 Kings 9:1-6, 2 Chronicles 12:5, 2 Chronicles 12:6, 15:2-7).
 - i) They were spiritual advisors or seers for the kings; they "saw" the immediate future and so were able to advise the kings of the right decisions (1 Samuel 9:9, 2 Samuel 24:11, 1 Chronicles 21:9, 24:29, 2 Chronicles 19:2, 33: 18, 2 Kings 17:13, Isaiah 29:10).

j) They were fore-tellers of significant future events (2 Samuel 7:5-16, Amos 9:11, Isaiah 9:6,7, Isaiah 53, Ezekiel 34:22ff, Micah 5:2, Daniel 9:26, Zechariah 13:8, Joel, Zechariah 14) and many more.

k) God intended them to be the shepherds and vine-dressers of the nation. As such they were to be the type of Christ, who is referred to in the Old Testament as "the great prophet" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Zechariah 13:5-6, Matthew 21:11, Luke 7:16, 8: 18-20, 24:19, 23-26, John 7:40,41).

3. There was no "set" formula for the prophets to follow, but certain things were established as "tests" for the people to be sure the prophet was genuine.

a) The prophet had to have a spiritual life witness that was like Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10 - 12).

b) God spoke to the prophets by dreams and visions. God spoke to Moses face to face but he was an exception (Numbers 12:6-7).

c) The prophet had to be totally confident of his message, as he was judged by God if there was any falsehood in it (1 Kings 22:13, 14, 2 Kings 5:8).

d) There were to be no secret prophecies, everything was to be open and clear, so that all the people might be warned of God (Jeremiah 23:25-29).

e) The prophet had to be specific in his message and had to be obeyed literally (2 Kings 5:10-19, note especially verse 13).

4. There were always false prophets; in fact the great prophets of the Old Testament were always outnumbered by false prophets in their own day (Jeremiah 2:8, Ezekiel 13:1-23). Our Lord warned us that there will always be false prophets about (Matthew 7:15 - 23). NOTE THE LORD'S WORDS here in that the personal walk of the prophet is to be paid attention to. No spiritual fruit in their life = no truth in their words. God allows the false prophets to operate without immediate judgement upon them, so that believers are always presented with an obedience test, to see whether we will obey the scriptures or follow our own lusts to judgement. False prophets will abound at times of poor Bible teaching. Weeds only grow in poorly cared for soil (Hosea 4:5, 6, 9:7, 8).

5. Tests that believers must apply when confronting a person claiming the gift of prophecy:

a) The words of the prophet will never contradict the Word of God (Jeremiah 23:33-36, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 Corinthians 14:32).

b) The prophet will never call people away from genuine worship of God (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

c) The prophet will always be specific and the prophecy will be able to be tested (Deuteronomy 18:20-22, Jeremiah 28:9).

d) Any prophet who asked for money was to be treated as false (Jeremiah 8:10).

e) Any prophet who was a drunkard was to be treated as false (Micah 2:11).

f) Any unconfessed sin of envy, jealousy, strife,.....etc in their life, they were false! (Jeremiah 23:11).

g) God's prophets were generally men alone, not in groups (1 Kings 22:5-8, 18:22).

h) Does the prophecy accord with scripture? (1 Corinthians 14:37, 38, 2 Kings 23:2).

Exodus 4:14-31

“4:14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, 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. **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. **19** 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. **21** 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. **24** And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. **25** 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. **27** 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. **29** 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 worshipped.”

REFLECTION

Verses 14 – 16. The Lord is not happy with Moses at all, for he has failed to see the power of God as being sufficient for him in his walk in this life. The Lord seeks for us to embrace His power and walk in it, not make excuses to Him and seek others to help where none is required in the power of the Lord our God. God knows that Aaron can speak well, and so he will be the voice of the Exodus, but this is not the best that could have been. The Lord will ensure that Aaron comes out to meet Moses and that there will be great joy in his heart when he sees him. God now promises to Moses that He will strengthen both their mouths, and they will both say the things that He wants them to say, and that He will teach Moses what to do as he advances down the path.

There is still the test of faith for him and the Lord expects Moses to meet this test and pass it. He shows this by advancing now with focused energy on the plan of God, and relaxation in his walk with his brother, who is to be his spokesman. Moses will be as God to Aaron and Aaron will be the mouth of Moses. Let us serve the Lord and not look backwards to our failures, nor be hindered by the memory of them from pressing forward with Holy Spirit power. Luke 9:54-62.

Verses 17 – 19. Moses is told now to stand, take his staff and rod in his hand and return to Egypt and see whether his family are still alive. He has been told that Aaron will greet him but not about any of the others. He is reminded that he will do great signs with this rod, and he is to hold it in his hands at all times he speaks to the Pharaoh. His staff is long, but the “rod” will be like Pharaoh’s sceptre, and both men will face each other with their signs of authority in their hands. It will be a spiritual battle between the forces that are represented by their rods; Moses represents God, and Pharaoh stands for the gods of Egypt. It is a power confrontation in the true sense of that phrase.

Moses is under the authority of Jethro, as his tribal leader, and must seek his permission to return to Egypt. This he does and that permission is granted. The Lord encourages him that all who sought his death in Egypt have now died and he is safe returning at this point. He is eighty years of age at this point as we will discover below. He will live another forty years in good health and die at age 120. Exodus 7:7, Deuteronomy 34:7.

Verses 20 – 22. Moses does not leave his wife and sons behind, but leads them upon asses and off they go as a family to see Egypt. Now it will be a power confrontation between God and the gods of Egypt, and I cannot help questioning Moses over the taking of his family on this journey, although the boys are men, not teenagers. I wonder why he does this, placing them into this danger, on a journey that will lead to his wife divorcing him and returning to Midian anyway. It is a journey that will take many months before they are beside this mountain again, but the family could wait safely there, for they have God’s word that he will return, and he certainly won’t have time to be taking his sons to show them the pyramids. Maybe he was thinking about this being a leadership training expedition, or was it Zipporah who wouldn’t let him go off alone, for whatever the reason?

Moses is an older man of eighty, and these “boys” may be anywhere between thirty and forty years of age by this time! He may want his family with him, and this is a human desire, but not necessarily God’s will for them all. Moses is a frail man, like ourselves, and he makes this decision possibly without specific prayer and forethought. God said for him to go, not make this a family reunion trip, or sight seeing venture! The family could have waited until he returned to worship at

the mountain. That would have been safer and he would have been without care or entanglement on the journey. **2 Timothy 2:3-10.** There is a story here, but we must wait till heaven to know it.

He is now told by the Lord another piece of information, and this one will affect the safety of his family on this journey. When he arrives and speaks with pharaoh, he will not be believed by pharaoh, and he will not let the people go, and the Lord will be in control of the process. As he journeys towards the land he is reminded that the signs of authority are to be used before pharaoh, not just before the people of Israel.

He is now told that God will "harden the heart" of pharaoh and he will not agree to the demands of God upon him. The word here and the other word, used elsewhere both have similar meanings. They refer to a process of hardening, toughening, or making stronger in resolve. God will not force this pagan king to do something he doesn't want to do, rather the opposite; God will force him to disclose exactly what is in his heart, and will not allow him to compromise at all. Pharaoh will be forced to show exactly what is in his heart all the way through this process. Exodus 7:3, 13-14, 22, 8:15-19, 32, 9:7-12, 34-35, 10:1, 20-27, 11:10, 14:4-8, 17.

God reminds Moses in this that he is in charge and no man can escape being honest before the Lord who sees into their heart, and any who resist him will be dealt with. Luke 16:15, Acts 1:24, 7:51, 2 Timothy 3:1-9. God seeks to save the lost, and does not desire their death, but those who reject him must face the consequences of their choice; there is no escape from those. **Isaiah 28:21, Ezekiel 33:11, 2 Peter 3:9.**

Verses 23 – 25. This is a strange section to us, but it tells us that Moses has not followed the Abrahamic sign for his sons and circumcised them as he ought to have thirty years before. Refer to the BTB study on CIRCUMCISION. They are on a holy mission with their father and must be ready to stand before the Lord as "sons of the Abrahamic Covenant". Genesis 17:14. Moses has failed to follow through on God's command, and so he is stopped by the Lord in an Inn on the journey and told if he does not do this then he will lose his own life and that of his sons. Moses is nearly killed by the Lord, and we are not given any other details.

It may be that Moses was so incapacitated by the Lord's attack upon him, that he couldn't move, but it is Zipporah who does the circumcision on the oldest boy (a task that Moses himself should have done on the eighth day after his birth) and throws the foreskin down at his feet telling him in no uncertain language that she believes this to be barbaric and stupid and that she has lost her respect for him as her husband.

Moses is possibly proving himself a weak character here, and he continues to be a frail leader at times, for his own family is in disarray before him, but we ought to hesitate before we jump to these premature conclusions. At least one of his sons has however submitted to adult circumcision, and that tells us that he is prepared to trust his father, when he is of an age to reject such an experience and a painful week afterwards to recover. The other will return to him eventually.

What of the other son? Has he been circumcised as the Abrahamic Covenant ordered? Some commentators believe so, and that may be right, for the Lord's threat against Moses for not circumcising his son is serious and the judgment would not have been removed had he stopped half way and only had one boy circumcised. I cannot find any textual evidence here of that however, and given Zipporah's reaction, I suspect she did one of her sons and then threw the foreskin and the flint knife away in disgust. She returns to her father, and possibly takes both of the boys back with her, or they go to keep her safe. They meet next when Moses brings the people to the holy mountain. Exodus 18:2.

Another question comes up here. Does she cast the bloody foreskin at Moses feet to save his life from the threat the Lord made towards him? Is it just one of his sons that needs this? Once again we are left without clear answers. God does not slay Moses, so I must assume that he met the demands the Lord made of him, whether there was only one boy to circumcise or whether he got out of bed and circumcised the other himself after Zipporah threw the knife away. One thing is very clear; God was going to slay Moses for failing to circumcise his son(s).

I suspect Moses' embarrassment over this whole incident means he is not giving too much away, other than to underline that failure to circumcise an Israelite with the covenant sign is a capital offence in God's sight! The incident means he goes on alone, which is what God had intended anyway; Egypt is not the place to bring family to, when he is about to lead everyone else out! Moses is seriously transformed by this incident, and while he buckles at times under the tremendous pressures he faces, he remains one of the greatest leaders I have ever studied.

Verses 26 – 28. Zipporah, aged from 55 – 60, leaves the scene and the boys accompany her back to Midian in Arabia, but Moses presses onwards down towards Egypt. At the same time, the Lord appears to Aaron and tells him to journey into the wilderness to a mountain there and meet Moses. After forty years this must have been a shock to Aaron, who is 83 years of age now. He obeys and heads off into the desert on a journey that will take him several weeks and arrives at the "mountain of God's choice" and there he finds Moses heading towards Egypt. God brings these men together as He will later bring Cornelius and Peter. Acts 10.

Where is this mountain? Is it the mountain where the burning bush was seen, or is it another of God's choice on the way to Egypt? If the mountain of God's choice is in Arabia it means that the campsite of Jethro is well into the Arabian Peninsula, and that the Mount of God is around half way to Egypt, in order for both men to be there together.

The identity of this mountain is in dispute, with most historically arguing for the so called Mount Sinai, and others for a great mountain in what is now Saudi Arabia. It is a reminder to us that Moses fled a long way from Egypt, as we would

expect when he fled for his life. I suspect he fled right into Arabia, not just into what is now called the Sinai Peninsula, for the Egyptians could have chased him into Sinai, as they controlled that area with its mineral wealth and smelting works. It may be he wandered as far as Mecca and Medina, for this is within the biblical land of Midian and the great mountain of Arabia is between these cities and the path to Egypt.

I believe Moses went far further than most Sunday school books teach. Both men must travel many weeks in the then pastoral lands of Sinai and Arabia and meet by the mountain where they will later see the Tablets of stone received. They will retrace their steps together through the lands they must bring the Israelites and so are able to even start to think about or plan their campsites in advance and know what awaits them on the journey and realise it's perils and what they will be short of. They can see that unless the Lord provides water and food they will die in this place, even though it was at this time quite fertile and pastoral rather than desert.

Their meeting together after forty years apart is warm and filled with deep affection. Moses tells Aaron everything that has happened, and all that the Lord has told him relating to their tasking. They can now discuss the job before them; that they are to bring the people of Israel back to this very place. God has guided, and will guide them both.

Verses 29 – 31. The two men walk or ride together all the way back to Egypt now and speak to the Israelite elders of the twelve tribes. These men hear Moses words, through Aaron the spokesman, and see God's signs, and believe his words and accept Moses as their leader for their Exodus. Now pause here and look at the verses before us again, and notice that it is Aaron who apparently does the signs before the elders. The people are grateful that the Lord has heard their prayers and they worship in thankfulness for answered prayer in their deliverance through these two men. Aaron will carry the rod of miracles as will Moses; and it appears that Aaron was given the same power that Moses received as his spokesman also. The Exodus journey has begun as it should, with God's call being heard, God's leaders being recognized and God being worshipped as the one who will deliver them.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. When the Lord calls us to head out to serve him we are to be very prayerful about family involvement. Moses was not told to take his family and it nearly caused a disaster. He had also been slack in obedience in his family over the previous forty years and had not circumcised his sons. It is a reminder to us to be obedient to the Lord in our families and not to treat the work of a Lord as a holiday. God holds us responsible for obedience in all things, and we are expected to walk alone when ordered to do so. The only people who are safe companions on the path of the Lord are those he has called us to walk with. No passengers in the Lord's service!

2. When God moves in the affairs of men he will force all to disclose the true content of their hearts. Pharaoh believes he can play politics with God, but no-one does that. The Lord will harden his resolve in all his deepest desires and he will be forced to speak his heart in full. God knows the heart of man, and he seeks our honesty before him; anything else is foolishness. Let us be honest with our Lord and serve him with all our heart.

3. Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, and Moses had no business moving out to do his work without completing this sign in his sons. They ought to have been circumcised on the eighth day, but he had failed to do this, probably because of his wife. He had to stand up to her and the boys had to be circumcised. Moses has failed to follow through in his own home, and we must not follow his example here, for he loses this marriage as a result of this confrontation, but this was necessary. God must be obeyed and where a person objects, then that person must be prayed for, spoken with, but if they fail to follow the Lord, they must be left behind. Zipporah will be left behind and drop from the Plan of God. Obedience alone keeps us in God's Plan, and this lovely woman who failed to advance in her faith is the warning to us all.

DOCTRINES

CIRCUMCISION

1. Circumcision was designed by God as a sign of the Abrahamic covenant. (Genesis 17:10-14)
2. It was both a physical operation and at the same time a circumcision had ritual connotations. (Romans 2:25)
3. No Jew could partake of the Passover without first being circumcised. (Exodus 12:48)
4. Circumcision indicates dedication of the male. It occurred on the eighth day. Medical science has shown, from an infection viewpoint as well as coagulation of the blood, that the eighth day is the optimum. (Leviticus 12:2,3)
5. The ritual of circumcision has no significance in the Church Age and only intrudes as a false standard. (1 Corinthians 7:18,19; Galatians 5:2,3; Ephesians 2:11)
6. Circumcision became a rallying point for legalism. (Acts 15:1,24; Galatians 6:12,13)
7. Circumcision is used to designate the Jews by race and by nation. (Galatians 2:8; Colossians 4:11; Titus 1:10; Ephesians 2:11)

8. During their period of slavery in Egypt, the Jews started to fail to circumcise their male children. (Exodus 4:24-26)
9. This neglect continued into their wilderness wanderings. (Joshua 5:4,5)
10. Moses neglected to circumcise his sons. (Exodus 4:24,25)
11. Circumcision to the Jewish baby is the equivalent of dedication in the modern church. The adult circumcision (Genesis. 17:24-27) can be analogised to believers' baptism in the Church Age.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

Moses enters the land and has his preliminary meeting with Pharaoh. This is a “scoping” mission, to test Pharaoh’s heart and see how positive or negative he is to the Israelites and to Moses himself. Moses is not seen as Egyptian now, for all the people he knew are dead; he is simply a slave class man asking a king for a holiday. The total despising of the Hebrews emerges in this encounter with Pharaoh. He is focused on the social and power differential between them. He does not take this initial request as a spiritual issue, but as an issue of rebellion of slaves who clearly have too much idle time to plot holidays and plan to avoid work.

Moses faces his first set back as a leader, when he confronts the reality that the result of his first visit to the king has been to cause more suffering for his people. He does the right thing, and lays this burden before the Lord, seeking God’s answer to the problem they now face. He knows that God’s ways are not man’s ways, nor his thoughts, our thoughts, and he seeks clarity of mind and a renewed sense of confidence in the path ahead. He casts his cares upon the Lord and seeks renewed orders to move forward in power with the plan of God. Job 9:10, 11:7-9, Psalms 36:6, 94:11, Isaiah 40:13-14, 55:7-9, Romans 11:33-36, 1 Peter 5:6-7.

TEXT

“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. 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. 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. 4 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. 6 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. 9 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. 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. 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? 15 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. 18 Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tally 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 diminish ought from your bricks of your daily task. 20 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. 22 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.”

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 5. The two called men enter the court of Pharaoh as an “official” delegation from the Israelites speaking on behalf of their God. This was a first for Egypt; never before had their slave people had a leader, let alone had that leader requested audience with Pharaoh, and let alone had they the courage to request such a thing as Moses and Aaron request. To this pharaoh it is a matter of social class and political power, not a matter of their God. He considers the whole religious issue here as a cloak of rebellion, and believes that the reason given to go into the wilderness is a cover for a total armed revolt against their masters.

These people have been slaves or “people of the land” (common people), as he will call them, for four hundred years now. No-one can remember any other reality than that these people serve their Egyptian masters. They are now seen as a part of the Egyptian under-classes, and therefore like cattle to be ordered and driven by their aristocratic masters. To this pharaoh the issues are class warfare, and economic survival. These people must be shown their place again, and their economic power must be harnessed more securely and without complaint. It is a testimony to God's power and protection that Moses and Aaron live through this first audience. What held Pharaoh back from executing them?

Moses has used the new name of God that he has been given and announces the Lord as “Jehovah Elohim”. He makes it clear that it is not his order, but God's that is given to Pharaoh. Pharaoh's response is that he does not know or acknowledge this “god” and will therefore ignore such an order as illegitimate within Egypt. His exact words will come back to haunt him; “who is this Jehovah?” All that will happen to him after this will help him get acquainted with Jehovah. Aaron and Moses then entreat further, recounting the events of the meeting of the Lord with them and the specific orders given to them. Denying God's reality does not protect us from God's reality, just as denying Covid-19 didn't stop the anti-vaxers and deniers dying of the disease! **Hebrews 10:28-31, 37-39, 12:29.**

They see this as an issue that affects the survival of their people, for they fear that the Lord will judge them as a people if they are not obedient and go into the wilderness and worship there. They make it clear that the Lord has told them they are to die by sword or disease if they fail to follow through on His instructions. Pharaoh is determined to assist the Lord's judgment of them by the sword at least; for he will order his men to kill those who stagger under the increased load he plans to put upon them.

It was normal for each nation to worship in their own way and place at this time. **Acts 17:29-31.** It was quite a normal thing for one people to withdraw out of the land they lived in to worship their god in a different place and manner to the people amongst whom they lived. They would not insult the local gods by worshipping in a strange manner, but would withdraw far enough (3 days journey) to not insult or be seen to rebel against the local gods of that land. The request Moses and Aaron make was therefore religiously reasonable, and after service of over 100 years of slavery, a seven to ten day absence is not a great economic price for Pharaoh to pay. This response of Pharaoh to God's first request is

showing Moses Pharaoh's heart, and making Moses see that there is no hope for compromise with this man, and nor does he have any grace or mercy in him.

There is a principle of nature, that is also a principle of God's justice. This may be expressed as follows; there is no mercy to those who persist in showing no mercy. The deaths that will result in the land due to Pharaoh's obstinacy are to be laid fully at his feet. Initially it will be Hebrew slaves who die, but soon it will be Egyptians, and in large numbers. It is Pharaoh's mental attitude that is under test here, and he shows his arrogance towards the Israelites and towards the Lord God of the heavens and the earth. This man will become the perfect picture of the unrepentant unbeliever, who is determined, to the end of their life, to rebel against God's righteous demands upon their life. Revelation 20:10-15.

Pharaoh makes it very clear what he thinks of Moses and Aaron's plan. He believes they are revolutionaries, simply using the slackness of the slaves to prepare to unite them in one place as a nation and rebel against Egypt. There are simply too many of them to let them assemble in one place and at one time under such leadership as Moses and Aaron offer. Egypt's national security and integrity are at stake as far as Pharaoh is concerned and he will not budge; the people go no-where except to work every day, and they work until they die or he kills them for their disobedience.....

While they remain disunited, in their separate houses and working on separate projects in the delta region they can be controlled by a small army of taskmasters, whereas, if they unite as one people on the march under their own leadership the Egyptians will need a full army to deal with the threat they might pose. He simply doesn't want to lose the economic resource, and do so with a risk of violent overthrow of his army and possibly his throne. Proverbs 14:23-28.

He then takes further action to ensure they are too exhausted to think of rebellion, let alone plan it further, or execute that plan. He orders them to gather the straw for their brick making in addition to making the bricks, while holding the quota of production at the same level. He orders Moses and Aaron back to their own burdens with their people. This tells us that eighty year old men are not excused labour in the construction sites, and that Pharaoh is determined to crush the rebellion, and these two men with it, by working all to death.

It also tells us that Moses is indeed a humble servant, who has returned to share his people's burden not just sit by and use age or pastoral authority as an excuse to not labour physically. As we will see below Moses is working away from the brick pits, for he doesn't realise until he is told what is happening there. This is not unusual, for the Hebrews would be well scattered throughout the Delta region and would be working on many projects there. Moses has worked with the tribal leaders/elders only at this point. The people have never been all together in one place at this point.

Verses 6 – 9. Pharaoh's mind is made up and he believes these people have had too much idle time to plot and plan and dream up escape plans. He sees them as "idle" and they need to be worked harder. The joke that was freely told when I was a Naval Officer, was that a poor commander would have as his motto; "the floggings will continue until morale improves". This pharaoh has no compassion and no understanding of spirituality. Worse still he lacks the forethought to plan his best response to his slave resource. He has not thought through his response to Moses, taken no time to pray or reflect, and sought no wise counsel from his older counsellors. This is a man who is impressed with his own power of command and is used to being obeyed and not challenged, and he has stopped thinking of consequences.

Good leadership always accepts challenges and reflects upon how they can be better in their task. This man is not teachable, for he is too full of his own opinions to learn new truths. This will prove fatal to every family in Egypt including his own. Good leaders learn new things, receive correction, and confront their weaknesses that they might build strength in fact, rather than simply be strong in their own deluded opinions. **Proverbs 3:7-26, Jeremiah 5:3, 2 Timothy 3:16.**

Pharaoh is determined to punish these slave people for challenging him. In psychological terms we would say that this man is displaying narcissistic tendencies. He is not thinking in any other terms than himself and will not prosper long if he has any serious opposition. He does not realise who he is up against – and I do not mean Moses, but Almighty God himself and all the power that made the universe will focus its force upon Egypt and this foolish man.

People who are overly impressed by their own thinking abilities in the business world will survive as long as they are not challenged in the market place by another powerful business leader. The big business collapses of recent years have all been associated with leadership by "egos". Many looked successful, but that was only because they were surrounded by weak competition, and even weaker staff, but when a well led and motivated business opposes them they failed. Many bullies feel they are tough and sharp, but they are simply stupid, and such self centred behaviours always bring disaster to businesses.

When you see in the media reference to "egos", read "narcissism" and think of pharaoh here, for such people bring disaster into their organizations through their Old Sin Nature area of pride. The biblical case study of pride is Nebuchadnezzar, and humble service would be Moses. Nebuchadnezzar learned wisdom after seven years of mental illness, but this pharaoh will not be so blessed. **Daniel 4:23-37.**

Pharaoh is determined to make it difficult for the people and he even jeopardizes his own construction projects in the way he goes about this. The sun baked mud bricks without straw within them will lack strength and stability for building and may lead to building collapses in future years. He doesn't care, he just wants these Hebrews to work harder and have less time to themselves, and he wants more violence used against the Hebrew foremen if the tallies of bricks and work are not met. He doesn't want them doing anything other than working or sleeping, and he certainly wants to destroy the credibility of Moses and Aaron by undermining their message and their hope. He nearly succeeds in doing this, for by

targeting the Hebrew foremen and beating the people through the Egyptians guards he gets them pressured from both directions.

This gives us insight into the way the slave labour was managed; by using Hebrew foremen and Egyptian lashers. With their own people encouraging them to work harder and the Egyptians beating them, the people will be exhausted and dispirited each day. This is how Pharaoh wants to control them; by despair of hope and resignation in their toil until they die of exhaustion. His plan, like that of his predecessor is genocide, but in a time frame to make sure he squeezes out of them the work he wants before they die. The Nazi's of Germany in 1938-1945 would do the same with their forced labour camps, which after 1942 became death camps. Satan is driving this in Egypt, just as he would do in Germany all those centuries later. By their "fruit" you know the origin of people's heart desires and their mind's darkest thoughts.

Verses 10 – 13. The taskmasters over the people were a mix of their own and Egyptian officials. This is exactly the same pattern that the Nazis used in the Concentration Camps in 1942-1945, whereby "carpos", or supervisors, from the local Jewish people were used to co-ordinate the labour squads in the camps and report back to the guards. They were fed more and had privileges above the other prisoners and they urged them on to work harder for their masters. These compromisers are forced to make the announcement from Pharaoh that the straw that had previously been provided will no longer be provided and that the people themselves must scatter through the land and find any stubble left over from the harvest that they can find and bring it to the brick yards for the making of the bricks.

This tells us that they will be leaving Egypt after the harvest time of the year and that in the other regions through which they will travel the rains will have stopped, and it will be indeed desert country for the first months. They are then told that no reduction in the tally of bricks to be produced will be allowed, and that they will be beaten if the quota is not met. It is totally unfair and unjust, and the people will soon ask Pharaoh, why has he done this?

It is so incredible that they initially don't believe the pharaoh could have been so foolish as to order this. The clear fruit of satanic malice is that it is always counter productive, but the perpetrator doesn't see it, for they are blinded by satanic hatred. The Israelites are soon to discover the extent of his malice, and the corresponding determination of the Lord their God to deliver them. Why does the Lord let them suffer this much more just before he delivers them? The answer comes from the next verses.

Verses 14 – 16. The Jewish supervisors, who the Egyptian taskmasters had placed in charge of the work gangs, are now badly beaten for failure to produce the tally of bricks. They feel deeply the injustice of it and appeal to pharaoh and tell him that his own people have failed to provide the straw for the brick making. This tells us immediately that these men have a sense that pharaoh is a fair and just man and wouldn't do this evil thing! They are wrong, but they clearly, sincerely believe that he is ignorant of this thing. This is why the Lord must let the people suffer more before they are ready to be delivered. Most still believe evil people are just misunderstood! We must "get it" – evil is evil!

The service of the people to the Egyptians has not been that bad for some. It would appear that these men have been treated well, and that within the building gangs there are those who have had the respect of the Egyptians. These people live well in their service and drive their people as hard as they are told to. A good percentage of the people of Israel are living well it would seem and they need it pointed out to them that they must flee this place, for evil has now gripped it's heart. 2 Timothy 3:1-15. Beware the mentality of those who do not see the reality of the Angelic Conflict – for they will believe good of evil men and open the door thereby to more evil.

How could they ignore the earlier genocide of the babies? It is an interesting fact of human nature, that people can ignore anything that disturbs their prosperity! People can fool themselves that it is "not as bad" after all. Even though the Hebrews have been ordered to work for pharaoh and the work is harsh for some, it is skilled labour for others, and they have within their population men now skilled in all aspects of building and masonry work, and these men have prospered under their Egyptian masters, and are able to ignore the plight of their less fortunate/skilled brethren in the brick pits.

Many have, as we will see below, intermarried with local Egyptians and most are living amongst them. There are no concentration camps here. The babies just "disappeared" and daily death comes so slowly and at random that the majority do not notice it. All must feel the lash, in order for all to be united in their understanding that they must leave. A realization of the nature of the evil of our enemy is crucial for our spiritual and physical survival. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15, James 4:4, 7-8, 1 Peter 5:8-11.**

Verses 17 – 19. It is only after they hear the words from pharaoh's own mouth that they believe they are truly facing a great evil. They also see the centre of the hatred of this man towards them; it is their desire to worship that is at the heart of the evil they face. Having worked hard, 365 days a year for the last hundred years, these men hear that they are "idle", and see pharaoh repeat the word in disgust at their desire to worship.

They now know that all their efforts are treated with contempt, that they are treated with contempt, and their God is treated with contempt. They must get to this place to break any attachment they have with this land where some have had a good life style, and where even with their service, they ate well. Even with this confrontation with the truth about the nature of their slavery, many will rebel in the desert wanderings later, and will seek the food and comforts of their homes back in Egyptian slavery. Numbers 11:4-6.

Verses 20 – 23. As these battered and bruised men leave the court of pharaoh, for it would appear they are beaten from his presence by his guards, they meet Moses and Aaron on the roadway back to their houses. They very

strongly criticize Moses and Aaron, blaming them for the great evil that has come upon them all. Their words indicate again why the Lord has allowed this to happen. They must suffer enough to break their belief system that pharaoh is in fact reasonable; they must see his unreasonableness or they will not be interested in escape at all. They previously had been well favoured by pharaoh and had received good things. They still are attached to their rights and privileges in Egypt at this point. They do not see the pharaoh as unjust, but Moses as unjust, and pharaoh simply reacting to Moses unreasonable demands. They have been "kept in their place" by small favours and they prefer these to truth and freedom.

Notice how controlled these men still are by their life style and their position as supervisors. This phenomenon has been identified in all abusive situations; where the abused develop a bond with the abuser, if he gives them just a little reward for their "work" at times. In psychological terms it is called "intermittent reinforcement", and leads to the most tenacious belief, in the person so controlled, that evil is in fact good. In relationships it has been called "battered spouse syndrome", and leads to a battered spouse returning again and again to the abuser, who in the end may kill them. They seem incapable of escape, so well are they controlled. God must break this with the light of the truth bursting in upon them.

Moses does the right thing; he bows before the Lord and prays for the deliverance of the people again. He brings his question to the Lord, as to why he has allowed this thing to happen, for as yet he does not see the hearts of many, and their commitment to the benefits of staying in Egypt. Moses takes his questions to the Lord and that is the right place for our deep groans and questions relating to the plan of God for our lives. Only over time will they all see the evil of Pharaoh. **1 Samuel 30:6, Psalms 73:21-28, Jeremiah 12:1, Romans 8:26-31.**

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. If we are not controlled by the Holy Spirit, and led by the truth of Bible doctrine, then we will be controlled by evil men and their lies to us about how reasonable their demands are! There is a war being fought for the souls of man, and the enemy uses deception as his key tool, and our only remedy is standing in the truth. Let us feed on the truth of God's Word daily, and so prepare ourselves to see the lies of the enemy with more clarity and avoid them with more spiritual strength.

2. We are at war with the forces of evil and should not be surprised at the malice and hatred of the enemy forces towards us. We must daily put our armour on and stand against the evil forces that have vented their hatred towards all who stand for God since the beginning of time. Do not under-estimate the hatred of evil for you as a son/daughter of God through grace and faith. Satan and his crew hate us! John 15:18ff.

3. Egotism is an evil and opens the door to far more evil! The self centred attitudes of pharaoh are simply a reflection of the evil of Satan himself. All of the enemy's forces have his weakness; they worship themselves rather than God. They will follow their narcissistic tendencies ahead of reason and logic at times, and this is not to surprise us, rather we are to be encouraged, for we have in their behaviours the evidence of whose children they are! Let us recognize the battle we are a part of and fight with our armour on daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, and let us not be distracted by the persistence in evil by some.

REFLECTIONS UPON OUR OLD SIN NATURE

1. We are born with a nature, inherited from Adam, which is against God and prone to sin (Ephesians 2:1, Romans 5:12).

2. The old sin nature is perpetuated in the human race by physical birth (Psalm 51:5, 1 Timothy 2:13, 14).

3. We are therefore considered spiritually dead at the point of physical birth (Romans 5:12).

4. Names for the old sin nature are:

- a) Flesh - Galatians 5:16
- b) Old Man - Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9
- c) Carnal - Romans 7:14
- d) Sin - Romans 5:12
- e) Heart - Jeremiah 17:9
- f) Member - Colossians 3:5.

5. The believer continues to have an old sin nature after salvation (1 John 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:1).

6. The believer under the control of the old sin nature is called carnal (Romans 7:14, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

7. The old sin nature frustrates true production of the Christian life (Romans 7:15).

8. The old sin nature has two tendencies (Romans 6:6)

- a) Area of weakness - pushes us towards lawlessness and sins (Hebrews 12:1)
- b) Area of strength - pushes us towards asceticism and self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6).

9. The old sin nature is not found in the resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:56, Philipians 3:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

10. Victory over the old sin nature is by achieved by considering your old life dead, surrendering to God, confessing sin and relying upon the filling of the Spirit (Romans 6:6,11, Colossians 3:9-10).

REFLECTIONS UPON CHRISTIAN'S SUFFERING

1. Ultimately, all suffering is a result of the sin of Adam. We live in a fallen world and have fallen natures.
2. God is sovereign and allows even undeserved suffering to come upon the world for a reason, but we may not see the reason this side of eternity in some cases, or see the full facts here and now. (Romans 8:28)
 - a) Suffering can bring people to a point of helplessness, where they call out to Him.
 - b) It can test and develop faith, so bringing glory to God and great reward to the believer in eternity.
3. There will be no suffering for believers in eternity (Revelation 21:4).
4. Unbelievers will suffer forever in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:12-15).
5. Suffering can be caused by:
 - a) Discipline for your own sins
 - b) The effect of the sins of others on you - gossip, war, crime
 - c) Self-induced suffering as a result of your own actions – e.g. sickness from smoking, poverty from poor stewardship
 - d) The sovereign will of God - health, events, weather.
6. Premises of Suffering for all believers to claim:
 - a) All suffering is designed for blessing in the Christian walk (1 Peter 1:7, 8, 4:14)
 - b) Even discipline is designed to restore fellowship (Hebrews 12:6)
 - c) Suffering follows the principle of grace (Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:18).
7. Purposes of Christian Suffering:
 - a) To receive discipline for carnality or backsliding (Psalm 38)
 - b) To glorify God (Job 1:8-12, Luke 15:20, 21)
 - c) To illustrate doctrine (Book of Hosea)
 - d) To learn obedience (Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 5:8)
 - e) To keep down pride (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - f) To develop faith (1 Peter 1:7, 8)
 - g) To witness for Christ (2 Corinthians 13:4)
 - h) To demonstrate the power of God (2 Corinthians 11:24-33, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - i) To manifest the fruit of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:8-11)
 - j) To help others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)
 - k) From indirect action - because other believers get out of fellowship (Romans 14, 1Corinthians 12:12, 13, 26, 1Samuel 21, 1Chronicles 21).
8. Dealing With Suffering - Applying Spiritual "Daily Orders":
 To be a believer is to be associated with suffering. It is not a strange thing, it is our duty, and we are to take it as a soldier takes the rigours of a long campaign; without complaint, and with dignity and strength.

 The five "**Daily Orders**" for the battle against the adversary, to be applied in the church age, in the power of the Holy Spirit are found in 1Peter 5:8,9. They will protect us against the cunning of the "lion".
 - a) Be Sober! - At all times be self controlled, not under the control of any emotion, or any other substance(drink or drugs), but only by the Holy Spirit. Romans 13:11-13. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 -8.
 - b) Be Vigilant! - At all times, stay awake to danger, don't relax your guard, don't get careless.
 - c) Resist! - Stand up to, resist, oppose everything he stands for. Zero tolerance of evil is to be the standard for our lives. Also refer, Luke 4:3-12, Ephesians 4:27, 6:11-13, James 4:7.
 - d) Be steadfast in the faith once delivered to the apostles! Be unbreakable, stand as a solid mass of soldiers resisting attack. Stand with the apostolic doctrines, and their practices. As a local church be united, stand together, tight and committed to each other.
 - e) Keep on knowing you are not alone! All believers suffer pressures when they stand for their Lord.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IN EPHESIANS 6

1. General Scripture Ephesians 6:11-17.

This passage relates to the armour which the Roman soldier wore and analogises its use into the spiritual realm.

2. USE OF THE ARMOUR Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the whole armour of God." Ephesians 6:11a. We are instructed to "put on" (ENDUO Gk) - this means "to clothe" - it is a command by God to the Christian soldier. We are to "clothe ourselves" or to "dress ourselves". "Whole armour" (PANOPLIA Gk) - the complete armour "of God" (THEOS Gk) true source of the armour is God.

The whole armour of God is given in Ephesians 6:14-17. It comprises:-

- a) The Belt of Truth Ephesians 6:14a
- b) Breastplate of Righteousness Ephesians 6:14b
- c) Boots Ephesians 6:15
- d) Shield Ephesians 6:16
- e) Helmet of Salvation Ephesians 6:17a
- f) Sword of the Spirit Ephesians 6:17b

PRINCIPLES:

- i) The Roman soldier wore all his armour for his own safety and protection.
- ii) When the Roman soldier was highly disciplined he ruled the world.
- iii) When the Roman soldier became degenerate the Empire declined and fell.
- iv) The Roman soldier was in the army 7 days a week.

3. SPIRITUAL ANALOGY

- a) As Christian soldiers we wear our armour for our own safety and protection.
- b) When we are highly disciplined in the Christian life we are very effective in our warfare.
- c) If we become degenerate or apostate our Christian witness and effectiveness declines and we become casualties in the spiritual warfare.
- d) The Christian soldier is in the battle 7 days a week. A part time soldier never amounts to an effective soldier.

"That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11 b.

"to stand" (histemi (Gk) - to hold your ground. We are in a spiritual warfare and the purpose of the armour is to hold our ground against the foe. "the wiles (methodeia dia Gk) - tactics, cunning or fraud" "of the devil" (diabolos Gk).

We therefore have the whole armour of God to enable us to stand firm against the devil's tactics.

PRINCIPLE: By learning the tactics likely to be employed by your opponent the Christian soldier is able to go on the offensive using the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. (verse 17).

4. THE ENEMY (Ephesians 6:12)

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places. "

"Wrestle" - "the wrestling" (he pale estin Gk) hand to hand combat not wrestling as a sport. "not against flesh and blood" – not against other members of the human race, but against:-

- a) PRINCIPALITIES (arche Gk) Ruling demons.
- b) POWERS (exousia Gk) - Demons with authority, officers in the demon army.
- c) RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD (kosmokrator Gk) - world rulers, demons close to the seats of government such as the demons of (Daniel 10:13, 20).
- d) SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES (pneu matikos poneria Gk) - the demon army.

Quite clearly our fight is against a spiritual foe. From Hebrews 2:7 we know that as human beings we are inferior to angels. Therefore in order to have success against superior forces we must have God's armour.

5. BE PREPARED (Ephesians 6:13)

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. "

Since the resurrection ascension and session of Jesus Christ the attack of Satan has moved from the line of Christ to the individual believer. Our dependence on the whole armour is imperative yet many believers reject part or all of the armour. There are many casualties as a consequence.

We are again exhorted to put on the whole armour of God.

6. THE BELT OF TRUTH (Ephesians 6:14a, Isaiah 11:5)

"Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth."

The Roman belt was a wide girdle of leather worn around the waist from which hung the scabbard for the sword and loops for rations and equipment. The leather belt was supported by a cross shoulder strap studded with metal plates with

thick leather strips hanging down to protect the lower body. The belt therefore was the basic armour on which the defence of the soldier was based.

PRINCIPLE: Our basic defence is the truth contained within the Word of God. The sword of the Spirit hangs securely to the believer by means of the promises contained within it. The greater our trust in the truth of God the greater our protection against the enemy.

7. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Ephesians 6:14b, Isaiah 59:17)
"and having on the breastplate of righteousness."

The breastplate (thorax Gk) was usually made of leather overlaid with metal strips. Shaped like a sleeveless coat it was in the higher ranks often covered with gold or silver. The belt held the breastplate firmly in place its primary function being to protect every vital area of the soldiers body.

PRINCIPLE: The righteousness of Christ protects us. We stand in his righteousness alone. He gave us his righteousness at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our continued protection through his righteousness is through the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) (See topic Holy Spirit: Filling of the Spirit).

8. THE BOOTS (Ephesians 6:15, Isaiah 52:7)
"And your feet shod, with the preparation of the gospel of peace".

The boots (caligae Gk) were made of hobnail studded leather soles 15mm (1/2") thick secured with a leather tie over the instep and round the ankles. Good footwear is essential for the soldier with infantry still being essential even in these days of sophisticated armaments.

PRINCIPLE: In spiritual terms the feet are often analogised to service. The feet take one towards the enemy. The gospel of peace is a direct attack on the enemy. Peace in this context talks of reconciliation between God and man. (Romans 1:1 4-16, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

9. THE SHIELD OF FAITH (Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4)
"Above all taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

The Roman shield (thureos Gk) was shaped like a door being made of glued planks wrapped in canvas or calf skin, the top and bottom edges being protected by iron. The shield was the most active of the defensive armour carried by the Roman soldier. Loss of shield often meant death to the soldier.

PRINCIPLE: The Christian soldier's shield is walking actively in the promises and principles set out in the Word of God. If we do not use our faith we can become spiritual casualties. Using the shield of faith we can claim -the 7,000 promises for the Christian walk including Isaiah 41:10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 4:4.

10. THE HELMET OF SALVATION (Ephesians 6:17a; Isaiah 59:17)
"And take the Helmet of salvation."

With the exception of the standard bearer who wore a wolf's head, every Roman soldier wore a metal helmet (perik Gk) usually of bronze over an iron skull cap. This protected the most important part of the soldier - his head.

PRINCIPLE: Before a person can be a soldier for Christ, he has to be born again. He has to wear the helmet of salvation. One of the wiles of the devil is to make the believer feel that he has lost his salvation. If a believer loses his assurance of salvation he takes his helmet of salvation off and is totally vulnerable to the attack of the foe.

11. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (Ephesians 6:17b)
"and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."

The sword referred to is the machaira or Roman short sword. The sword represents the basic offensive weapon for close combat. It was only effective when out of its sheath.

PRINCIPLE: The sword in its sheath is potentially devastating but it is only effective when it is used to combat and defeat the enemy. We must therefore conquer using principles, promises and doctrines from the Word of God.

Notes

CHAPTER 6**INTRODUCTION****BELIEVER - APPLY WHAT YOU LEARN**

In Exodus 6 we see that only as we apply what we learn and move forward, in faith in it, will God's purpose be fulfilled. The Lord had said to Moses that it was going to be He Himself who will bring the Hebrews out of Egypt. It is not as if the Egyptians were weak, and they could slide out of the back door. They are going to send these people out while they are still able to conclusively defeat them. They are going to release the Israelites even though they have the power to detain them.

From a human viewpoint what is going to happen is going to be humanly impossible, but the Lord is going to do it. Only God can do it, and He does, in accordance with His promises to them. Our lives today are to be lived in the sphere of this same faith in the impossible being possible within the plan and purpose and power of Almighty God. God alone protected them, and God alone protects us.

From a position of total human weakness we are going to succeed because of who the Lord is, and because we are a part of His eternal plan. We are in Christ Jesus and He is the Lord. The power of the universe is centred in us, for we are in Christ. He is our strong tower. With all our heart we will praise the Lord our strength! Psalm 86:12, Isaiah 61:3.

Psalm 61:1-7. *"1. Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*

2. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

4. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6. Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.

7. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.

8. So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows."

Do you lack power and confidence today as you read these words? As a believer, you are in Christ Jesus, and He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so there is no power problem that He cannot solve. If it is in His plan it will be done. Our job is to move in obedience with the plan for there we are invincible.

God spoke to Moses and said, "I am the Lord". In the Old Testament there are many names for God. The Lord says that He is the self-existent one, "I am the one behind everything", said the Lord. Both names of God, Elohim and Jehovah, occur in this chapter. Don't even reflect upon the Graf-Welhausen hypothesis, its pagan nonsense; see the truth here.

By reviewing the names of God you are confronted again with the doctrine of the Character of God. Review that doctrine also now, for in all things we face, we have stability when we ground ourselves upon the certainties of God's person and promises. God is stable even when we are not. He is powerful even when we have no power. God says that the patriarchs knew him as God Almighty, but they did not know Him as the ever-existent one. To Moses He is revealing more aspects of His character and nature as the Creator of space and time; something that was not revealed before.

We confront here the truth of the unfolding drama of redemption; the unfolding revelation of God's person and plan through the ages of man. He is working out the plan for His glory and if we but get a glimpse of His plan we can rest within it and have the right mental attitude towards the events we see in time.

The Lord also says that He is the truth. What He says He will do. He speaks directly to Moses and says, "I made a promise to these people, and you are going to be the one who will help me keep this promise". He is the God of grace, and mercy, and love. The iniquity of the Amorites is now full and He will give the Israelites their land, because they have come to the place where all they are doing is polluting it with sin. They have gone too far and they lose title to their patch of earth! In this chapter we have a series of, "I wills"; the I AM says He will do what is in accordance with His nature and plan.

He is operating the same way today. In Ephesians 2 we are told we have a position in the body of Christ and the plan of God. God says, I will because I AM. Do you believe it? You show whether you believe it or not by the way you live as a Christian. If you take His Word seriously and apply it in your life you demonstrate the faith of Moses.

God says to us through His Word every day,

"Son or daughter, I will do something in your life because I am your heavenly Father, and I have the power.

I am Almighty God, why do you not trust me? I made you, I have saved you, and I saved you to bring glory to my name.

Will you believe Me and apply My Word in your life? Will I call you friend because you do what I tell you to do?"

John 15:12-17.

Will you face the enemies with a calm heart and loving attitude to me still? **John 15:18ff, 2 Timothy 1:7.**

THE ATTITUDE OF PHARAOH AND THE UNBELIEVERS WE MEET TODAY

The Pharaoh, who is a determined pagan, believes in the demon-gods of Egypt, and as a result he will be the subject of his own superstition, because he will think that Moses is a manifestation of his God Jehovah. He does not fear Jehovah God but he does fear Moses and what he will do. Moses will be Pharaoh's test and the judgment on Egypt and her gods. God is going to have two purposes in this plan, firstly to bring His people out, and secondly to judge Egypt.

Why does He want to judge Egypt? We do not have a specific answer to this, except to remember the terrible treatment of the Israelites over this last 100 year period. Initially Pharaoh is going to refuse to let the people go. There is a purpose and plan in this, for his obstinacy will open the door for all the gods of Egypt to be judged. God has a plan and it is going to work out. Pharaoh has decided to oppose this plan, and he will unwittingly fulfil it by his rebellion against it.

This is a reminder that the plan of God **WILL CERTAINLY** work out. What is going to happen in the future, the Rapture, Tribulation, Second Advent and Millennium, will all come to pass, as it is in the eternal plan of God. There are some things we do not have all the answers to this side of eternity about how this occurs, but we can be sure of one thing; the plan will work out exactly as God has prophesied it will through his prophets, without our free will being violated.

Many times great preachers have had to deal with and minister to disobedient people every bit as negative to God as this Pharaoh. God may send you into a position where no one will listen to you. Moses preached to possibly 30,000 adults in the desert for 40 years and only 2 responded fully. The rest of them died in the wilderness due to unbelief. **Hebrews 3:12 – 4:12**. Whether people listen to you or not, you are still to preach the truth. **Jeremiah 1:18-19, Ezekiel 3:3-6**. We are to assess always our communication, to ensure it is clear and factual, but we are not judged by God on results, for the greatest preacher-teacher of the ancient world is Moses, and he was no failure in his results.

You will have difficulty as a minister, but join the club, for Moses, Paul, and the Lord Jesus Christ faced rejection, rebellion, and hatred at times. Do not worry about consequences; do your job as unto the Lord. **Ezekiel 3:8-27**. Win the crowns for obedience under pressure, and provide no excuse for those who reject the Word by your shoddy workmanship. We are not judged by results, as the world judges, but by our faithfulness to the task given.

We are responsible to the Lord. God says, in effect, "Moses, do your job and leave the consequences to me, and the results with me". **Ezekiel 2:2-8, 3:4-11, 17, 24-27**. Whatever teaching ministry you have or anything in the Lord's service, you must remember this principle. You are to do your job as unto the Lord. God wants you to serve Him with a singleness of mind. Do not be double minded as per James. **James 1:6-25**. If you are with God, walking in obedience to his commands, then you are safe; in this world we are safe no-where else than hand in hand with The Lord Jesus.

Moses stood before 30,000 or more people and often they screamed and wanted to kill him. As a teacher you may weep over the people of the Lord in private, but you should continue to teach them. Few of us will ever face the negativity that Moses faced! Do not let the Lord's people get you down, because they are His not yours. You must be as tough as steel but as soft as a shepherd who loves the Lord's sheep and recognizes that sheep have a mind of their own sometimes and will run off cliffs even when you try and stop them.

You should not weep over your people in public; that is the place to be strong and stable and teach them. We are to take our burdens to the Lord, and his ministry to the people. The faithless shepherd is severely disciplined. 1 Corinthians 9:27. Church people can be very cruel to God best pastors at times; they may be errant sheep in need of confession, or fake "goats" crept in unawares. **Jude 3-4**. When Paul was in prison in Rome at the end of his ministry, awaiting his martyrdom many within the Roman church disowned him. 2 Timothy 4:9-17.

Jail however did not slow him down because he was with God, doing God's job in the strength of the Holy Spirit. Paul can walk alone to his death with courage, and the early church recorded that some of the people did come out to walk with him, and all bowed in prayer with him in the end. Physically he is alone facing death, but spiritually he is in Christ and in him forever. Learn to do your part in the plan of God as Moses and Paul did and work with, and look to the Lord.

TEXT

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. 2 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. 6 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. 9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage. 10 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.”

REFLECTION

The Lord is going to introduce himself to this pharaoh and he will know who has the power and who does not. The Lord will not just deliver the people of Israel, He will lead them out with His “strong hand”. This was a way of saying, “with maximum show of divine power”. The heavens are described as “the finger work of God”. Psalms 8:3. When God acts with a “strong hand” it means he acts in overwhelming power.

Pharaoh has had the chance to show compassion, understanding, and hear the words of Moses and reflect, or even pray upon them. He has failed to see spiritual things, and has called them political and economic. He will see that this issue is nothing about politics or wealth, but about the spiritual power of the real, one and only, Almighty God Jehovah, and the powerlessness of paganism.

Verses 1 – 3. The Lord is not going to simply manipulate pharaoh to let the people of Israel go, rather, he is going to force pharaoh to face the truth about the bankruptcy of his paganism, and reach the point where he forces the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. The judgment that will fall upon him will stem from his malice alone, for the Lord will grade the signs he gives this man, and they will build to the point where his first born dies, but at any point pharaoh could have followed through with logic, and let the Israelites go. His refusal to hear the words of God costs every family in the land its first born son, and his refusal to stop his obsession with getting them back, and his sending an army after them, leads to the loss of that army.

The Lord re-grounds Moses in the truth of the integrity and power of His person and character. The Lord reminds Moses that He is the one who spoke to the Patriarchs and He is the one who has promised to give them the land, and He will deliver on these promises. Our stability in times of pressure is in direct proportion to our resting in the certainties of God; His character and His plan. Moses is urged to rest upon the Lord at this time. Before he re-enters pharaoh’s court he is called to remember that he stands in the court of the Lord God of all creation, and that he stands as the friend of God, whereas Pharaoh has made himself the enemy of the King of kings and Lord of all lords. **Psalms 89:5-14, 136:4-16, Isaiah 43:10-13, 63:11-14, Ezekiel 20:33-36, 44.** He fights God – and he cannot win! Moses can only win with God.

Verses 4 – 6. The Lord’s promises are secure; what He has promised to their fore-fathers He will accomplish in this Exodus generation. What God says he will do! God has established His covenant, and it will not be broken or voided in any way at all, by the evil of man. The promise made to the Patriarchs was that their descendants would inherit the land of Canaan, and inherit this land they will. The only unknown variable is the timing of their reception of this promise. **Genesis 15:18, 17:7-8, 13, 28:4.**

The Land of Canaan is called the “land of their pilgrimage”. Genesis 23:4, 26:3-5. It is the reminder to Moses that his ancestors never held title to the land, except for a small parcel for burying by Hebron and Shechem. They were strangers in the land always, yet God has given them the everlasting title to it. This land is from the time of the promise, the land of the children of Israel. They lose tenure at times, but the title deeds are held in heaven, and so none can take it away. Those who fight Israel poke the “apple of God’s eye”. The history of the last seventy years is a testimony that any that fight against Israel will not prosper. Deuteronomy 32:10, Psalms 121:3-4, Zechariah 2:8.

We also are called to be pilgrims upon this earth, for our real home as followers of Messiah, is heaven, not this earth. We serve here as His ambassadors, and an ambassador has no tenure to the land. **1 Peter 2:9-17, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.**

God remembers His promises long after we have forgotten to be obedient to Him. The Lord is not like us and does not hold grudges against people for their sins, but seeks for them to repent and be restored to Him. The Lord heard their groaning, just as He hears our deep sighs of spirit. **Psalms 106:43-48, Isaiah 63:7-9, Romans 8:24-28.** The Lord hears our prayers and they are always answered; it is just that we at times do not like the answer. He is the “Lord their God”, and they had better learn to follow His instructions, for it is He alone that blesses them and leads them through the wilderness. He will pay the purchase price for their sins and redeem them to stand before Him and worship Him in the land He has given to them. Isaiah 9:8-21.

Verses 7 – 9. The Lord’s promises go beyond just giving them a land, but to making them a nation in their own right. They will be established as a people in the land and will become great there. 2 Samuel 7:22-29. The promise of God is always a lasting one; while this earth stands this people have their inheritance in the land God gave them. Those who forget this or fight against it will find they are fighting God. The people themselves were to learn who their God was also; for like pharaoh, they were a disobedient lot, and needed to be reminded of the power and plan of the one after whom they were named.

The reason the Lord will do all that He has promised is that He is the Lord; He has the plan and it will be fulfilled because it is His Plan! The sadness of the response is underlined by Moses; the people suffered so greatly from their bondage that they could not believe in the deliverance of the Lord. They need education, and the Lord will provide it at the expense of the Egyptians.

Verses 10 – 13. The Lord's answer to Moses and Aaron is simple; I have said it, it will happen, and so do what you are told. Moses has to learn to get his eyes off the people and onto the Lord alone. The Lord does not need the positive response of the people to accomplish His plan; all He needs is the obedience of those who love and worship Him and He will achieve His goals. The people will learn over the weeks to come and will follow the leadership God has given them. They will falter and they will fail, but Moses is to keep his eyes on the one who will not fail them. **Jeremiah 1:17-19, Ezekiel 3:4-11, 24-27.** This is our call as the shepherds of God's flock; we are to keep our eyes fixed on the Great Shepherd, and look out for the sheep, but ignore any annoying bleating, be they sheep or goat! 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Remember that you will be hated by those who follow the enemy; for they have always hated those who stand for truth. John 15:18-25. We are to look to the comfort of the indwelling Holy Spirit, not the applause and acceptance of fallen men. John 15:26-27, 14:1-4.
2. God's purpose is for His name and power to be known. The Lord seeks to make Himself more fully known to His people as they advance down the path of life that the plan calls for from them. We have a task and our job is to discover this and walk that path, and no other, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and no other.
3. The Lord hears our prayers and seeks our obedience, in order that He might more powerfully answer our prayers, for power flows best in the right places. Our job is to position ourselves in the plan and then watch and see the power of God as it can pour through an obedient vessel set apart for His glory.

REFLECTIONS UPON OUR REDEMPTION

1. Redemption is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ towards sin. The implications of the Greek words (lutron, lutrosis, apolutrosis, antilutrosis) is ransom, redeem, pay money to set a slave free, pay a price, or (exagorazo) purchase from the slave market (of sin).
2. The principle of redemption is found in (John 8:31-36).
3. The Lord paid the price for us, redeeming us from the slave market of sin by his perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross. Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 2:14.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only qualified redeemer. Through His virgin birth he has no inherited Old Sin Nature, by His perfect life He had no acquired sin or sin nature, and through His hypostatic union He is equal with both parties: God and man. Isaiah 53:9, John 8:46, 19:4, 2Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 1:3,4:15,7,25,28, 1 Timothy 3:16.
5. In the Old Testament redemption was taught by means of the shed blood of an animal sacrifice. Hebrews 9:22, Job 5:19,25,26.
6. Blood was the purchase price for redemption. Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, 1 Peter 1:18,19. The blood of Christ relates this work of redemption to that which was pictured in these Old Testament sacrifices. 2 Corinthians 5:21.
7. The soul of the believer not the body is redeemed. Psalm 34:22, Matthew 8:17.
8. Redemption removes the demands of the Old Testament Law. Galatians 3:13,10, 4:4-6.
9. Redemption is a doctrine which the believer can apply in times of pressure and catastrophe (Job 19:25,26), thereby finding both blessing and happiness.
10. Redemption results in adoption (Gal 4:4-6).
11. Redemption provides the basis for the believer's eternal inheritance (Heb 9:15).
12. The blood of Christ is the ransom money or the purchase price of redemption (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 1 Peter 1:13,19; 1 John 1:7).
13. Redemption includes forgiveness of sin (Heb 9:22).
14. Redemption provides the basis of justification and immediate cleansing at salvation (Rom 3:24).
15. Redemption is the basis of our cleansing from sin during our Christian walk. (Lev 4:5; 6:1-6; 1 John 1:7,9).

REFLECTIONS UPON OUR ETERNAL REWARDS AND CROWNS

1. Rewards and Salvation are carefully separated in the scriptures. Salvation is a free gift from God, rewards are for meritorious service in the power of the Spirit.

2. Salvation - a free gift to the lost. (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, John 4:10) - an everlasting possession. (John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:47)
3. Rewards - to the saved who faithfully work for the Lord. (1 Corinthians 9:24, 25, Revelation 22:12) - distributed at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10) which takes place after the Rapture of the Church Revelation 19:7,8
4. Rewards are often pictured in the form of crowns:-
 - a) The incorruptible crown - for faithfulness in exercising self control. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
 - b) The crown of glory - for faithfulness in suffering. (1 Peter 5:4)
 - c) The crown of life - for faithfulness under trial. (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10)
 - d) The crown of righteousness - for faithful testimony. (2 Timothy 4:8)
 - e) The crown of rejoicing - for faithful service. (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20, Philippians 4:1)
5. Rewards come after you have entered into the Plan of God through regeneration
6. Rewards are based on the use of divine operating assets including the filling of the Holy Spirit
7. You can lose rewards but never salvation 1 Corinthians 3:14-15, 2 Timothy 2:12,13

REFLECTIONS UPON OUR AMBASSADORSHIP

1. An Ambassador does not appoint himself, he is appointed by the nation he represents, the king he represents, the person he represents. We are appointed by God. (2 Corinthians 5:20).
2. An Ambassador does not support himself. We are sustained and protected by God (Philippians 4:19).
3. An Ambassador does not represent himself. We represent God on earth. (Matthew 28:19-20).
4. An Ambassador does not belong to the nation to which he is sent. Positionally we are in heaven, experientially we are in the world. (Philippians 3:20, John 15:19).
5. All Ambassadors have instructions in written form. We have the Word of God. (1 Thessalonians 4:1-2).
6. An Ambassador representing his country does not treat any insult as personal. (Matthew 5:11-12).
7. When an Ambassador is recalled from a country it is tantamount to declaration of war. After the Rapture there will be massive warfare on earth. All Christians will be recalled at the Rapture.(1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

TEXT

“14 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. 28 And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 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?”

REFLECTION

Verses 14 – 16. None of us find a great list of names edifying, but that is because we did not know these people. Even today passers by read the names of the fallen on war memorials and they make no sense to them, yet to

the person whose relative is named there, that list is precious to them. Just so this list is a record of the families who served the Lord, but it also records the tragedy of believers who were not as they were meant to be and so they perished in the wilderness, rather than inheriting the land as they could have through total obedience.

These men were the founding princes of their nation; each family ancestor named had a prince to lead their family before the Lord during the Exodus. The leaders of each of these families, and the other sons of Jacob, will become the first Sanhedrin, yet they will all die in the desert lands. This list for Reuben, Simeon and Levi parallels the one in Genesis 46, and records the families that came from these patriarchs and were represented in the nation at the time of the Exodus. The blessing of great age was given to the patriarchs, who live in excess of 120 years each. Ages of their descendents move slowly down to the average of seventy after the Exodus period.

Verses 17 – 26. Now we focus into the family of Levi that Moses and Aaron descend from. From Levi, who lived for 137 years, to his son Kohath, who lived for 133 years, to his son Amram, who would live for 137 years, like his grand-father. This man married an aunt, his father's younger sister, Jochabed. From this marriage came Moses and Aaron; Aaron being the older one by three years. Moses will live for 120 years.

Aaron will have four sons to his wife Elisheba; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. These men will become the ancestors of the High priesthood and the key servants of the tabernacle in the wilderness and beyond into the Temple period. Their descendents will join the Lord's people in the early establishment of the Messianic Community in Jerusalem. Acts 6:7.

We will see the failures of these men as we advance through Exodus and Numbers, but we need to remember that their children will praise the Lord in the land of Canaan, and many from their descendents will praise the Lord in the early church, and in the Millennial Kingdom, their descendents will serve in the Temple with the Lord personally present. Their failures down the centuries will not stop those who repent and return to the Lord being blessed. Ezekiel 44:9ff. The line of the High Priesthood will flow through Eleazar, and through Phinehas, who will prove himself valiant for the Lord and for righteousness. Numbers 25:7ff, 31:6, Joshua 24:33.

Verses 27 – 30. Having brought us genealogically down to Moses and Aaron, Moses now writes the orders of the Lord, which came strongly to him again. He reminds the people through his words, that God's grace settled upon him and he was used by God to speak to Pharaoh, and then to bring the people out of Egypt. He is reminded that he is to speak all that the Lord says to him. He is not to diminish or add to the words of the Lord, but be His messenger alone. Moses still doubts his ability to communicate with Pharaoh. He feels his deep unworthiness before this great ruler. He is to speak with the Lord's strength as His messenger. Ezekiel 2:6-8, 3:10-17, 1 Corinthians 9:8-19.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God knows the names of His servants and they are all precious in His sight; even those who fail and fall short of the glory that could have been theirs, are still precious in His sight. God knows our names and we have a destiny in Him.
2. There is forgiveness in the Lord and an eternal destiny for all who love and serve Him in spirit and in truth. The family of Levi will rise up to serve the Lord through the centuries; many will fall, but enough will stand for truth to ensure that they are represented in the Millennial Temple. Let us so serve our Lord as to be worthy of remembrance, like those named in this chapter.

Malachi 3:16-17. *"16. Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

17. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

NOTES

CHAPTER 7**INTRODUCTION****THE NINE SIGNS OF GOD'S POWER OVER THE "gods" (demonic forces) OF EGYPT**

The Lord now calls upon Moses to take up his commission again and go to this Pharaoh, and realize that he is in the midst of the "Angelic Conflict" (Refer to the BTB study), and is a key soldier in the battle between the gods of Egypt and the Almighty God Jehovah.

Moses must see that he is in this place as God's man, and as such he is following a divine plan that will work itself out. All Moses is required to do is obey the commands of the Lord his God and head for the palace again and have Aaron speak to Pharaoh the words that God has given him.

Moses will become god-like in Pharaoh's eyes as a result of the conflict, and Pharaoh, as the representative of the gods of Egypt will fight against Moses with all his might and lying cunning. Moses will be the agent of God in the bringing of nine plagues upon the land and people and even animals of Egypt. Each will build in power and dreadfulness, and will prove, blow by blow against the gods of Egypt, that Jehovah rules as King of kings and Lord of all lords. Pharaoh will resist every thing that Jehovah God does, and he will even promise to deliver the people under duress, and then change his mind when each plague abates.

The nine plagues occur in three distinct groups of three, and their story takes up the next five chapters being rounded off in chapter eleven verses nine and ten. Six of the nine plagues come with a formal warning to Pharaoh, (numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8), but the 3rd, the 6th, and the ninth come without any warning, although after Pharaoh's recanting of his agreement to let the people go.

Pharaoh learns about the power and position of the Lord Jehovah from them, but his learning is academic, and does not change his behaviour towards the people of Israel. He confesses that the Lord Jehovah is indeed God. Exodus 8:22, 9:14, 27, 10:16. He asks Moses and Aaron to pray for him. Exodus 8:25ff. He even confesses his sin before God. His belief in the truth about God is however like the demons he worships; he trembles, but his belief in the truth does not change him, and so, it does not save him. **Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, 1 Corinthians 10:20, James 2:19.**

Pharaoh's works prove his statements of belief in God, and his confession of sin, is spiritually powerless, and personally useless to him. He has "dead faith" – it does not work out in godly decisions and actions. Matthew 7:13-20, James 2:14-26. He becomes a case study of so called, "easy believism"; for he can "tick the boxes" of belief in the reality and power of God, yet he remains in active rebellion against God. It is a reminder to us that people can acknowledge the truth about the Lord God, verbally acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord, and yet remain unsaved, for the truth that truly saves, is a truth that transforms the life.

If the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not in the life of a person, then that person is unsaved, no matter what they claim they believe. 1 John 3:11-15, 23-24, 4:1-3, 21-22. A belief that does not transform the life is a false and empty belief; a faith that does not transform the life is a fake faith. Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:15-16, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-14, James 3:14-18, 5:1-6.

Satan loves fake faith, indeed it is a major strategy of his to tranquilize the unsaved and have them walk along a pseudo-spiritual path to hell. Satan hates mankind and in fake religious experience and practises we see just how much he hates fallen man.

The Lord's parable of the sower reminds us that it is fruitfulness that proves the root of the plant is in the right place. Matthew 13:18-23, John 15:1-14. As Matthew 7:22-23, reminds us, many claim to be "in Christ", and may even do great deeds in His name, yet the Lord will disown them in the day of judgment, for their lives were never built upon a genuine relationship with Him. Matthew 7:24-27, 25:31-46.

As we go through Exodus we will see that not only Pharaoh, but many of the Israelites also are being tested by their experiences, and the nature of their belief system is put under God's microscope. The first three plagues will fall upon the Israelites as well as the Egyptians. The Lord allows them to suffer further for their rejection of Moses and their complaining to him about the way he is delivering them. They realise that the Lord is God once the third plague has finished and they repent as a people.

From the fourth onwards the Egyptians only suffer, and the Israelites in the land of Goshen are exempt. The faith of many of the people will however prove to be shallow, and their memory that God judges sin will prove short, and they will rebel again and again in the desert wanderings. While many will be saved, all will die in the desert because their faith in their God did not go far enough to trust Him to deliver them into the land of promise. Read again **Hebrews 3:7 – 4:7.**

Moses is the mentor for us through these things, as he sees and acts upon the truth, standing for the Lord God and seeing in the "faith" of the Egyptians a fake demon inspired, deceptive religion. He sees that they must change and the Israelites must have any hankering for Egyptian "faith" removed by being washed away with the strong soap of suffering.

TEXT

“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. 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. 3 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. 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. 6 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. 10 And Moses and Aaron went unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 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. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.”

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 7. Moses and Aaron will be the Lord’s double act for Pharaoh to pay attention to. They will proclaim the terms of battle between the gods of Egypt and the one true God over all. They are reminded that they are to follow God’s instructions alone and speak only what they are told to speak. They are not to get carried away with oratory or allow their outrage at Pharaoh’s double dealing to make them angry.

They are God’s ambassadors to the court of an evil man, and they are to act with the dignity of ambassadors, and take nothing personally. There is to be one command for Pharaoh; “let my people go and worship me!” He is to hear this message purely and clearly every time he sees these two servants of the true God. He will be judged by his rejection of this clear message, but Moses and Aaron will be judged if they are not clear and strong in proclaiming it. In the power of the Holy Spirit God makes us strong, but we must be truthful and clear in all we say and do!

Ezekiel 3:4-9. *“4. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.*

5. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;

6. Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

8. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.”

Ezekiel 3:17-20. *“17. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.*

18. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”

No personal message is to intrude into God’s message; Moses and Aaron are to be the heralds of the King of kings, not the speakers of their own opinions or emotions. They will feel many emotions through these coming days, but none are to intrude into the message. Just so, the minister of the Lord today is to be a “herald of the King” and that alone. Our personal opinions, however valid they are, are not to intrude into our ministry, and certainly not into our preaching; we are here to give the Lord’s policy on matters, not our own policy or ideas. Matthew 28:20, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

The attitude of Pharaoh has already been illustrated by his words at the first meeting Moses had with him and the evidence was seen in it’s results in the brick pits. Pharaoh’s arrogance and the policy that flows from this spirit within him will harden against Moses and God over the coming weeks. Pharaoh will be forced to disclose his true and abiding nature and choices by the things the Lord God puts him through.

God does not “harden” this man against his desires, the Lord simply bakes his desires hard in the furnace of testing! The anger of Pharaoh gives the Lord the opportunity to bring judgment upon the gods and people of Egypt who have delighted in the oppression of his people Israel. It is going to be judgment day for Egypt, as it is one day for all who hate righteousness and delight in oppression of the innocent. Matthew 18:1-7, Romans 6:23, Revelation 20:11-15.

Many today believe that the problem of low numbers responding to evangelistic messages is solved by having more signs and wonders, or a changed message. These next chapters will answer that false opinion completely, for both the Egyptians and the Israelites of this generation saw more signs and wonders than any group before the Lord's miracles were done, and yet both were judged for rebellion against God. Look at other believers as they reflect upon this period of time. **Nehemiah 9:10, 17, 25-31, Psalms 78:25-32, 105:27-45, Jeremiah 32:17-27, Acts 7:35-36.**

Signs and wonders do not change volitional choices at a deep level; for people will always do what suits them and what they finally prefer to do. Signs are given that rebellious people might be without excuse, not that they might coerce belief and create life change. Emotional responses to truth are always fleeting. People who prefer easy paths will find they always lead downhill. The Lord calls us to the narrow mountain path where real exertion is called for. Matthew 7:13ff.

If you have a ministry with lots of signs and wonders, be very careful, for it normally means the people you speak to are shallow and their proclamation of faith is superficial. Really devote your time to teaching the Word of Truth, for it alone, applied in the power of the Holy Spirit will transform and stabilize their lives. Emotionality brings joy at the time, but the memory of joy isn't joy, it is simply a longing for more emotion. Stabilize in truth, for it alone will keep people safe. Moses sets our example to follow, as a great miracle worker he kept on teaching bible class through the forty years, for he knew that the miracles wouldn't save these people, just meet their Old Sin Nature need for joy and comfort.

God will deliver the people at this time by means of overwhelming power, and that is the way He wishes it to be, for Egypt must not trouble these people for many years. The Egyptian people must know that they are judged by the true God. They are determined to rebuild their paganism, and they will successfully re-establish worship of their gods, even after losing all their first born sons (who normally would be the priests). These people will know the truth and then reject the truth. They will persist in their proven bankrupt faith system. They are judged because they choose to stay under the hand of judgment, rather than accept the offer of grace.

At any time Egypt can be the recipient of grace and mercy, but they will not bow to the truth, and without truth, there is no justice, love, grace or mercy. There is certainly no peace of mind, only legalistic rituals to feel falsely safe within. Aaron and Moses are obedient, and they do exactly what the Lord commands them and they are honoured for that. John 15:10, 14. They are of an age when most in Egypt are facing the inevitability of their death, but the Lord has another forty years of service for these two men, and they fulfil His will by their obedience; just as we do also. Our life is in the Lord's hands not in the hands of men. We are not to fear death, only the results of disobedience. **Psalm 68:20, 116:15.**

Verses 8 – 12. The Lord speaks to the two men, telling them exactly what the response of the Pharaoh will be. How did the Lord speak to these men? It would appear that they literally heard the words of God spoken to them. This was a supernatural and unusual thing and not many through history have had this experience. Be very prayerful when you hear clear direction from the Lord, for great things are expected of you, and you must walk in the Spirit or be crushed by the responsibility of it.

In the last verses of **Deuteronomy 34:10-12**, the final editor (most likely Ezra) notes that there had been none like Moses ever since. If it is Ezra who writes these words, he includes the work of all the prophets in his assessment, and places Moses experiences ahead of all the others. Few needed in history to hear the exact words of the Lord to do the Lord's will, but Moses and Aaron certainly did through the years of the Exodus, and the Lord told them exactly what they were to do, and precisely gave them what they needed to know for their day and all since.

They are told to bring the first sign before Pharaoh at their next meeting. When they are asked for a sign, Aaron is to throw his rod to the ground and it will become a serpent. Now Moses has seen this occur with his rod in his time of calling on the Mount of God (Horeb), but Aaron has not, so for him it is an act of faith to be obedient. The Lord is asking them both to step out in faith, and for Aaron to act on the basis of what Moses has told him the Lord has done, and expect the Lord to do it again. Exodus 4:1-5.

Moses has also been shown that he also has the ability to give himself leprosy and cure it again, but this is a sign that appears to have been reserved for the Israelites, for they needed to know and believe that the Lord could bring them through to victory. They had to see that any suffering in his plan, was able to be healed completely, and finally rejoiced in. Romans 8:28-39.

Aaron cast his staff down before the Pharaoh and it became a serpent and wriggled around the court probably scattering courtiers in all directions, as I suspect it was the serpent of Egypt, the Egyptian Cobra. The magicians of Egypt are very clever and adept in the magic and occult arts. These men have power, but it is from the devils associated with the pagan gods and so is inferior to the power of those who stand in the living God. 2 Timothy 3:1-9, 1 John 4:4. Aaron's staff snake swallows the others whole one by one and then Aaron picks his snake up and it becomes his own staff in his hand.

This is a clear miracle and also a demonstration of the superiority of the power of Moses and Aaron to that of the pagan magicians. Pharaoh however is not impressed, for his men have initially matched Moses and Aaron, even though beaten by them. He is determined to cling to his paganism, against the evidence, and so will hold onto the hope that they can beat Moses and Aaron next time.

It is important for believers to remember the lessons learned from this situation before us here. The powers of the demons and their human agents or mediums, are considerable at times, but always inferior to a Holy Spirit filled believer.

We are not to be surprised when the enemy demonstrates power, for Satan is after all the most powerful angel of all! We are to be alert to the power of the enemy and avoid him and his people if we can and stand against them if we have to. God has given us the Holy Spirit for just this reason – to stand against the devil and his minions. God is able to make you stand! Be obedient and be encouraged! **Romans 14:4, 1 Corinthians 16:13, 1 Peter 5:8-9.**

The Lord orders us to “Stand!” He tells us how we can stand, and it is only by having all our spiritual armour on and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Like Moses let us be obedient!

Ephesians 6:11-14. *“11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God will harden the personal resolve of all people, and they will not be able to do anything other than praise His name for His justice in His doings. The Lord simply pushes people to confront their reality fully and own it as their own. Pharaoh was determined to oppose Moses and the Plan of God, and so the Lord was not letting him off easily. In absolute justice and righteousness Pharaoh was going to be forced to fully disclose his heart and face the consequences of his actions and decisions. All people must face the consequences of their actions and decisions. Revelation 20:11-15.
2. God has no problem defeating Satan, his demons, and their human helpers. Our job is to remain in the place of God’s calling for our lives and then the power of the Holy Spirit will always overwhelm the powers of the enemy. God has no power shortage to deal with evil at any time. We get into trouble when we are out of the plan, or out of fellowship with the One who has the power. Revelation 3:14-20.
3. It is never too late to hear the voice of God within the heart. Moses and Aaron are in their eighties, and they stand and serve and move out to lead the people. If we live we have work to be done, be it in prayer, support, service, teaching or leadership. There is no-one who is too old to serve the Lord, for our retirement is in heaven, so while we live we need to be listening for the words of the Lord in the heart and the opportunities for service on the path ahead in our life.

REFLECTION UPON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SIGNS

1. A sign is something which stands for, or looks forward to something else.
 - a) Things such as- The Temple, Regalia, Stars and Uniforms.
 - b) Festivals such as the Jewish Feasts which spoke of the Plan of God.
 - c) Sacrifices such as Levitical Offerings which spoke of the work of Jesus Christ.
 - d) Customs such as Circumcision.
 - e) Names including the names of People and Places.
 - f) Supernatural Acts such as Miracles.
2. Signs were given by God to individuals as a proof of their authority. (Deuteronomy 13:1-4, Judges 6:17, Ezekiel 12:6,11, Hebrews 2:4)
3. Signs were for unbelieving Israel as a warning of coming judgment. (Isaiah 20:3, 28:11, Jeremiah 6:1, Ezekiel 4:3)
4. Signs for believers were for reminders of God's Grace (Exodus 13:9), such as the Covenant, (Exodus 31:13,17) and His Holiness. (Ezekiel 14:8)
5. The life of the Lord was a sign. (Matthew 12:38-42, Luke 2:34-35, John 6:30-35)
6. His death and resurrection were also signs. (Matthew 12:39, 24:30, John 2:18-22, 3:14-15)
7. The Apostles had temporary sign gifts to prove their authority from God.(Act 14:8-28, 1 Corinthians 1:22, Acts 19:11-12 cf 1 Timothy 5:23, Philippians 2:25)
8. Asking for signs is not a sign of spirituality, and is dangerous. (Matthew 12:38-39, John 6:30-35, 12:32-34)

9. Signs of the First Advent in Luke.
 - a) The virgin birth itself, in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy; the visitation of the angels both to Mary and Elizabeth, were all miraculous events. (Luke 1:26-38)
 - b) The attendant birth of John the Baptist is also described with its associated signs, and the recognition by the baby in the womb of Elizabeth was a sign of things to come. (Luke 1:5-25, 43-45 cf Psalm 110:1)
 - c) Mary's prophecy of her son's role as Saviour and Sacrifice. (Luke 1:54-56)
 - d) The signs associated with John's birth. (Luke 1:65-66)
 - e) The prophetic song of Zachariah. (Luke 1:67-80)
 - f) The angelic visit to the shepherds. (Luke 2:10-11)
 - g) The song of Simeon. (Luke 2:25-35)
 - h) The song of Anna. (Luke 2:36-38)
 - i) The sign of the prophet Isaiah in the preaching of John the Baptist. (Luke 3:3-18)

10. The "Seven Signs" in John's Gospel.
 - a) Wedding at Cana at Galilee. 2:1-11
 - b) Healing of the Nobleman's son. 4:46-54
 - c) The Cripple by the Pool of Siloam. 5:1-16
 - d) The feeding of the Five Thousand. 6:1-14
 - e) The healing of the Blind Man. 9:1-38
 - f) The raising of Lazarus. 11:1-46
 - g) The resurrection of the Lord. 20,21

TEXT

"13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. 14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. 15 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. 17 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 loathe 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. :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. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. 24 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."

REFLECTION

Verses 13 – 14. The hardening process begins with the proclamation of the truth. People's hearts are not hardened against God while things in their life are calm and ordinary, but when the Lord God of Heaven and Earth makes demands upon them, then the process begins, if they do not want to have the Lord rule over their heart and life. It is a volitional thing here, as has been mentioned above before, although the Lord takes responsibility for the process. God tells us that He hardens Pharaoh's heart, even though Pharaoh is hardening his own heart, just as the Jewish people have done through their history, and we have done through our respective nation's history.

Zechariah 7:4-14. *"4. Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,
5. Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?
6. And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?
7. Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?
8. And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,
9. Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:
10. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.
11. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.*

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.*

13. *Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:*

14. *But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate."*

Zechariah's passage here is the best one on the hardening process, and in it we see the reaction of the people to God's truth and their deliberate turning away from it. This is what Pharaoh does; he hears, he hates what he hears, he rejects what he hears, he opposes what he hears, and he loudly complains about what he hears, and then he turns away from the messengers. In his actions, all freely done, he walks away from God and hardens his heart against God.

God takes responsibility for this, for He drives the process, forcing mankind to face their choices, and make a decision about how they will live and who they will serve in this life. He forces them to choose, leaving them no pleasant options to avoid the issue. They are rightly judged for their response. Romans 1:18-32, 2:1-11. The challenge comes to us daily, every time we hear God's Word of truth. Will we hear and believe and obey the Word, or will we harden our hearts against it? Hebrews 3:7-13, 4:1-12, 12:9-13.

Hebrews 3:7-13. *"7. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,*

8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Verses 15 – 16. Moses and Aaron are told exactly where to stand in the morning to meet the Pharaoh by the river. This tells us that the Pharaoh has given them permission to come to see him, for otherwise to approach this ruler would be death. The two men are to position themselves by the river where the Pharaoh comes each day and stand ready to meet him there. It may be not far from where Moses was drawn from the river eighty years before!

It is Moses staff that is to be the primary one focused upon in this demonstration before Pharaoh this time, although both will be used to strike the water in the end. Both men's staffs have turned to snakes, but only Aaron's has been so transformed before Pharaoh. The point being made to Pharaoh is that it is not Aaron, his staff, or Moses and his staff, but the God of all who empowers them that he must come to terms with. It is the challenge to see beyond the man to the message. The message is the same, and this time Moses is to point out that the reason Pharaoh has not let the people go is that he has refused to hear the words of God. The request is to carry a hint of warning this time, for the second sign he will be given is to be a more serious one for the land and a judgment upon the heart of Egypt; the River Nile itself.

A story is told of an act of St Patrick when he led the great evangelistic campaign of Ireland in the sixth century that makes a similar point to this. A great pagan druid-priest challenged Patrick to an ordeal of strength. The pagan worshipped fire and the god of fire. The ordeal called for both men to walk into a raging fire built in the shape of a large conical hut and return alive from the midst of the fire. Patrick offered to go first. He wrapped his monk's cloak around him and walked into the midst of the fire and returned. The pagan priest argued that the cloak was what was keeping Patrick safe, so Patrick gave it to the pagan priest to walk into the fire with. He did and died in the midst of the fire. Patrick walked back into the fire, recovered his cloak and returned to the chief of the tribe, who immediately ordered his people to put aside their worship of fire, and worship the God and creator of all the elements of the universe, who Patrick worshipped. Paganism ended that night for that Celtic tribe because they were prepared by Patrick's faith and obedience and the Holy Spirit's work within them as they opened their hearts to the truth.

The same thing could have happened in Egypt, but pharaoh didn't want it to happen! He preferred the inferior power paganism gave him, and so he hardened his heart against the truth, and the Lord kept the pressure on him, so that what was really there, in the core of his heart, would come out. He fights the creator of the universe; a really foolish thing to do, yet the choice still of the majority of men and women. Isaiah 45:9-13, Jeremiah 50:31-34, Ezekiel 29:1-7.

Verses 17 – 18. The specific instruction is now given and the words to be said made clear. Moses is to announce the very nature of the judgment upon the waters of the River Nile. The waters are to turn to blood, and the result of this red tide, is that the fish of the river die and the entire river will stink in the nostrils of the people and become undrinkable for the people and unable to be used for anything other than irrigation, although they may be too scared to use it for that lest the land be defiled also.

The people of Egypt worship their river, and so let them worship a stinking cess pool! If they will pay divine honours to a river and not it's Creator, then the Creator will show them who has the power, and it is not the river. Not only the river will be infected with corruption, but all stored water in open containers will also be polluted. This is to make sure that none say this is a natural phenomenon flowing from the lands to the South, but all see that it is a divine act of judgment. Every household will be affected by this, for they will be without water to drink or wash by for seven days. The people are used to walking to their river every day to draw clean and delicious tasting water, but now they must dig wells beside the river and allow the water to cleanse itself in the soil and draw up water from the holes they have dug.

Verses 19 – 20. The Lord now tells Moses to get Aaron to also stretch out his staff over the waters of the land of Egypt. Both men now formally raise their staffs over the waters and the judgment is pronounced by God and the waters turn to blood. The rivers, their canals, and their storage vessels, be they of clay or wood, all are turned to blood. The way Moses describes this makes it clear that he and Aaron lifted their staffs high over the water and then both struck their staffs into the water before them, but the turning to blood of the water sources occurred all over the land simultaneously at this one time.

The nature of this was so miraculous that only an act of God could explain it. It was done in such a way that there was no natural explanation for it, but unsaved and pagan man seeks explanations that will lower the significance of the miracle, and so hinder it's convicting power.

Verses 21 – 25. The judgment unfolds over the next hours, as fish die and float to the surface and the hot Egyptian sun rises and the fish rot on the surface of the river and the whole river stinks in the nostrils of all the people. The river water becomes undrinkable very quickly and the people have to dig trenches and wells to allow the water to purify through the soils before they can drink it. In grace God ensures they can drink water, if they work hard for it.

The whole land is affected and the people know that there is something happening in the land; there is a battle between the gods of Egypt and the God of the Hebrews. Their river was their life and their god, and they now worship their stinking god, and for seven days this plague continues.

The Lord will later, John 2:9-11, turn the water at Cana into wine, and this is to be remembered as we read this, for when the Messiah is received the water of purification becomes the wine of gladness. These people here in Egypt could have been blessed by the Lord, but their negative volition to Him meant that judgment was the only face of God they allowed themselves to see. This judgment will occur once more, at the very end of this age, during the Great Tribulation period. Revelation 8:8-9.

Satan is not short of power here, for with certain chemicals the waters can be made to look like blood, and the magicians are able to turn purified water into blood also, although not on the same scale as Moses and Aaron have. It is the scale of the impact of this that should have made Pharaoh stop and realise that his gods are judged, and so is he, but he clings to the false belief that this is but a trick of Moses and Aaron. There is no logic to Pharaoh's position, yet that is because there is no logic behind the thinking of people who do not **want to believe** in God.

Miracles/Signs are given to convince people of truth if they genuinely seek the truth, but no sign will convince people who do not want to believe the truth. The Lord will be without any case against His righteousness here; all will see that He has been just, fair, righteous and holy in His dealings. God has given men the greatest miracle in the Resurrection of the Lord, but even this will not convince those who do not want to believe. Luke 16:19-31, John 11:49-53, Acts 2:43, 4:2ff, Revelation 20:12-15.

Finally all who reject God's work and rest arrogantly upon the goodness of their own, will face the judgment where their works evaporate away and they are left with their negativity towards the King of kings and they perish without hope, for they have turned their backs on hope!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Each person faces, at some point in their life, the demands of the Holy God over their life. The Lord puts pressure upon all to face the truth, and for those who reject the voice of their creator and Saviour, there is nothing but the daily hardening into their sinful rebellion. Such persistence in hatred of their Saviour leaves no hope for them at the last judgment. They had the opportunity to respond, but failed to do so, and so they face the truth too late.
2. Satanic counterfeits exist, and he has power to use, but always inferior to that available to the believer in Christ and through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Being Spirit filled is crucial for daily survival in this present world. Let us ensure we walk with the Lord daily, and have our armour on, for the evil and malice of the enemy is focused upon us. Claim 1 John 4:4 right now and walk into this day in God's power and with his confidence.

NOTES

CHAPTER 8**INTRODUCTION**

The hardening process continues through this chapter, with Pharaoh being given fresh opportunities to acknowledge that the Lord God is indeed the King over all kings, and the Lord over all the gods and lords of Egypt. However, he continues to refuse to see what his eyes show him and clings to his rejection of the meaning of the facts, hoping that all this will simply go away. Satan's main strategy with unsaved mankind is distraction by pleasant activities and denial of truth.

This is the common attitude of the unbeliever who does not want to believe the truth; they simply hope that the conviction will be over and that the annoying truth will be buried and hidden again. All they seek is to continue with their pleasant life without any reference to their maker. The Lord will ensure that they get their wish; for if they reject his truth the conviction will ebb away over time, and they will be allowed to do exactly what they sought to do, avoid God. That is, until of course, they face him! Psalms 107:40-43, Revelation 20:10-15.

TEXT

“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. 2 And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs: 3 And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs: 4 And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. 5 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. 7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. 8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat 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. 9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I entreat 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? :10 And he said, To morrow. 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. 12 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. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 4. To avoid the sight and smell of the stinking river, Pharaoh had simply retired to his palace and avoided the unpleasant reminders of the power of God. He had been able to lock himself away from the sign of blood in the river, but he will not be able to lock himself away from the next sign from the river, for the plague of frogs will enter his very bed room. Pharaoh is again told to let the people go and worship the Lord their God, and this time he is told exactly what will happen if he doesn't.

Frogs were a natural phenomenon in Egypt as the waters receded each year. What is unusual this year is that the water will not recede for this to happen and the numbers of frogs will be excessive, well beyond anything ever before. They will fill the land and crawl over everything in the houses of the people, leaving slimy trails over all their cooking utensils, rendering everything that would be eaten from, unclean. Satanic religion leaves all of life unclean before God, and this plague simply makes the impact of evil religion real and palpable.

Verses 5 – 7. Just as Moses had said, so it occurred; the frogs came out of the Nile and covered the land with a writhing carpet of slimy frogs. The magicians are able to call the frogs up also, although this would be relatively easy once they were there in the river after Moses and Aaron have called them to multiply. This time pharaoh will see through the actions of his magicians, for they can call more frogs onto the land, but they cannot stop them coming, which is what he seeks them to do! Their power is limited and their ability to duplicate Moses and Aaron's actions has met their match. 1 John 4:4.

Their magic is nothing when compared to the mighty power of the Creator God. They are seen to be powerless against God and they will not try to duplicate any miracle again, but they will resist salvation. The test for any prophet is that what they say will occur, and what they claim comes true. True prophets prove their credentials and call people to righteousness and truth. Deuteronomy 13:1-11, 18:9-22. Fake prophets are game players and they will always run out of power when reality is truly confronted, but even then ungodly people prefer their ungodliness, and hold to evil.

Verses 8 – 11. Here is the genuine prophet seen and the false workers of evil unmasked. Moses places himself in the hands of the Pharaoh as to when the frogs are to go, so that the Pharaoh cannot say that there has been

any planning and human agency in their removal. This is always God's way; for if man can make the prophecy come true then it was not of God in the first place. The magicians of Egypt can bring more frogs, but cannot remove them, let alone do so on a day that Pharaoh nominates. This is God's way of ensuring that the Pharaoh cannot give glory to anyone other than Jehovah. The battle is against the Lord God and the Lord gives Pharaoh no other way to turn than towards him in worship or back to his bankrupt gods/demons. He will choose freely to stay with his demons and pay the price.

Pharaoh recognizes that it is the Lord Jehovah God who has done this in his request to Moses that he pray to the Lord for the plague to be finished. He promises then to release the Israelites to worship in the desert. Moses uses this protestation of repentance as an opportunity for a further proof of the Lord's power over the land and rivers of Egypt. Pharaoh is to name the exact time for the plague to go. He does so, giving Moses overnight to pray, and for the plague to be all gone by morning. The frogs will die or stay in the river, and none will be left alive upon the land. The actions of the Lord are to be a sign to Pharaoh and also a sign to Israel. Sadly over time, both will forget the power of God and serve other gods, and so receive the judgments associated with their stupidity. Psalms 78:42-57.

Why do men lie to God? Why do creatures forget that they cannot fight against their Creator and win? What makes men resist the One who made them and went to the Cross to save them? These are the questions that brought the Lord to tears as He wept over Jerusalem, recognizing that they would reject Him and despise His sacrifice for them. Matthew 23:37-39, Luke 13:34-35. The Lord knows that we are dust, but He will judge the persistently proud and arrogant. Psalms 78:32-38, 103:10-18, Isaiah 10:12-15, 40:21-31, 46:8-13.

Verses 12 – 15. The two men leave the presence of Pharaoh, having given him the time frame for the miraculous deliverance of the land. It is not humanly speaking possible to call frogs to return to a river, especially not along several thousand miles of water ways! Moses can pray only, and the Lord alone can answer his prayers. Only God can deliver Egypt from the plague of frogs, and only God can prove Moses a genuine prophet or a fake and a fraud. Remember the tests of the true prophet that Moses will later give to the Israelites, to assist them in identifying fraudsters in the years to come. Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:9-22. Any prophet who is not specific in their prophecy is a fake, and every prophet whose words are proved false is not to be listened to ever again!

Moses spends the night in fervent prayer for the land of Egypt. The Lord leads him to seriously pray through the night for those who hate him, and for the land that has treated his people with slavery for a hundred years. He is to pray for them that spitefully use him and his people. This remains the Lord's will for us all; that we pray for the lost, and for those who hate us. Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-36, 23:34, Acts 7:55-60. It is a challenge as we read these verses as to just how seriously we are to pray. I had thought, through early teaching, that all you did was to send up a quick prayer and then move on in the daily tasks, but for any serious subject, serious prayer is called for, and earnest prayer is to be made through the night (or day) hours.

The Lord answers Moses prayer and the frogs upon the land all die that night. It will be an unholy stink in the morning when the sun rises and the Egyptians will spend all the next day gathering them into heaps, and either burning or burying them. The people, from pharaoh to the poorest in the land know that they have been delivered, and they know that this is the doing of the Lord. How is that? The ordinary people outside the delta region would not necessarily have been told of the words of Moses, but two things would mean the story would spread quickly.

Firstly, every audience was held with large numbers of servants present, who would have gone home and spread the story through their families and into every market in the delta region at least. All people, even those further up the river, were interested in the subject, for all were affected by it and sought the correct supernatural explanation in order to do the right spells, and make the right sacrifices at the right temple to deal with the problem in a way that made sense to them. Trade and travel up and down the river was extensive and so the story would spread quickly, from one market up the river to the next in days.

Secondly, the frogs were sacred to the Egyptians, and there was a frog god. I suspect the temples dedicated to this god were crowded with people making earnest prayers for the plague to be over. When you worship a slimy, sticky creature, and you are unable to kill it, your suffering is twice as burdensome. We see this today in Hindu India with their worship/reverence of rats. This was the Lord's point to the people of Egypt. Each plague will be a direct assault on one or more gods of Egypt, and is a challenge to turn from the demons to the real One True Creator God.

I suspect the frogs would have to be burned, to purify the land, rather than just bury them. This would have prolonged the smell for a number of days. As the smell drops away and the pharaoh reflects upon the fact that the plague is now over, he hardens his heart against the promise he has made to Moses. He hopes Moses power is exhausted and that there are no more plagues to come. The deception of Satanic thinking is such, that his people think that they will get by with their rebellion, and that God will eventually give up and leave them alone, because that is what most people do! They forget, God is not a man that he should lie! God is not exhausted as men are.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God is gracious to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The judgments against them are graded in their power and scope. The plagues are a nuisance, but no-one need die of them. The mildness of the plagues, given the lying deception of the Pharaoh is a reminder that God does not run to judgment, but seeks man's repentance and transformation.

2. The true prophet of God does not speak nonsense, nor imprecise words of encouragement or general warning; rather, the true prophet is precise and specific, and says things that are testable and falsifiable. Moses stands for God and that means he stands as a warning and a message of hope to these people. Egypt can be blessed if they will turn away from their gods and worship the truth, but they prefer their spells and sacrifices to slimy creatures.

3. Prayer is to be earnest, serious, passionate, life changing, and long at times. Prayer needs to be made with precision, with expectation of an answer coming. At times prayer is to be short, but when there is an issue requiring it, we are not to be hesitant about staying up through the night and repeating our requests hour after hour, and even day after day.

TEXT

“8:16 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. 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. 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. 20 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. 22 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. 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. 25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. 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? 27 We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. 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: entreat for me. 29 And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will entreat 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 entreated the LORD. 31 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.”

REFLECTION

Verses 16 – 19. With the next plague there is no warning given to pharaoh that it is coming; Aaron just is told by Moses to stretch his staff over the dust of the land and the “lice” (probably ticks – that attack both men and animals and suck their blood and cause disease) emerge in plague numbers. Lest you think God is being unfair here in not warning Pharaoh, remember, he has refused to honour his word to Moses and let the people go. He can make the connection quickly between his decision making and the events that flow afterwards.

He makes the direct connection and the magicians creep back into the palace and try to do the miracle themselves to regain their credibility, but they are unable to do it at all. There were plenty of spells and charms that involved ticks, lice and other crawling beetles and insects, and I suspect they tried for quite a while before they had to admit to Pharaoh that there was no hope of duplicating this miracle sign. Reluctantly, but definitely they admit, “this is the finger of God”. This is a reminder to us that while the enemy has power, it is limited, and when the Lord wants to achieve an objective, then He will ensure it is he alone that gets the glory, and that Satan is unable to duplicate His work. Daniel 2:10-11, 4:7, 5:7-8, Zechariah 7:8-12, 2 Timothy 3:8-9. How desperate are unsaved people to avoid changing their lives?

Verses 20 – 22. Up until this point the Israelites have suffered these plagues as well as the Egyptians, but this next one will be for the Egyptians only. Remember my observation in the previous chapter, that the people of Israel needed to learn the power of God to punish disobedience, in order that they might have no excuse before God for their later disobedience, nor any reason to complain when they were punished for it.

All in the land have come to the point that the magician have; that this is the finger of Jehovah God, and this is the God you do not mess around with. Having had this lesson hammered into them, the Israelites are exempt the further plagues, although they will be required to follow Moses instructions to escape. With the next plagues the Hebrews are required to remain within the boundaries of the land of Goshen, and then they will be alright. Malachi 3:6-10, 17-18.

The next plague is warned of, and it will be a particularly challenging one to the Egyptians, for the dog god Anubis was honoured by most in some way in many of the details of life, but the biting “dog-fly” that will come will be particularly awful and dangerous to the health of the nation. The fact that it is a fly will make the miracle of the deliverance of the land

of Goshen, within the Delta region, particularly impressive. Flies tend to fly everywhere and to have this land free of them would make a significant point to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

It will be like a hidden force field over the land of Goshen and no fly enters the area. Many Egyptians will join the Israelites in leaving at the Exodus, and some may leave because they acknowledge that the Lord Jehovah is indeed the one true God as a result of these plagues and their deliverance from them by joining themselves close to Israelites.

The message to Pharaoh is repetitive, and consistent. He is without excuse before God and men for his persistent negativity towards God and the people of Israel. It is almost as if he has dug himself into a hole here and will not leave it! He is determined to reject the truth and persists in his rebellion even as the evidence becomes overwhelming against his position. It is a reminder of the words of the Lord in the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus. Luke 16:27-31.

If men will not hear the words of one prophet, then they will not be impressed, even if one rise from the dead. This was sadly proven by the actions of the Jewish leadership after the resurrection of Jesus. Acts 5:40, 7:51ff.

Verses 23 – 24. The land is covered with a swarm of these terrible biting flies. The result of these swarms may also be tied to a later skin disease that breaks out amongst the cattle and people, for these flies are pestilent, carrying all manner of diseases and infected bites in hot climates can quickly develop into serious illness and death. The plagues are not just impressive now, but actually harmful to the health of everyone affected.

It is important therefore, that the people of Israel are delivered from this plague and the rest. Their very deliverance will be a sign to Pharaoh that the days of grace are now over, and each miracle sign given will now be one that sorely punishes the Pharaoh and his people for their attitude of evil. Psalms 78:45, 105:31. God has slowly moved to this level of discipline for evil, but Pharaoh is playing the game by his rules, and all he needs to do is repent to stop the escalation.

There were pagan gods that claimed to rule over the flies. One especially “Baalzebub” (the Lord of the Flies) of Ekron, will be a key deity (read demon), who will trouble the children of Israel through their history, possibly because he got such a beating at this time. The demons who claimed to be able to expel the flies from temples and houses are all proved hopeless and powerless against this judgment. The Lord judges each of the demons which are behind the pagan gods here and gives them a foretaste of their final doom. Revelation 20:10.

Verses 25 – 28. Pharaoh is determined not to lose his cheap labour force. He doesn't want to let these people go to worship and then slip away into the desert. He is desperate to get rid of the biting flies but will not relent on his desire to hold onto his slaves. He will not bow to the Lord, but wants Moses to entreat for him. This word is a primitive one, and means to burn incense in worship and prayer. It recognizes that he wishes them to worship and pray for him, but he doesn't want them to do it too far away.

Moses recognizes that the sacrifices demanded by the Lord are blood sacrifices of animals that the Egyptians hold sacred, and so such a sacrifice within the borders of the land will incite a riot and the local people would try to stone them to death for blasphemy against the Egyptians gods. Moses repeats his demand that they obey the Lord God Jehovah and go three days journey into the desert and there worship, well away from offended Egyptian eyes. Exodus 3:18, 5:1.

Pharaoh won't have it, and repeats his desire that they do not go “far away”. This is another primitive, likely Akkadian origin word, that again reminds us that this account is written in the days well before the Monarchy of David or Solomon. These words were written by Moses, not a later scribe! We are challenged by God here, through Moses, and let us remember that his words tell us that, and we are to strongly reject the words of pagan German commentators who attacked the truth of the Mosaic authorship of these books.

Verses 29 – 32. Moses operates openly and warns the Pharaoh not to be deceitful again. As I read this I reflected that he could have said, “We will go into the desert and there I will pray for the flies to go!” God is gracious to Pharaoh. This is not political manoeuvring, but spiritual warfare, and so the Lord's man must be ready to lose each battle on the way in order that the spiritual victory may be as the Lord wishes it to be. Pharaoh and the people of Egypt are to be fully and completely without excuse for their evil towards Israel. Their gods and the demons behind them are to be fully judged. **Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, 1 Corinthians 10:20-21.**

Once again Moses sets the time for the departure of the flies while they still swarm around him. Now Moses and Aaron have had to enter the “fly zone” to deliver this message. They must be ready themselves to be attacked by the flies to deliver the grace message of deliverance to Pharaoh. He leaves with the warning for Pharaoh not to change his mind again and rescind his permission to go into the desert to sacrifice. It is a dangerous thing for any person or people to lie to God and withhold what they have promised to do in obedience to his command, but that is exactly what Pharaoh did yet again. **Psalms 78:34-37, Jeremiah 42:19-22, Malachi 3:6-10.**

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God makes distinctions in his judgments. If we suffer anything in this world we are to take it to the Lord and claim Romans 8:28, for the Lord does not punish the innocent with the guilty, and anything that has happened has a purpose in the grace and mercy of God, and the challenge of the believer is to find that purpose.

2. God is more powerful than the enemy. The Lord's power is superior to that of the demons under Satan's command. Our task in this world is to walk before the Lord in the filling of the Holy Spirit and with our spiritual armour on at all times. We then walk safely on the path the Lord has carved for us through the midst of the devil's world.

3. It is a dangerous thing to lie to the Lord. If the Lord calls us to do any thing, let us advance and do it, without fear or hesitation. The Lord calls us to serve him in spirit and in truth, and so let us do so. If we have promised anything to the Lord, let us fulfil that promise. Let us devote ourselves again today to the Lord's service and leave any injustice or lying behaviour's of Satan's people in the Lord's hand for His remedy.

REFLECTIONS UPON FALSE "GODS" - DEMONS

1. Occult practices such as astrology, divination, and spiritism are condemned by the scriptures (Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:9-12). These were punishable by death in Israel. (Leviticus 20:27) Demonic forces are behind these things when they are real.
2. Demonism has exercised much influence in history (Ezekiel 21:21, Daniel 10:13). Evil is associated with the rule of demon possessed kings. (2 Kings 21:1-17)
3. The judgment of demons involved the destruction of demon possessed people and religious systems associated with idolatry. (Isaiah 19:1-3, cf Deuteronomy 7:5)
4. Many nations have been destroyed because of their demonic practices.
 - a) Canaanites (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)
 - b) Babylonians (Isaiah 46:1-7, 47:1-15)
 - c) The judgment of Egypt's first born included the judgment of demons. (Exodus 12:12)
5. The return of nations to the battle of Armageddon is under demonic influence. (Revelation 16:13-16).
6. Satan and the occult forces will be imprisoned during the Millennium. (Isaiah 24:21-23; Revelation 20:1-3).
7. Demons are called "hairy ones" (Leviticus 17:7), destroyers. (Deuteronomy 32:17) They are ugly in their effects and ugly in their hatred of mankind – and often even their idol statues are ugly.
8. Demons
 - a) seek to possess men or animals (Mark 5:1-13).
 - b) deceive man into false doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1).
 - c) believe and tremble (James 2:19).
 - d) speak both truth and lies; whatever will assist their deceptive objectives. (2 Chronicles 18:21; Acts 16:17-18).
9. Satan rules the demon world (Matthew 12:24-28). Demons have a hierarchy and are territorial. (Daniel 10:12,13,20; Ephesians 6:12).
10. Sacrificing to idols is worship of demons (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 106:36-38, 1 Corinthians 10:19-21).
11. The following activities can lead to demon possession (for the unbeliever) or demon influence (for the believer):
 - a) Submission to demons through idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:19-21) and occult practices such as mental telepathy, clairvoyance, astral travel, and spiritism (Deuteronomy 18:9-12).
 - b) Specific dedication of one's body to demons, such as the Hindu soma and shamanism.
 - c) Any practice in which you "lose control" of your mind and senses, such as drugs and alcohol (Galatians 5:20, the Greek word for "sorcery" is "pharmakeia"), meditation and trances, hypnotic rhythms in music and dance.
 - d) Sexual cults, such as the asherah (Judges 6:25-28, 2 Kings 21:3)
12. When people reject God, He may allow Satan and demons to administer discipline, even death. (John 8:44, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 3:6-7). People finally get what they choose.
13. Demon influence can cause abnormal psychological behaviour, physical strength, sickness, etc (Mark 5:1-5, Job 2:6-8)
14. Jesus Christ has conquered all demon power (Matthew 10:8).

CHAPTER 9**INTRODUCTION**

The next two plagues complete the second group, and with the third illustrate the specific judgment of God upon the hardened heart of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but also we keep on seeing the grace of God in action. The Lord does not destroy Pharaoh, or his people by these plagues, and there is a way of escape provided in each by fleeing into Goshen and joining the Israelites. The Israelites are also learning through these plagues, that their God is Lord of the whole earth, and that His judgments are specific; He separates the innocent from the guilty. Jeremiah 24:4-7.

They also see that the Lord does not act without warning and opportunity for obedience first. In the plague of hail there is advance warning to secure the animals and people, and the hail strikes at a time when cash crops are destroyed but not the crop that the Egyptians depend upon for their staple food. God is being very careful to inch up the suffering of these people until they see the truth, but not to overwhelm them by judgment. It is grace all the way through this next section. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

This second group of plagues, which made a separation between the Israelites and the Egyptians began in Exodus 8:21 with the swarms of biting dog flies, and now increases in severity with the "murrain" (a contagious disease of cattle) upon the cattle and then other animals, and then a fire storm of hail and lightning bolts that devastate the land. The land of Goshen will be spared each time as a way of graphically pointing out to Pharaoh and his people that the Israelites are being protected in the midst of the judgment, and that their God is truly the Lord of Egypt as well as them. The people are being left without excuse for their rebellion by this process.

God takes no delight in the death of the lost, and judgment remains his "strange work" throughout scripture. It is common to hear amongst superficial scholars the lie that the work of Moses is of "law and judgment", and the work of Christ is "love and grace", when the truth we will see unfolding through these books is common to both testaments, and is grace, mercy and love for man. **Isaiah 28:21, Micah 7:18-20, John 3:15-16, 2 Peter 3:9.**

In this chapter we also get a clue as to the time frame of the judgments upon Egypt, for we are apt to think, following the Hollywood movies, that all these plagues occur within a few weeks. The truth is quite different. From the details in this chapter we can identify that there is at least eight weeks between the seventh plague, of hail, and the tenth that leads to the Exodus.

We have an approximate date for the Exodus, due to the Passover being instituted on a set day in the time period between the end of what we now call March, or the beginning of April. As we will see, the plague of hail destroys the crops of barley, and the flax, but not the wheat. This will occur in the Egyptian climate only at the end of January or very early February. This gives us the possibility that the time frame for the plagues and the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses may have stretched over four or more months.

TEXT

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. **2** 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. **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. **5** And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. **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. **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. **8** 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. **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. **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. **12** And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses. **13** 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.

REFLECTION

Verses 1-3. The message of the Lord through Moses is still the same, but the consequences for disobedience are growing in their destructive power. God's judgments are still measured and the Pharaoh has time and opportunity to repent and change his heart and behaviours. The Pharaoh is told that he is to obey the Lord or he will face

even more terrible consequences than he has faced before. There has been a time delay for the people and their leader to recover from the earlier plague, although their fly bites may still be infected and require treatment. They are reminded of the earlier judgments, but are not overwhelmed by them and so they face a new test of volition. This is at the heart of this confrontation; the people and their leader are facing the basic choice to obey or disobey/reject the Lord of All.

Moses will go on to write in the Law itself the principles that emerge from these dealings of the Lord with Pharaoh. The children of Israel and the Egyptians will learn lessons of God's righteousness and justice, as well as His mercy and grace. They all will see over time that the Lord has been gracious to them, but their own rebellious hearts has led to their judgment. Israel must learn this also, and sadly all but two of the Exodus generation will die in the wilderness for their disobedience. Leviticus 26:14-17, 21, 23, 27, 28.

God's message to man remains unchanged through the centuries; if we obey there is repentance and forgiveness, but if we resist the will of God there is nothing but the judgment that must flow from there. Psalms 7:8-16, 68:19-23, Isaiah 1:16-20, Romans 2:3-11. Moses is blunt as he tells us the story, and we are urged, don't blame God for this, for each person makes their own call as to what they will do and so what their ultimate destiny will be.

Verses 4 – 6. The terrible and contagious disease will affect the cattle and all the working animals of the Egyptians, but will not affect the Israelite's animals. This is not naturally possible with all these diseases of cattle, which spread by air bourn virus or spore forms. There is no stopping such diseases and entire herds have to be killed and burned to stop an outbreak; often the entire four footed animal stock of an affected area must be killed to stop the spread of these diseases. Today a "foot and mouth" disease outbreak can cost a country billions of dollars. It is this level of disease that is in view here.

In New Zealand the very day I first wrote these words (in 2007) this was in the news, for a minor outbreak of such a "murrain" type disease in the United Kingdom had led to major changes in importing and exporting of cattle products world wide. The cost to New Zealand of such an outbreak, if it occurred, was quoted in that day's paper as being, the immediate loss of 20,000 jobs and the cost of ten billion dollars per annum over at least five years. The impact of this sort of thing upon Egypt can only be imagined, but the majority of their live stock will die of this disease. Some will survive, for they are at risk from the later plague of hail. Refer below to verses 23-26.

The disease breaks out in a day. The translation of the text we have records that "all the cattle died", but that is not a correct translation, for the survivors must be taken indoors to protect them from the hail. All cattle are affected by the disease, and the survivors are weakened and frail. It is an economic catastrophe for Egypt and it occurs on one day nation wide; another indicator that it is a judgment, not a natural occurrence, which would unfold from one area to others.

The cattle of the Israelites live, while all around them sicken or die. The report back to Pharaoh makes clear that there is a distinction, just as Moses had said, between the Israelites and the Egyptians. It is a clear judgment and a clear fulfilment of the prophetic words of Moses.

Remember, each of the events that occur is God's way of certifying Moses and underlining that he is the real prophet and the Egyptian magicians are fakes serving demons with no power to stand against the real God of all the earth. Psalms 78:48-50, Isaiah 63:13-14, Jeremiah 28:5-17, Malachi 3:18.

Verses 7- 9. Pharaoh seeks the facts, but hates what he hears about the survival of the Israelite cattle and the death of his own. Remember the people of Israel were tasked with building up the herds of Egypt and had done so over the last 400 years. Genesis 47:5-6. The truth is sought, but it makes no difference to this man, who is so determined to hate God that **he will not** hear the truth and respond to it with repentance. Daniel 5:20-21, Romans 9:14-21.

The Pharaoh is determined to resist the attack of the Lord upon his obstinacy and so he will face another plague and it will move from the cattle to the people this time, and also there will be a separation between the people of Israel and the people of Egypt. The dust of the very brick/lime kilns that the Israelites have suffered so much in will be the source of the dust that is scattered into the air over the land. Moses and Aaron are to do this act in the presence of Pharaoh.

Verses 10 – 12. The disease that breaks forth upon all mammals in the way of the dust is an awful skin disease. It may be related to the earlier dog-fly bites, or may be a totally separate thing. The impact of this disease is far worse than the fly bites. The description has made some think it is "Nile Fever", that broke out in the population after the annual inundation of the land in many who had been covered in the waters of the Nile. It involved boils that formed on the skin and then the bursting of the pustules and weeping infected sores to develop.

They render people ceremonially unclean because of the terrible smell of rotting flesh. The magicians themselves are affected by this plague and are so embarrassed that they cannot approach Pharaoh until the boils are healed by Moses intervention. Isaiah 47:11-15, 2 Timothy 3:8-9. They acknowledge that they are beaten by the God of the Hebrews, but Pharaoh, although he weakens temporarily, he does not let the people go. He hopes God will run out of power....

Verses 13 – 15. Moses is told to get up early again and go and stand before Pharaoh. He is told that there is worse to come if he hesitates and thinks he can beat the God of Israel. He is told that these things have come to prove who the real God of the earth is. He is told that if the Lord chooses then he can wipe off the entire Egyptian people from the earth. The warning is dire and direct. Moses is blunt and obedient in his delivery of this warning. Pharaoh is told to be very scared of continuing his rebellion against the clearly revealed will of God. He knows he has no power to stand

against God, and yet he will persist in standing against the Lord until the first born dies. Notice again how slowly the Lord moves in judgment, and how easy it was for Pharaoh to stop the process and receive blessing. It is grace that is in view here!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Grace is the *modus operandi* of the Lord our God. He does not delight in punishment, nor take any pleasure in judgment. God seeks to bless and man receives things other than blessing only because he persists in rebellion against the Lord. If we follow Moses as our mentor it is grace that is always in view in all our work with others.

2. The issue for man is free will. Man selects his destiny in response to the acts of God in the world, and if he selects judgment then that is what he receives. We all make our choices and must accept the consequences of these. God moves slowly but steadily towards judgment of these people and there is a way of escape all the way until the end. No people die until the end of this process, and this is God's way of showing Pharaoh every chance to repent and do the right thing. It is his persistence in evil that leads to disaster, not any desire of God to kill them.

TEXT

“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. 17 As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? 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. 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. 20 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. 22 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. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. 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. 28 Entreat 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. 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. 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 balled. 32 But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they were not grown up. 33 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.”

REFLECTION

There are times when we face great pressures and challenges, which may not be met, or resolved in the way we expect. Moses will be unsuccessful in leading Pharaoh to saving faith, and he will not see this pharaoh let the children of Israel go until every family in Egypt is bereaved of their eldest son.

Moses may feel a failure at times through the process he is called to see through, and yet the Lord calls him to keep on going down the hard road he has been called to walk. He is called to remember the call of the Lord to Him and to see that it is not in his hands to ensure success so that all are blessed. At times leadership means we have to soldier on through what men see as “failure”, and yet it is the path we are called to walk. When people refuse to follow the path we call them to, we are without sin or error, but we are often without friends also!

Egypt will not be blessed, even though they could have been. There will be death and disaster for them, and Moses will be powerless to stop it unfolding, indeed it is not his job to do so, but to work the work of God here. That work is the judgment of Egypt, and Moses is to see that the Lord will receive blessing in spite of the actions of the men in the picture. He is God's man and called to walk in obedience; he cannot change the outcome, but he must keep telling the truth.

Verses 16 – 20. Moses is told one of the divine purposes that will be worked through him in his ministry. As a man, Moses, like ourselves, is focused on the final goals that we see, but God's purposes are often directed into quite different things than the final result as we see it in time and space. Moses just sees getting the children of Israel out of Egypt, but God sees all the things that are to be achieved in the process of their deliverance, and in this case the process is more important than the actual deliverance. The deliverance is certain, but it is the timing and the means to achieve it that the Lord will use to teach the Israelites and the Egyptians about his character. At times in leadership our

goals may not be the ones that are to be worked out, and we need to take a “long view” at times, and that means an eternal life perspective.

God’s purpose is always, “that we might know” Him and His purposes. Look up the words “know” and “revealed” in your concordance and see just how many times the words are used, and notice clearly that God’s purpose is that man might truly “know” Him and His Plan! God does not want mankind to be ignorant of His character, purposes or plan. There are no “secret” doctrines in our faith, but all things the Lord has to say are revealed to us for His glory and for growth in knowledge and application of the truth into our lives. Matthew 11:25, Luke 10:21, 12:2, John 18:20, 1 Corinthians 2:10, Ephesians 3:5, 1 Peter 1:5-12.

God’s graciousness towards the people of Egypt and Israel is also still being shown in this next plague. None needed be hurt by this plague; all they had to do was believe God’s words through Moses and act upon them. Moses challenge is to believe also and move forward in that belief. Romans 9:14-24, 1 Peter 2:19-24. We are called to advance down the path in this life that the Lord has called us to in patience and quiet obedience, and with our questions and worries poured out before the Lord, with the faith that knows that His answer to come in His time and we will rejoice in them. Psalms 136:4-16, Isaiah 63:7-14, 1 Peter 5:7, Jude 24-25.

Pharaoh is told theologically what he is doing; he is exulting himself above the Lord God! This is the most stupid thing upon the face of the created earth, yet this man will persist to play games with God and His servant. Moses is challenged as he delivers these words to leave his case in the Lord’s hands. Jeremiah 1:8, 17-19, Ezekiel 3:8-11, 24-27. The herald of the king has no other task other than to deliver the king’s message. It is not to be his concern at all what the people he speaks to say or believe about the words of the king; his focus is only on truthfully delivering the king’s words in full. This is our task before God as His leaders today. 1 Timothy 4:11-16, 6:13-16, 2 Timothy 2:3-10, 4:1-5, Titus 2:1-2.

The pharaoh is told in sufficient time to send out messengers to warn the people of the Delta where this plague appears to be centred. All who believe the words of Moses as from God can be delivered. This is the evidence that all the animals have not died of the previous plague, for the survivors are able to be saved by being brought indoors. Moses once again proves himself a prophet with his specific advance warning of the plague to come; it will occur at exactly this time of day on the following day. The whole land has twenty four hours to reflect, be ready, repent and be delivered.

God’s purpose is not to kill, but to warn of His power and the need for humility before Himself by these proud people. If they will believe and bow before God they will be delivered. Jonah 3:1-10, Mark 13:14-23. Notice that there were those who believed and they ensured they got their servants and animals in from the fields by this time the next day.

Verses 21 – 23. Those who ignored the words of Moses and who did not value the words or warning of God were careless of the safety of their servants and surviving animals and left them working in the fields and so when the clouds of the mighty storm filled the sky there was not sufficient time to get every person and animal to safety. Of those who lacked faith, many would die this day.

The time of the plague had been set by Moses as around the time of his prophecy, and he stands before Pharaoh at this time, and waits upon the Lord’s exact timing. Notice this carefully. Moses does not act without the exact instruction of God on the matter, so that the time of the hail is timed perfectly in God’s purposes to the second. Moses must learn by this to not over step or under play the Lord’s work; he must be precise in all he does, for the Lord is a God of the details.

The storm that breaks over the land happens in minutes and is such that has never been seen in all the history of the land of Egypt and never since. It is a unique event as a sign of God’s ability to do anything He wishes within nature to impress man as to who is Creator and who is creature! Pharaoh will learn this by the end, but sadly not by this plague. Fire runs along the ground from the lightning strikes. This occurs in America and other places every year, but had never occurred before or since in Egypt. People are killed by the lightning strikes and then by the enormous hail stones that shatter trees and destroy the grown cash crops ready in the fields for harvest.

Verses 24 – 26. The hail fell with vigour through the land and the effect was devastating upon the animals and people caught in the open, but also for the crops in the field and the trees themselves were damaged. It was exactly as the Lord had said, but those who believed the warning words were safe and secure. In the delta region there was only one area exempt and that was the area of Goshen where the Israelites were living. The sign was once again specific and those close to the people of God were safe. There was blessing by association for all who dwelt close by Israelites.

Verses 27 – 28. Moses and Aaron must be still standing within the palace area when the hail strikes, for to leave the safety of a great building was to die that day! The two men wait to be called by Pharaoh and it does not take long, for the storm is unlike any ever seen in the history of the land of Egypt. The fearful sight of lightning fire balls running along the ground and the enormous black thunder clouds must have been a sight like judgment day and that is exactly what Pharaoh now thought; that his days were over. They must have been fearful that the hail would break the buildings down around them.

Hail has been found after great storms in the USA that is the size of tennis balls, and occasionally some hail is considerably larger. People are killed every year by hail in the USA and cars destroyed by the larger balls. It was this sort of storm that breaks over the land and it does not stop until Moses lifts his arm again.

Pharaoh is keen to confess his sin and the evil of his people. Now pause here and reflect on his words, for they make no sense if he was not receiving feedback from his people that supported his actions in resisting Moses. These people wanted their gods to win the battle even though it was impossible; they clung to their religion even when it was proved bankrupt and their gods defeated. Jesus' words were never more true than in this demonstration of power by God. Read **Luke 16:27-31**. These people have seen the power of God, yet still they refuse to listen to the truth. **Proverbs 29:1-4**.

Verses 29 – 30. The storm clearly comes in waves, for it will now be possible for Moses to walk out into the storm and leave the city, and then stand with Aaron in the open fields and raise his staff and stop the storm. Moses will do what no Egyptian dares to do, and he will do it in the open field so that all in the palace can see them. Moses must express personal faith in the Lord's will for him and place himself in the open field with the clouds still black above him and the thunder still rolling around him.

Moses must stand upon earth recently blasted by the lightning fire balls and must stop the storm from a place without any natural shelter. He must shelter within the care of God alone. This is why he could write Deuteronomy 33:27-29. Psalms 24:1-2. Leadership means being so sure of your place in God's plan that you are without fear of death, and can stand in harm's way and call upon the name of the Lord.

Moses will stop the hail by his prayer to the Lord, but he tells Pharaoh that he is not fooled by his words, and does not expect Pharaoh to follow through and deliver the Israelites. Mercy and grace will still however operate for Egypt and the Lord will not blast them in judgment, but will give them further opportunity to repent and change their lives and hearts. 2 Peter 3:9.

Verses 31 – 35. Moses does as he has promised but the Pharaoh is hardened further and hates God more, and Moses adds that the people of Egypt are now also starting to openly express their hatred of the God of Israel. There is no repentance and no recognition of truth, just resentment at the plagues, without the acceptance of their sins. God's judgment was gracious, for their staple food is left alive, but their cash crops are destroyed; it could have been the other way around if the hail had been delayed two months. The people have been spared catastrophe, yet they hate the God who they resist; they will not embrace the God who rules over the heavens and the earth. Romans 2:3-11.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Quick confession and hasty repentance may not be real at all. People are often "sorry they are caught", but yet they do not regret their actions. Pharaoh is terribly sorry he is suffering and he quickly uses words like sin and wicked, but he doesn't mean it at all. The evidence of people's beliefs is not their words but their sustainable deeds.
2. Many argue that the answer to evangelism is power confrontation with the evil one. Now in any power confrontation God will always win, but men are not necessarily saved by such things. In this situation we see the massive demonstrations of God's power and the people of Egypt and Pharaoh still will not bow their knees.
3. God's purposes are not ours. We are called to achieve the Lord's results and they may not be the ones we seek. The Lord seeks to glorify His name and teach men of His character and plan, but we are often seeing only the physical results. Let us look at what the Lord is doing through us and our ministry, and see it in the larger framework of the purposes of God, rather than our goals.

NOTES

CHAPTER 10**INTRODUCTION**

The Egyptians must learn, as also the Israelites must, that the Lord is God. They must be ready to put aside their gods and receive the true God of all. They will accept the God of Abraham in the third century of our era when the Roman province of Egypt becomes Christian. The Lord has been gracious towards the people of Egypt and left them their food after the hail storm devastates their cash crops. The next plague however ends that time of grace and their food crops will be destroyed. What has been saved from last year will now be required to be used for food for the next, for the locusts who will arrive at Moses request will devour every living green thing in the land that has survived the hail.

Pharaoh will hesitate, and play for more time. He keeps on hoping that God has run out of things to do; as if the Creator will be limited! Pharaoh's mistake is to see the Lord God of all the heavens and the earth as if he is one of his own gods. All the gods/demons have limits, for they are just created angels who fell to become demons, but the Creator God is not limited. Pharaoh keeps on hoping that there is an end to the plagues, and if he waits long enough then God will "go away". Men still think that they can deal with God's demands by being boring, and by delay, and denial. We cope with political problems by almost "boring them away" by studious inaction, and most unbelievers think God will give up on us and let us into heaven – "Oh well they did their best, these pathetic creatures".....NO, NO, NO! **1 Peter 1:12-16.**

The last plague involves a removal of light from the land of Egypt through the dreaded "Chamsin" wind that blows fine dust into every place, making the land dark and getting into every home. The Egyptians will be unable to light fires in their homes due to the unusual strength of the wind and the quantity of the dust, yet the land of Goshen will be exempt from this plague also. Pharaoh will try to negotiate again and bargain with God, as if He can be compromised with. God does not compromise on His demands; there are no deals to be struck with the Creator and Saviour; we are either in obedience or we are in judgment.

TEXT

10:1 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. 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. 4 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 groweth 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. 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? 8 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. 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. 12 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 locust 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.

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 2. Moses is reminded that the reason for so many plagues is related to the learning process that the Lord is trying to get Pharaoh, and his people to actively respond to. God seeks their confrontation with the truth about His nature, and the limits and falsehood of their demonic religion. He seeks their genuine repentance and their belief in Him, but they will not respond except to mock and express their hatred of Israel and the God the Israelites worship.

If any believe a people group will be impressed in any lasting manner by miracles, then this generation of Egyptians and Israelites is the answer to them. Romans 9:14-24, 1:18-32. The Israelites will remember these things and they are instructed to teach their children about these things for as long as time flows, for they need to know the Lord their God. Deuteronomy 6:20-25, Psalms 78 and 105. The next generation of Egyptians will worship one god, but not the true God.

Verses 3 – 6. The people of Egypt (their local rulers) now have joined their leader in rebellion although they will relent under pressure. As far as they are concerned it is a personal battle, and it is one that they are determined to follow through on and see these people gone and their God gone with them. The nature of the locust plague and the dust storm darkness is going to make it clear however that the Lord is God over all the earth. The winds will blow from strange directions and for periods longer than usual.

All the signs point to the Lord being King over all the earth, but the people and leader of Egypt refuse to acknowledge the truth and change their nation's path. They select Satanic darkness rather than Divine light; and that is after they can see the light in the land of Goshen and understand that these people are God's and are not to be trifled with.

The question Moses and Aaron ask of Pharaoh is the appropriate one; how long will you refuse to humble yourself before God? Pharaoh has an arrogance problem and he refuses to accept the rulership of the Lord God over him and his land. There is one demand that is made; let my people go that they might serve me! The repetition of the demand underlines for Pharaoh that this is an unchangeable demand. The Lord does not alter His demands upon us; for they are righteous demands. God does not get the plan wrong, nor make any errors that need modifying or correcting. **Proverbs 1:20-32, Jeremiah 13:8-11, 18-21, Ezekiel 5:6-10, Hebrews 12:25.**

Pharaoh is told very specifically of the next plague, and he understands what it will mean to the economy, for the locusts will bring economic ruin in a day. He is being told that his entire economy will collapse and his people will starve until the following year. Normal plagues of locusts were local and would cover one or two provinces, but never the entire land. Pharaoh is being told to prepare for something new and altogether awful that is beyond all human help. This is no idle threat, but a prophetic word that can deliver this man from further judgment; all he has to do is humble himself under the mighty hand of God. Proverbs 18:10-12, Isaiah 1:5-10, 2:10-12, James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:5-6.

The locusts work as an army and in this case the great horde that will descend on Egypt will operate like an army and destroy everything in their path. This army of locusts will be like no other ever to plague Egypt; they will fill the land and the houses of the land. The call is for total repentance; nothing less will save their nation. Joel 1:4, 11-14, 2:2ff. They need to be serious with God and quickly, but the Pharaoh will not act to save his people, for his arrogance stops him. The Lord is hardening him into the place he wishes to be, which is the place of total opposition to the Lord God of Israel. Moses sees the look on Pharaoh's face and having said his words he turns and leaves his presence.

Verses 7 – 8. The people of Egypt are represented before Pharaoh by their governors who relay feedback to the Pharaoh from their provinces. The report of the people from these months of catastrophe is strongly for the release of the entire population of the Israelites. They refer to them as a "snare". They see that having the Israelites amongst them brings bad luck. It is as if they attract disaster and act as a trap for evil to befall the Egyptians. The people have turned and are now making their opinions clear to their arrogant leader. They want him to release the Israelites, or at least their men folk. This expression of rejection of his leadership really upsets this man and while he apparently listens to them, he hates the very idea of losing these slaves, and so he will dig himself further into the hole he is in.

The provincial leaders tell Pharaoh bluntly that the nation is in ruins economically and if the plague of locusts comes they will be in total disaster from which they will not be able to recover. The only man who was able to help Egypt in such a place was Joseph and he had done so 400 years before this, but I wonder if his granaries are now full enough to feed the entire population for a year after the locusts have done their work?

The Pharaoh acts then, and reluctantly calls the two prophets back. Moses and Aaron stand before him and they are asked, who is it that is to go to serve the Lord? They have already given the answer to this; all are to go. Pharaoh is trying to hold the women and children, or at least the animals back as a bargaining tool to ensure they all return. He is desperate to keep his slaves even if it costs him his nation!

Verses 9 – 11. Pharaoh now shows his true malice again. The old English translation is not clear here. What Pharaoh uses here is sarcasm. He says mockingly, "go, you and your little ones", then he abruptly says, "evil is in your face/intentions". Now it is not Moses who has evil intentions, but this man. He believes Moses plans to escape with the people and flee Egypt forever, and that is exactly what the Lord will bring about by means of Pharaoh's actions here.

He then orders his servants to beat Moses and Aaron and drive them out of his presence. It is a foolish thing to attack the servants of the living God, for any attack upon an Ambassador is an attack upon the government or power that sent them! One of the baffling things about evil people is that they will always blame you for being evil in intentions when it is actually them who are evil in intention. There is a baffling malice, pointless, and even counter productive hatred in the lives of evil people. To assault godly people is always to bring judgment upon the evil ones.

Verses 12 – 13. Pharaoh has made the rules and cannot complain about the consequences of his actions, for they will be severe. He has insulted the servants of the living God and the penalty is death for such a thing. He will experience the death of his land in a day; no living thing will be left intact after the hail and the locusts. The wind that brings the locusts in is not the south or south west wind that would normally bring locusts from Africa, but an easterly wind that will bring locusts from Arabia, Persia or even India. It is God's way of underlining that He is Lord of all the earth and knows exactly where the locusts are and will bring them to Egypt in the largest numbers ever seen before or since.

Verses 14 - 15. The plague of locusts arrives after twenty four hours of strong easterly winds and they literally cover the ground and eat everything. Every green thing was eaten in the land in a matter of hours. The plague was so bad that nothing like it had ever been seen before or since. The land was darkened by their flight into the land and the land was covered with them and they crept into every house and dwelling. They covered every surface and defied the brooms to sweep them away. The people all knew that this was another plague from God and that their Pharaoh was the cause.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God seeks for man to learn of Him and His plan. He seeks from man the appropriate response of a creature before his Creator; and that response is worship. The choice for man is simple; will we worship the Lord in humility, or will we stand, with Satan, in arrogance?
2. Each plague has unique and non-natural elements in it so that none can say it is a natural phenomenon. The wind here blows from the "wrong direction" to get a plague of the normal locusts, and it blows for twenty four hours. It may be the locusts were brought from India, not just Arabia. It may be several great swarms are brought together and sweep over the land. God is Lord of all the earth; not just the Middle East!
3. We are all ambassadors for Christ, and any attack upon us is an attack upon the Lord himself. Moses and Aaron can relax in the assault they receive, for they serve the Lord and the Lord will vindicate them. We are to express our faith through our ambassadorship also, and relax in the midst of pressure and acknowledge that the Lord alone is our ruler and He will bring us through to victory in the end.

TEXT

"16 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 entreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. 18 And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated 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. 21 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: 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. 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. 25 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. 27 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."

REFLECTION

We have heard all these words before, have we not? Pharaoh plays with God after his land has been destroyed. How blind is a man who will not acknowledge the truth of his debt to his maker! Pharaoh will go from arrogance to further insult and arrogance and even threaten to kill the servants of God. If he has faced the wrath of God to this point, what might he face if he kills the servants of the Lord? His foolishness knows no bounds, but he is just like all who stand against the Lord their God! **2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:1 – 5, 1 John 2:11.**

Verses 16 – 17. Pharaoh moves quickly now, but he is twenty five or more hours too late. By this time the plague has created the disaster Moses warned him of. The reports will be coming in from all over the land of Egypt, and they will be reports of total devastation. Locusts are on the ground feeding only until they are ready to fly and breed again, or until the food is exhausted. There may be a few days before the Pharaoh panics and then urgently calls Moses back into his presence. This man hesitates until too late each time, because he is hoping the judgments of the Lord will fail and there will be a natural end to the calamities, so that he can claim victory without reference to Moses or his God.

His prayer request is interesting in itself. He says to Moses that he is "for the last one and only time" asking for prayer that the plague might stop and that his sinful actions might be forgiven. He refers to the plague of locusts as "this death", for indeed it will lead to famine that will create many deaths in his land. It is a real request, yet it lacks the genuine repentance that will lead to this man's salvation and complete deliverance for his land. There is little chance of blessing to now flow for the Egyptians. In grace however the Lord will answer this prayer and forgive his sin.

We must admit that his sin is forgiven, for the locusts are removed, and the two requests were linked, so God must have answered both. God acts in answers to prayers on the basis of his character, not our own. The worst man may be forgiven if he asks, but where will he go at that point? This man proves a hypocrite and a persistent pagan, determined to maintain his bankrupt religion even though God delivers him again and again. This man will be without excuse before

the last judgment seat. Revelation 20:10-15. This man's request was heard by God, through the prayer of Moses, even though he later regrets his promise and hardens his heart yet again. This man could have been saved and his nation delivered, but he would go back on his word each time, and so each time he places himself back under judgment. 1 Timothy 1:15.

Verses 18 – 20. Moses has been physically beaten by this man, yet holds no grudge against him, nor does he hesitate to bring his prayer request before God. Moses stands as the perfect example of the man of God before men. He forgives himself and then moves back to assist others in their distress, even if they have caused distress to him and insult to him and the Lord. Moses entreats the Lord.

The word "entreats" indicates earnest prayer for Egypt. Moses heart is being kept soft towards the nation that has become the enemy of his people. He prays for his enemies. Once again we are reminded that the believer is to be ready to pray for those who abuse them. Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28. Moses mentors the mental attitude of the genuinely spiritual believer who never ceases to desire the best for the lost.

The answer is quick in coming. The locusts are on the wing again and the Lord raises a strong west wind that blows the insects into the Red Sea where they are drowned. The deliverance of the land is complete, but it is a blasted land now, and the Pharaoh is really bitter towards Moses and God, rather than grateful, and so he hardens his heart again and refuses to let the people go. God is spoken of as the hardening agent, but what the Lord is doing is ensuring that this man has no other option but to disclose the true content of his heart.

Verses 21 – 23. The supernatural nature of this last plague before the angel of death strikes is not in its nature, but in its specificity and its duration and strength. The land grows dark in Egypt once a year due to the fine sand/dust storms that sweep in from the desert lands well to the south.

This particular storm is of massive scale, as each of the other plagues have been. It darkens the land for three days and three nights, and this time it is all the land, although in the province of Goshen the people are able to light a match and have their lamps burning, whereas for the rest of Egypt they are unable to even have light in their homes. For people who worshipped the sun god Osiris, this darkness is seen, quite rightly, as a full and final judgment upon their pantheon of gods. They are powerless against the God of Moses. John 12:37-50, Romans 9:14-24.

Verses 24 – 29. Pharaoh is persistent in his acceptance that it is God who does these things, yet his simultaneous denial that he needs to worship God! Such confusion of thinking is caused by only one thing; the desire to reject the power and authority of the one who rules over the heavens and the earth. He is like the demons themselves, whom he serves, who know the truth, tremble at the truth, but will not bow their knees to the one who is the way the truth and the life. **James 2:19.** The determined unsaved are exactly that – determined to remain free agents, not servants.

Pharaoh is so determined to bow to no-one but his own image that he plays with his Creator and lies to Him! It is the blindness of a man who follows Satan so thoroughly that he will not bow to the true God. **Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19.** God hardens him in this viewpoint, but that is only because that is his chosen path, not because God makes him follow the enemy. Persistent following after evil darkens the soul and hardens the heart against God, and opens the door to further evils than simple demonic worship of idols. There is no limit to the depths that satanic viewpoint thinking will go.

Romans 1:18-32. *"18. 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:
21. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
23. And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.
24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped 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:
27. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.
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;
29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
30. Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31. Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
32. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

Pharaoh keeps negotiating to hold a sense of power over the Israelites. He wants the animals left behind. There are two reasons for this; the first is it means they have to return, but also, these are the only animals left alive and well to breed from after the plagues in all the land! If these animals leave they will have to buy their entire replacement stock from surrounding nations, and they now have no cash crops to pay for them with. It is economic catastrophe that they face here, but arguing/double dealing with God is not the best way to alleviate their troubles, but that is exactly what human viewpoint thinking is – trying to out think your maker!

Moses is absolutely strong in his rejection of any compromise to the will of God at all. This man is not negotiating with Moses, he is arguing with God, and Moses, as God's man, must not compromise one millimetre! It is to be noted that this principle is to be applied in all we do in the Lord's work. If there is a suggestion of compromise to be made we are to reject it; it is the Lord's will 100%, or we stand back and wait for the Lord's deliverance.

Moses ends the exchange by agreeing with Pharaoh's final threat; he will indeed see Moses face no more without death being the result and cause. The threat is as serious as it can be, but Moses relaxes under the Lord's protective shield. Moses has been called to lead the people out and that is exactly what he will do, and no action by this man will stop that.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. It is a foolish thing to stand against your Creator, yet men in rebellion against God do so every day. We are to remember when we are engaged in evangelism, that we are not called to "save the world" but deliver God's Good News message to all the world. The unsaved's active resistance against the truth will continue until the end of time itself, and we are not to be either surprised nor dismayed at it. Our job is to show compassion and manifest our love for the lost even though they may hate us. John 15:18-27. Our job is to give the truth in the power of the Holy Spirit, and rest upon the promises of God regarding our own destiny, and receive the comfort the Spirit can bring in the midst of the battlefield of this world.

2. Moses holds no grudge against the Pharaoh who ordered him beaten. Moses takes all things as "unto the Lord" and nothing is seen or felt as a personal insult, rather it is just "part of the job". Moses relaxed mental attitude towards the suffering that comes as he serves is a lesson to us all. Let us do our job and take all problems and upsets to the Lord and leave them there, then return to our task with nothing but loving concern for the lost, and love for our Lord, to drive us forward in our service

3. Power confrontations are at best problematic for evangelism. They are not able to break down the walls of negative volition and they are not meant to. God's use of power demonstrations is simply to ensure that the lost are without excuse before him, not to sway them overwhelmingly towards Him. Those who seek such miracles to assist their evangelism fail to understand the divine institution of volition and the nature of humanity's rebellion. Luke 16:19-31.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE GRACE OF GOD TOWARDS US ALL

1. Grace is all that God is free to do for man on the basis of the cross. Therefore Grace is unmerited favour from God.

2. Grace depends on the character of God therefore Grace depends on who and what God is. Grace is what God can do for man and still be true to his own character.

3. The believer must recognise the difference between legalism and grace. Legalism is man's work intruding upon the plan of God.

4. The greatest thing God can do for the saved person is to make him exactly like His Son Jesus Christ. This is accomplished in three stages of sanctification.

5. Positional Sanctification: At Salvation every believer enters into union with Christ. (Hebrews 1:2) Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father and is therefore superior to all angels in his humanity. At the point of salvation we are entered into union with Christ thus we are positionally higher than angels. We are positionally seated with Christ at God's right hand.

6. Experiential Sanctification: During the Christian's life on the earth the time spent under the power of the Holy Spirit. During this time we produce the character of God in our lives - gold, silver, precious stones. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

7. Ultimate Sanctification: When the believer receives a resurrection body he loses the sin nature and all human good. At this point the believer is physically superior to all angels. He remains in this perfect state eternally.

8. All believers have tasted of Grace at least once (1 Peter 2:3). This refers to the point of Salvation at which the believer receives at least 34 things which he did not earn or deserve. (Ephesians 2:8, 9) Disorientation to grace is the believer's greatest occupational hazard in his Christian life. (Galatians 5:4, Hebrews 12:15)

9. The divine attitude to grace is expressed in (Isaiah 30:18, 19) God is constantly waiting to pour out his blessing on all believers in the Christian life.
10. Grace in salvation is expressed in many ways. It is always the same - believing in Jesus Christ (Psalm 103:8-12, Romans 3:23-4, Romans 4:4, 5:20, Ephesians 2:8, 9)
11. There are many ways in which the Christian life expresses GRACE:
- Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)
 - Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)
 - Growth (2 Peter 3:18)
 - Stability (1 Peter 5:12)
 - Lifestyle (Hebrews 12:28, 2 Corinthians 1:12)
 - Production of Divine Good (1 Corinthians 15:10, 2 Corinthians 6:1)
12. Grace is the correct attitude in relation to giving. (2 Corinthians 8 & 9)
13. Grace is the only means of coping with suffering in the Christian life. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Through Grace God is able to bless the believer in the midst of the pressures and adversities of life. (1 Peter 1:6,7)
14. Implications of grace that we can depend and "faith-rest" upon
- God is perfect, and his plan is perfect.
 - A perfect plan can only originate from a perfect God.
 - If man could do anything in the plan of God the plan would no longer be perfect.
 - A plan is no stronger than its weakest link. Grace therefore excludes all human merit, all human ability.
 - Legalism, human works is the enemy of Grace.
 - The works of human righteousness have therefore no place in the plan of God. (Isaiah 64:6)

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

Having said to Pharaoh in the end of chapter ten that he would "see his face no more", this chapter appears to be out of place, for it records Moses last words to Pharaoh. The answer to this question of timing is seen as this chapter unfolds, for it is the content of what Moses spoke just after his words in verse 29 of the previous chapter.

Moses explains why he was so confident that he would not see Pharaoh again to ask anything of him. This short chapter is best treated as a parenthesis – giving us details of what Moses said after he made his comment that he wouldn't be back, and why he was confident of the Lord's final action against Egyptian resistance. He records what the Lord told him about the final judgment on this man and his nation.

TEXT

"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. 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. 3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. 4 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 first born 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. 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. 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. 9 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."

REFLECTION

Verses 1-3. The Lord had told Moses these things before his last visit to Pharaoh, so that when the Pharaoh tells him to leave and never come back, Moses is able to tell him the result of this final insult to God's messenger. Moses will finally leave Pharaoh's presence in great anger indeed (verse 8). Moses is told that the Pharaoh will not just let them go, he will actively throw them out of his land. Exodus 12:31-39. They are also told to "borrow" off their neighbouring Egyptians all they have to give of their jewellery and spare gold, silver and any precious things.

Now this is an amazing thing to be asked, especially after the plagues, for the Egyptians will need every bit of wealth they have to buy food for the next year until the land recovers. Why would they give the Israelites anything? Firstly let us look at the word "borrow". It means to ask expectantly, not borrow to repay. There is no threat involved, just a polite but earnest request for gifts to be given as they go, and the Lord's promise is that the Egyptians will give their all to see these people leave them.

The actual taking of the jewels will be after this last plague, when the people of the land just want to see the back of the Israelites for good. This will be reported in chapter 12, verses 1-2, and 35-36. These jewels will be later freely given back to the Lord, (who got the Egyptians to give them), when they are required for the tabernacle in Exodus 35:20-24.

The principle here is clear; when the Lord blesses with great wealth, it is always for shovelling back to bless His work. Ezekiel 16:8-14, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. We are blessed as we transmit God's blessing on to others, and into His work, never as we hoard them. When God gives it is always for us to rejoice in giving back to the glory of the Lord and his work in some way, and God will keep on giving to us right into eternity, when we reap all we have sowed from what the Lord gave us in time.

Verses 4 - 8. The specific nature of the prophetic word is seen again here. The Lord makes the time of the plague around midnight of the fourth (or possibly the fifth day) from the day of final warning to Pharaoh. There is ample time for information and warning to go through the land that can deliver anyone who does what the Israelites do, but for all who do not obey the command of God to offer up a lamb or goat and splash the blood over their lintel and door posts, the angel will bring death to their household and their barnyard.

Chapter twelve will detail the actions the Israelites will take, which will take five days to undertake; from the first day of the announcement and then the four days of waiting until the Passover night. Exodus 12:28-29.

Some in Egypt will apparently take these actions also, and in effect "join with Israel", for many natives of Egypt join the Exodus later, as we will see. The first born of Egypt was dedicated to their gods, and the first born of all Israel will be, here-after, dedicated to the Lord God also, as a result of this deliverance.

The distinction will be made between those who believe the Lord and those who do not. What are referred to as "true Israel" are believers, and this term will encompass all Egyptians who believe and act upon what the Lord tells them to do. Hebrews 3:7-4:10. Since Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans there has been one way to be delivered and that is through God's plan, conveyed to mankind by means of His people. The Egyptians who will be delivered will join with Israel, and it is only by being grafted in to the new nation Israel that they are saved, just as the church is grafted in to the stock of Israel. Romans 11:1-36.

Moses makes his final statement to Pharaoh and he is very angry. This is the first time Moses has been angry and it is right for him to be angry at this point, for the Pharaoh has moved God to the place where tens of thousands of innocent people will die because of his evil opposition to the clear will of God. Moses is not angry for any other reason than a godly and sensitive one; he sees the terrible waste of human life that will eventuate from this final rejection by Pharaoh of the path of God. Self centred anger is a fruit of evil, but anger at the wastage of life is godly fruit facing evil.

He is angry just as the Lord was sad and angry, firstly over the results of man's sin in causing death to enter the world, and secondly in the terrible destruction of Jerusalem that would eventuate in 70AD as a result of the nation's rejection of Him. John 11:33-35, Matthew 23:37-39, Luke 13:34-35, Daniel 9:25-26. Read these verses in the strange order I have set out here.

Verses 9 - 10. Pharaoh will not listen, even though, from the details given in chapter twelve we know he has at least four days to prepare himself and avoid the death angel's visit. He is able to watch the Israelites prepare their Passover lamb or kid and watch their actions on the door posts of their houses. Possibly Moses house is close enough to the palace to be seen; that certainly was the conclusion that could be drawn from his family's early service to the previous Pharaoh. God is not unjust in anything He does here; Pharaoh's own choices have left the Lord of all without option but to judge, and judge He will, and He will be righteous in this judgment. Romans 9:14-24.

Remember that the Bible clearly teaches that those who die before the age of accountability are automatically entered into heaven, so no innocent young life is lost forever. We learn this from the age of accountability here in Exodus, which we will study later in Exodus 30:14, 38:26, Leviticus 27:1-5, and in Numbers 32:11. We learn of the automatic entry into heaven of all unborn babies who die, and of all children who die, in the Law of Moses and also through the actions of King David when the illegitimate child, born of sexual immorality with Bathsheba, sickens and dies just after it's birth. Let us be clear of the principles of God's Word on this matter of judgment and how it affects the innocent who sometimes get caught up in these events. Firstly, God makes it clear through Moses that unborn children's lives are equal to adults in God's sight. **Exodus 21:22-25, 2 Samuel 12:13-23.** When unborn or new born babies die they go directly to be with the Lord.

Secondly we learn that no matter what the circumstances of the birth of a child, it is safe with the Lord if it dies before it has had the full opportunity to rise up and rebel against its Creator. Original sin and our inherent sinfulness do not stop the Lord covering the sins of an innocent child and bringing them into heaven. David prays for his sick child until it dies, then he states his faith that the child will greet him in heaven.

This remains the confidence of all who believe as Moses and David did. There is judgment for sin, but mercy in the midst of it. Satan does not get the chance to destroy the lives of the innocent as some Calvinistic theologians argue!
Romans 2:4-11, Matthew 19:13-15, 18:1-6, Mark 9:33-37, 10:13-16, Luke 9:46-48, 18:15-17.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. God will judge in righteousness and always there is grace and mercy in the midst for all who will hear His word, or are too young to respond to His Word. We must ensure that our presentation of the acts of the Lord are accurate and not theologically driven rather than biblically based. God is not unfair or unjust and never has been or will be in His judgments.

2. It is a foolish thing to declare war on the Lord God of all creation. Pharaoh pays, but so do all under his rulership. We must be careful of those we follow and always test the leadership with the Word of God. If a leader ever violates the Word of God we are to turn away from such a person and seek the Lord's path well away from them. Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:13-22.

REFLECTIONS UPON WHAT IS TRUE AND LASTING WEALTH

1. Wealth may be in the form of money, gold or silver, goods or land. Wealth is always relative to the values within a society. What is wealthy within a poor culture is poor within a more wealthy culture. What individuals feel is wealthy will differ from person to person; some will never feel they are wealthy enough. The believer is urged to be content with what he/she has received, in their life path/position, from the Lord. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, Philippians 4:11-13, Hebrews 13:5-6.

2. Money has a legitimate function, and wealth generally is, like money, a neutral thing; something to be used to facilitate daily life. Money and goods are used to pay taxes, buy goods needed for the family, and give towards the Lord's work in the church. Money is not evil. Genesis 29:3, Jeremiah 32:44.

Money and goods are used for taxation, Matthew 22:17-22, Luke 20:20-26.

3. It is no evil to have wealth or lots of money, it is the lust for money and goods that corrupts a man, as it did Baalam, Jude 11.

Money, and wealth generally, are great slaves but terrible masters. Wealth is deceitful if a person believes it will buy him happiness, provide him with security, or give him immortality. Matthew 6:24-33, Luke 12:16-21 Proverbs 18:10-12, Proverbs 13:7.

5. Money and wealth will not buy respectability with God, nor will it purchase salvation. Mark 8:36,37, Acts 8:18-24, Mark 10:23-27.

6. Wealth may get in the way of the simple message of salvation, as the Rich Young Ruler found. Matthew 19:16, Luke 18:19,20, Mark 10:17-27.

7. Money may get in the way of spiritual growth, when we pay more attention to our wealth than we do to applying doctrine in our lives. Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5:10 6:2, Baalam in Jude 11, Ananias' and Saphira in Acts 5:1-10, All of us in James 5:1-6.

8. God is not impressed with money and pride filled shows of wealth. Luke 16:10-31, Proverbs 11:4,28.

9. Wealth can be a great blessing received by believers in maturity, and if it is it is to be used for the Lord's work, as well as for life style. Proverbs 13:8ff, Hebrews 13, Refer Doctrine Of Giving.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE BELIEVER'S GIVING

1. Giving is an important part of spiritual life. It includes your attitude, the giving of yourself, your capacity as well as your possessions. Giving is as much a part of worship as praying, singing, listening to teaching, observing the Lord's Table, reading the Word. It is a function of priesthood for team work and often to sustain the work of leadership.

2. Basic Principles of Giving

(a) Old Testament Giving - this giving was grace giving just as it is in our age. (Proverbs 11:24,25)

(b) New Testament Giving - (2 Corinthians 9:7) also grace giving.

(c) Tithing - this means ten per cent. It was a form of income tax in Israel. Offerings or giving were above this. Tithing was for all Jews, offerings for believers only. It should be remembered that Israel was a theocracy.

[i] In Israel two tithes were required annually

[ii] Tithe 1 - for the maintenance of the Levites (Numbers 18:21, 24) Civil servants in a theocracy.

[iii] Tithe 2 - for national feasts and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 14:22-26)

[iv] Every third year a third tithe was required:-

[v] Tithe 3 - for the poor of the land. (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) Social security. In (Malachi 3:8-10) it mentions tithes and offerings, the tithes to be brought to the storehouse or treasury.

(d) The time to give - the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

(e) How much - as God has prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2)

3. General Scripture on Giving. (2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9)

(a) 2 Corinthians 8:1-8. Contrasts the Macedonian givers to the Corinthian givers, the former having been made poor by Roman oppression gave liberally. The Corinthians, the richest Church in Greece, gave sparingly.

(b) Giving is an attitude of grace and inner happiness rather than compulsion or the amount donated (2 Corinthians 8:2)

(c) Before money is given you must give yourself. (2 Corinthians 8:5)

(d) Giving is as important an act as any other act in the fellowship. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

(e) Giving is love giving not law giving (2 Corinthians 8:8)

(f) Giving depends on being oriented to grace, the prime example being the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

(g) Money given in the Lord's service must be properly administered. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21)

(h) If you give in grace you reap bountifully. If you give in legalism or with strings you reap sparingly. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

(i) How to give. Giving is a reflection of your character, by grace not habit. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

(j) God has given unto us his unspeakable Gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15, 1 Peter 2:24)

[k] Giving should be regular. 1 Corinthians 16:2.

[m] As we are prospered so we give: God provides the capital with which to give. 2 Corinthians 9:7-10.

[n] Mature believers are most effective givers. 2 Corinthians 9:10. Generosity of mind leads to generous giving. 2 Corinthians 9:11. Philippians 4:14-18.

[o] The pastor's logistical support comes from giving: He makes an issue out of the word never money, if he does his job God will provide the money. Pastor provides spiritual food and receives money for physical needs. Mutual blessing is thus assured, as the people show their appreciation for the ministry of the word. 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, Philippians 1:3-5, 4:10, 4:14.

NOTES

CHAPTER 12**INTRODUCTION****SUMMARY OF THE PLAGUES UPON PHARAOH AND THE GODS OF EGYPT**

In Exodus the judgments were by the Lord against the Pharaoh who refused to obey the true God of the heavens and the earth, but each was specifically targeted at one of the many gods of Egypt.

[a] The **Nile was sacred to Osiris**, it was turned to blood - what they worshipped started to stink. There are demons behind the gods of the pagans, and so each judgment is a blow against Satan's team of demons who controlled religion in Egypt.

[b] The **frog goddess was called Heka** - so the Lord multiplied the frogs. They couldn't kill them by their religion so God multiplied them. If they wanted frogs, then they could have them in abundance. The Lord will judge the Israelites the same way in the wilderness wanderings with their desire for meat when he sends the quail.

[c] **Lice - the scarab beetle - Geb** was the name of the demon/god, so the people who wanted to worship a creature rather than the Creator, could scratch as they worshipped him.

[d] **Flies and lice are from Ra** which shows the uncleanness of pagan worship. All religion is from the enemy, and it is all corrupt and will, over time, corrupt the morals or the mind and body.

[e] **Apis was the bull god** which the children of Israel replicated in the wilderness in the form of the golden calf. This is why several of the plagues targeted the cattle. It was God's way of trying to get the children of Israel to remember that the bull was just an animal and the one to be worshipped was the invisible maker of all creatures, not a creature, no matter how noble.

[f] Boils on the people especially the priests prevented them from exercising their office, as the priests could only serve if they were without disease. God is showing that their gods are not gods and their worship is not holy. With all the people having **boils the worship of Egypt stops** and if the gods cannot keep their people "holy" enough to serve them, then they are powerless to deal with sin, ungodliness let alone the realities of death.

[g] **Hail** was a particularly troublesome plague upon their gods, for in a land with no rain when they get hail they are without explanation or remedy. **Isis was the goddess of the air** and she/it was proved powerless and her worship pointless. The great sadness of the judgments on the gods is that the people will return and worship all these beaten gods/demons and they will do so for another thousand years!

[h] **Locusts were universally known in the ancient world as a curse** and dealt a blow to all the gods and their priests claiming to be involved in protecting agriculture by their spells and rituals.

[i] **Darkness directly attacked the sun god Amon-Ra.**

[j] The **firstborn was the one who became the priest**, so by the death of the first born of every family, God was saying to the Egyptians, "you are wrong, you need the truth, and for a generation you will have no priests to teach lies".

After the nine plagues Moses approached Pharaoh, as we have seen in chapters ten and eleven. The Pharaoh was still ready to fight to have his slaves remain in his empire. By means of the plagues God forced him to do what he really wanted to do in his heart.

Remember the hardening process that God puts him through is like wringing out a wet towel; as the water is squeezed out as the towel is tightened, so the towel gets hardened and what is within it (the water) is wrung out. Just so, the inner attitude of Pharaoh was squeezed out by the Lord applying pressure to him. What came out was what was in his heart.

The Passover event ends the judgments on Egypt and marks a new beginning of time for mankind. It will also mark the beginning of the national history of Israel. It is a turning point of redemptive history. The next turning point will be the day of Pentecost, which established the church from the root of Israel.

At this point the people who believed God's word through Moses expressed their faith in his words by obedience to them and they splashed the door posts with the blood of the animals. They were covered over by the blood of the sacrificed animals as they entered their house through the door covered with the sign of the cross of blood. 1 Corinthians 10:1-3. In this act on this first Passover night the children of Israel were identified with Moses in his faith and they by obedience were delivered. This is called later "the baptism of Moses". 1 Corinthians 10:2.

We have here a large group of people who are saved. The believers are going to be delivered both physically and spiritually this night. God provides a way where all Israelites can be saved from the Angel of Death that night, and all who walk in Christ today are delivered from the Angel of Death also. Death to the believer in the Lord is "absent from the body - face to face with the Lord". It is not a shocking or horrible thing, but a lovely meeting of the one who gave himself

for us. The sting of death is sin and that sting has been removed in Christ Jesus. Acts 7:55-60, 1 Corinthians 15:55-56, 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.

In Exodus 12:3 we will read that every household must make arrangements for their own deliverance by obedience to the commands of Moses; by taking a lamb/kid into the house on the tenth day of the month Nisan. It was to be without blemish, a male of the first year, sheep or goat. This is kept to the fourteenth checking daily to ensure that it was indeed without any blemish, and on that last day it is killed and cooked and eaten that Passover night.

The Lord will fulfil this perfectly himself, as our "once for all" Passover Lamb, for he came into Jerusalem on the tenth day. On the fourteenth is the crucifixion. During this period the Jewish people were able to look at Him and test Him to see that there was indeed no flaw in Him.

The lamb or kid was to be killed in the evening. The words, "in the evening", is literally, "between the evenings". The Jewish day started at 6 pm, and the day was from sunset to sunset. The Jewish day starts from the first evening of one day 6-9pm, and goes to the second evening of that day, 3pm-6pm.

The lamb would be slain before the sun went down but not in the heat of the day; between 3-6pm. The Lord died physically at the time of the death of the lamb, at 3 pm. He therefore fulfilled the Passover lamb, dying "between the evenings" of the Jewish day.

The blood is on the two side posts and on the lintel. If you draw lines connecting up these marks it forms a cross. This had never been done before and there was no precedent for it; it was a direct command of God pointing to the Cross later. You never took a perfectly good door and put blood on it in that type of climate as it would attract flies. It was not a sensible thing to do, but it was what God said to do. Looking back this nation becomes a nation of believers this night. However they will fail many times on the route of the Exodus, with only two men entering the Promised Land, so there will be lots of warnings and encouragement to ourselves as we struggle through life here and now.

The people had to be obedient all the way, and that meant eating all the lamb and leaving nothing. The lamb had to be baked not boiled. It had to be baked whole including the intestines. This spoke of the unity of the person of Christ. The Lord in His person was unity. As the God-Man He went to the Cross. All or nothing; this is salvation. You have to trust Him fully to be saved. The picture here is not the "easy believism", "tick the box" Christianity, of some churches, but a thorough and systematic commitment to the Lord of glory. **James 2:19.**

They had to eat it standing up with their shoes on their feet and their clothes on ready to march. If you were ready to run you had your long robe ready to be tucked up into your belt. The first Passover meal was not social, nor comfortable, it was spiritual. The first born in Egypt was to be executed on this very night if they were not covered by the blood, be they human or animal. It was a sombre time to reflect upon the importance of absolute obedience to God. When the order to move out came, they had to be ready to move out of their homes and off into the night, out of Egypt.

It is a reminder of the time frame of the plagues also; they spread over many months. This time frame was needed for the people of Israel to prepare/make family tents and have baggage wagons ready for their journey into the wilderness. All the families had to provide enough food for the first few days and all their clothing and useful possessions were required to be able to be packed into ruck sacks or wagons.

They were to have unleavened bread only through this period, as leaven was a symbol of evil. It was speaking of the future work and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who would perfectly complete the picture of the Passover Lamb. He and His work are perfect. In addition the wine drunk at this time would be unfermented wine.

This period of time started out with the searching out of the leaven in every house and it's total elimination from the house. No principle of decay or evil was allowed to be left unfound and dealt with. This speaks of the need to examine the life and deal with all sin and evil found therein. This is a feast that looks forward to the Messiah and it is a perfect picture of His work for us all.

EGYPT – THE SYMBOL OF MAN’S RELIGION RATHER THAN GOD’S REVELATION

They came out of Egypt. Egypt was a symbol of man's (and Satan's) religion. It was God-less religion, false religion; drawing it's power from the enemy's deception. The religion of Egypt impressed the Israelites, especially the worship of Apis, the golden calf. The beauty and richness of the Egyptian ritual was such that it took the people's breath away.

Many of these people were seduced by it; and having been taken out of Egypt in a few days, the Lord would take forty years to have Egypt taken out of them. They were still hankering after the things in Egypt, including the beautiful but false religion. This religion was contrasted with the truth and perfection and purity of God's truth.

In Exodus 12 every detail needs attention and obedience by the Israelite people for the perfect plan to come to pass. In Satan's plan, which is represented by the Egyptian system, it did not matter what you did as long as you got the basics right, and if you made any errors, then you paid more, and the priests did extra spells to set it right. Basically as long as you paid the money the priests would set the "gods" right for you. Everything depended upon money and power, not belief and obedience to the will of God.

Satan likes and uses religion, for it makes no demands on the heart, only the wallet! We often do the same things as these ancient people did, taking things from our pagan past and continuing doing them. We can compromise in areas where we should never compromise. Beware of the argument, “everybody is doing it therefore it must be all right”; for the majority will be proved wrong again and again in Exodus. Jesus points in Matthew 7:13-23 and Luke 18:8 are scary for us today to reflect upon; there are few genuine believers in the churches today, and there will be fewer as we approach the end of the Age. Don't depend on “majority votes”, for fewer and fewer will be focused upon the Lord.

God's plan requires us to be a holy people, walking by faith through grace. No other way is acceptable. Religion is always the satanic alternative to truth – God wants us to have a genuine relationship with Him by grace through faith, not play act in religious rituals.

SOME SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PASSOVER AND SALVATION

[1] The wages of sin is death - Romans 6:23 - Here we have a picture of judgment. The Passover night in Egypt was the judgment night for that nation.

[2] Only those who believed in the powers of God's substitutionary sacrifice could be saved. Thus only as the people did what they were commanded were they saved. It was by God's grace provision that had to be appropriated through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9.

[3] The blood of the lamb at the Passover spoke of the true lamb of the Passover. John 1:29, Hebrews 9:13-14, 28.

[4] In 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 - Paul said that the people who left Egypt were believers, and those that did not were siding with dead religion; showing a separation between believer and unbeliever. Exodus 12:29

THE ANGEL OF DEATH ARRIVES

For a hundred kilometres up the Nile there was the screaming of people who discovered again that their gods had not just failed to protect them, but led to the death of their sons. Sadly they all got the message this time, BUT it was too late, and they were judged with the death of their first born – every family's priest was taken. They had received many warnings and suffered many things but only this allowed the satanic blindness to be shifted; yet even then they did not bow before the God of all. Pharaoh's wife was screaming when his dead son was carried into him. The firstborn of the chief families of Egypt were to be the priests, thus on that night a whole generation of priests was killed.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron that very night and told them to get out of the land. His message was blunt and earnest, “Take your flocks and herds and be gone, stop this happening”. The Jews had been eating from six pm to midnight and were ready to go with a full stomach. For four hundred years the Israelites had served the Egyptians for no wages. At the Passover they received four hundred years of back pay from the Egyptians of the Delta region who gave them everything they had to move them out faster. They walk out as wealthy and free people.

How many people moved? We simply do not know; although the facts we will uncover as we go indicate about 30,000, but a whole nation is on the move this night, which is unique in human history. The only other time you had movements like this afterwards were with the Goths, Vandals and the like who brought down the Roman Empire. Once again reflect on their obedience to Moses, in that they have all their household goods packed and ready to go, and they will have tents to sleep in, all freshly made through the months of plague time when no other work has been done. They will fail later again and again, but they did start well!

In Joshua we have recorded the eleven generations of the captivity. The time they leave was 430 years after the giving of the Abrahamic covenant. In Exodus 12:48 all those who were not circumcised are all circumcised as part of the covenant. This was a sign that they were saved and believed the promise made to Abraham.

THE EXODUS GENERATION IS TESTED

It is possible to walk from Egypt to Israel in a hard walking week. In the ancient world there was a main route which followed the coast via the Gaza road. Acts 8:26ff. This was the geographically easy way, but God had a different plan. Things do not happen by accident. God knew these people, and He was going to give them a number of tests to prepare them for the battles that would need to be fought in the land. He was not going to give them a quick route to the Promised Land, nor provide an opportunity for the Egyptians to find them with any second or third army group.

This is often the way with us also in our own walk through this life. Do not complain if God takes you through the desert on what appears to be the long way. The Exodus generation were saved but failed to go on in faith and grow strong spiritually, and so must take the long road to learn the spiritual lessons before the land can be entered and conquered. Had they walked up the coast road they would have been unprepared for the battles they needed to fight in the land; the conquest would have been a defeat.

They needed to trust and go on growing stronger day by day in their trust in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 10:13 - there is always a solution, always an answer, but they needed to learn to rest secure in that knowledge. We should not repeat their failure as is so easy to do! Hebrews 4:1-4.

Moses took the bones of Joseph as the flag of Israel. They follow the coffin of Joseph as a matter of faith. The faith of Joseph has been vindicated as they lift that coffin over 300 years after he was laid to rest there, yet they will fail to believe as Joseph believed. We have the Empty Cross to look at yet we all too often fail also. We stop walking with Him and trusting in Him. The Lord was visible to them, a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night.

We have the Lord Jesus Christ within us today, and we have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide and teach. There are many lessons as we advance through these next chapters that directly apply to our own daily walk. Let us move on in faith and not fail like this generation did! The truth remains clearly stated – "The Just shall Live by Faith". Habakkuk 2:4.

TEXT

12:1 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. 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: 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. 7 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. 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. 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. 14 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. 15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16 And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. 17 And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 3. Moses records the details of what he and Aaron had been told well before these events are played out before Pharaoh and the people. The people are well prepared for the command to prepare the lamb or kid. They are told to look forward to the beginning of their new nationhood. They are ready to move out into the wilderness and survive there. The events of this Passover night are going to mean the calendar of the people will shift from the Egyptian one to a new one. This month, close to our April, will become their New Year's time.

The year will begin with this feast, as a reminder of what the Lord did for them on this night. Each and every household was to take a lamb or kid from their flock, or purchase one from a neighbour. They were to select an animal that the family could eat completely, and so if they were a small household they were to join together with a neighbour or relative to form a group that would be able to eat one animal between them all.

Verses 4 – 6. They were to think about this process from the first day. The entire animal was to be cooked and eaten by the group, so they had to work out who ate what and how much! They had to think about joining together with others in this; working together as a team. They had to keep the animal in their house for four days to observe it and even grow close to it. It was not meant to be a nice happy event. It was personal, for this animal had to stand in their place and die in their place.

The lamb's sacrificial death had to be totally appropriated (eaten speaking of their faith in the deliverance that would come later that night). It spoke of sacrificial death in their place and the blood sacrifice system was not meant to be pleasant, for it spoke of the terrible cost of sin entering the world. John 1:29-36, 3:16-36, Hebrews 7:23-28, 9:13-15, 1 Peter 1:18-21, Revelation 5:6-14, 7:9-17.

There were no functioning priests to kill the animals this first Passover and so each family killed and prepared it's own sacrifice; the head of each family acting as it's priest before God, just as the Patriarchs had done. 1 Peter 2:7-10. On this first Passover through the entire nation of families the senior male of each family killed the sacrificial lamb/kid in unison at

3pm in the afternoon (between the evenings) and then the cooking began on a spit that was hot and ready, with the fire of coals burning underneath.

From around 6pm that night they began the eating of the meat until it was devoured. That which was left as dawn broke was burned in the fire underneath the spit. It was the last time they used this hearth for just after midnight the order would be received by Moses for the people to leave Egypt, and all the people would be informed of the order over the next six hours, and then, as dawn allowed them to organize, they would move out and depart their homes of 400 years and leave Egypt in the packed wagons that waited outside each hut. Isaiah 43:10-12.

Verses 7 – 8. The animal's throat was cut with a sharp knife and the blood caught in a bowl. This blood was then taken by the senior member of the family and splashed with a branch of hyssop over the uprights and the lintel of the door of each house. Each household using it's lamb's blood to anoint it's door. The people had to take personal responsibility to do this and do it properly.

The actions were defiling in the terms of reference in the land they had lived in for 400 years! They had to step outside the cultural context of their backgrounds and be obedient, seeing in the deliverance that their "defilement" was lifted off them by the blood; they were covered by the blood. The lamb had made atonement for them and they were safe from the penalty of death placed over the land through the blood shed for them. Ephesians 1:7-8, Hebrews 9:13-15, 21-22.

The meal was to be eaten roasted, not boiled or stewed. It was to be seared with fire, and they were all to understand the symbolism of this as standing for the fire of God's wrath against sin, and the judgment of Egypt for it's great sin in holding the people of Israel as slaves after they were ordered by God to let them go. Hebrews 10:14-31, 11:28, 1 Peter 1:2.

It was to be eaten with bitter herbs, not the savoury sort normally used to enhance the flavour of lamb or goat. The bitterness of the herbs was to act as a memorial of the bitterness of slavery, from which they were departing later that night. The meal was not meant to be a gastronomic delight! It was a memorial feast that reminded them of the fires of judgment, and the sure promise of deliverance, and the bitterness of the slavery that they had endured for over one hundred years, but which were over thanks to the grace and mercy of the mighty God.

As we will see below the Angel of Death is not Satan, but is possibly the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The Lord in grace and mercy has given opportunity to have Egypt blessed and Israel delivered, but Pharaoh has chosen to hold the people and so he and his nation will suffer the terrible consequences of unresolved rejection of their Creator and Lord, just as mankind will in the Last Judgment. Revelation 17:12-14, 18:1-10, 19:11-21. We are not used to seeing the Lord in this manner, but we ought to be, for He told us that He would return to judge, and He will. Acts 10:36-43, 2 Timothy 4:1-8.

Verses 9 – 10. The entire animal was to be burned with fire, all the edible flesh was to be eaten. The animal was to be cooked whole on the spit, with it's head and entrails intact. This is not a pleasant sight and it was not meant to be as a whole skinned lamb or kid can look like a person. It is an unusual thing to do and was not common in the ancient world to cook an animal this way. It was meant to be unique, for it spoke of a unique sacrifice for the sins of mankind; it spoke of, and to every person in the room where it was done of their judgment being taken by another. 1 Corinthians 5:7.

It was not to be cooked with the herbs common to make the meat smell pleasant, and it was to be eaten well done, not rare. The blood was not to be running in the meat, for the blood shed into the fire spoke of the sacrifice and all was to be either on the door surround, or well cooked into the meat, or fire beneath. Everything about this meal was different to those the people had eaten before. It was to be totally consumed by morning, and everything left was to be burned in the fire beneath it. These fires would be still burning long after the people had abandoned their houses and were on their way out of Egypt that following morning. These fires were a testimony to the Egyptians later.

Verses 11 – 12. Any doubts about the plagues being against the gods of Egypt are removed in these verses. The Lord makes it clear that He has declared war against the demonic forces that hold Egypt secure in their grasp. Psalms 82:1-8. They were to eat as soldiers, ready for the immediate order to move out into battle, for a great battle raged around them against the demonic forces.

The words of the Lord to Moses are repeated to the believer of our own age in Ephesians 6:14-17. We are daily to practise the readiness to move out in obedience to the Lord, and alertness to the demonic dangers around us. We are called to remember the words that end verse twelve; "I am the Lord!" We are answerable to the Lord alone and to Him we give account of this life; no other's opinion matters. 1 Peter 1:13-19.

Verses 13 – 14. This will be the first day of their new history and it will be born in blood. It is a terrible day and yet a glorious one; one that reminds the people that the Lord their God is the creator, the Saviour, and the judge of all mankind. It is a day that reminds them that they need to be holy before their God and stand in awe before His majesty. It is a day when they reflect upon sin and it's consequences and upon the necessity for total obedience to the Lord their God. John 10:27-30, 20:26-31, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 John 1:5-7. This feast is the defining moment for the nation Israel. They are born in the fires of judgment and come to life through the death of the Lamb for them. Nehemiah 8:8-10, Psalms 111:1-4, 10, 135:13, 1 Corinthians 5:4-8, 11:23-26.

Verses 15 – 17. The feast of unleavened bread that was to follow Passover was to be kept for seven days, during which no leavened bread was to be eaten. It was a sign of the devotion of the people that was required by the

Lord of them. They needed to dedicate themselves to the Lord and His service, and be prepared to eat the food He provided and endure any hardships with joy.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Trust and Obey – there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey. The words of the old hymn apply to us all in this life. The only path through the troubles we face is the path of full knowledge of the truth, complete faith in the truth, and total obedience in life to the truth.
2. Jesus came in His first advent to bring grace and mercy and peace to all who would respond to His message, but He comes in His second advent to bring judgment. There is an urgency to our message, for man must respond while it is yet day, for the night falls fast! Romans 13:12, 2 Corinthians 6:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8, Hebrews 3:7-16, 4:4-7, James 4:13.
3. How often the Lord takes us what appears to be the “long way” through a problem. We are challenged as these people were, to walk by faith, not by sight; for the Lord is the one who knows all the facts, and we are to rest upon Him and His loving care for us. 2 Corinthians 5:7, Deuteronomy 33:27-29.
4. This nation was born in blood, and so the church is rooted and grounded in the blood of Christ, shed for us. We stand because He submitted Himself as our sacrifice. Our service for Him rests upon this submission to be our sacrifice; we love Him for He first loved us! 1 John 4:7-19.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE PASSOVER AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

1. The Passover is a type of Christ who fulfilled the type on the very day in AD. 32.
2. The Lord Jesus Christ is called our Passover, sacrificed for us. (1 Corinthians 5:7)
3. The Passover lamb was brought into the home four days before the feast to demonstrate that it was without blemish. (Exodus 12:5-6).
4. In fulfilment of the type Jesus Christ had a ministry of over three years to demonstrate that He was eligible to die for the sins of the world due to his unblemished character. (Hebrews 4:15) He entered Jerusalem four days before he was to go to the Cross, on the very day the Pascal lambs were being taken into homes (Palm Sunday).
5. The lamb tested must be slain by the family to be protected. (Exodus 12:6)
6. The Lord Jesus Christ having been found perfect had to die as a willing sacrifice, slain on the orders of his own people. (Hebrews 9:22)
7. The blood from the sacrificed lamb had to be applied to the door. (Exodus 12:7)
8. The death of Christ has to be personally recognised and acted upon. This clearly shows the part played by the free will of man and demonstrates the rejection of the concept of universalism, which states that not only did Christ die for all, which is true, but that all as a consequence are saved, which is not true. (John 3:16-36)
9. The blood by itself, once applied, was totally able to provide protection against judgment. (Exodus 12:13)
10. The death of Christ once applied to the life is all sufficient in protection against judgment. (Romans 8:1)
11. The firstborn of Egypt died if the protection was not used. (Exodus 12:29)
12. God gave his only begotten Son to save us from the second death. (John 3:16)

REFLECTIONS UPON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLOOD SACRIFICE

1. Ever since the earliest recorded time God has required a blood sacrifice for sin. It is implied by the coats of skin provided by the Lord in the Garden after Adam and Eve had attempted to clothe their nakedness with leaves. Abel brought an acceptable animal sacrifice, unlike Cain's who brought an unacceptable bloodless offering.
2. The requirement for blood sacrifices was continued with Noah after the flood; (cf. the near sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham); and was established as a requirement not only by the Passover lamb but also in the Levitical offerings.
3. When recording the will of God for Israel in the matter of food and the abstinence from eating "any manner of blood" Moses states "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

4. It is clear from the above that the life of an innocent victim (the animal sacrifice) acted as a shadow until the once and for all payment was paid with the true sacrifice of Christ.
5. There is an absolute necessity of the unique sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as indicated by the phrase "the blood of Christ" which covers all his work for our salvation. (Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 9:22)
6. Up to the time of the once and for all sacrifice the sins of believers were set aside adjacent to them (Greek preposition - para) but since the cross they have been taken fully away.
7. The twelve elements of grace which involve the blood of Christ:-
 - a) The New Covenant. (Hebrews 8:8, 9:20-21)
 - b) The blood is the life. (John 6:53)
 - c) Purchase and Redemption. (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19)
 - d) Propitiation. (Romans 3:25)
 - e) Justification. (Romans 5:9)
 - f) Sanctification. (Hebrews 13:12)
 - g) Cleansing. (Hebrews 9:14, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 7:14)
 - h) Victory. (Revelation 12:11)
 - i) The blood of sprinkling. (Hebrews 10:22, 1 Peter 1:2)
 - j) Made nigh. (Ephesians 2:13)
 - k) Peace. (Colossians 1:20)
 - l) Boldness to enter. (Hebrews 10:19)
8. It is of interest that the resurrection body consists of flesh and bone but apparently no blood.

SALVATION - ATONEMENT: UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

1. Definition:

- a) The totally effective work of Christ on the cross to pay the penalty of sin on behalf of mankind.
- b) Atonement as a noun means reconciliation after enmity and includes reparation made for wrong or injury.
- c) The verb has several related meanings such as to be at one, to be in accordance, to make reparation or amends, to make up for errors or deficiencies, to reconcile.
- d) In the Old Testament, the true meaning of atonement is related to the Hebrew verb "to pass over, to cover" - it is also the word for 'pitch' used to seal Noah's Ark.

2. In Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were used to cover sin.

- a) God forgave and restored where sin was covered by the blood of animal sacrifices.
- b) However, the true basis for atonement was not found in these animal sacrifices. This is why the sacrifices needed to be repeated time and time again.
- c) Animal sacrifices were used as a cover for sin until the true sacrifice, Jesus Christ, could be offered on the cross.
- d) Atonement in the Old Testament refers to the use of animal sacrifices to picture the saving work of Christ.
- e) The two concepts of atonement (Old and New Testament) are brought together in Romans 3:23-26)

3. Atonement is unlimited

- a) When Jesus Christ was judged on the cross for sins he paid for the sins of the entire human race, not just the elect. (Romans 5:6, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 1 Timothy 2:6, 4:10, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 John 2:2)
- b) "Limited Atonement", the concept that Christ died for believers only is incorrect.

4. Unlimited Atonement eliminates sin in the unbelievers' indictment at the Last Judgment.

- a) When Christ died on the cross, He was judged for all sins of the human race.
- b) Therefore the issue in salvation is not sin, but faith in Christ. People choose either to accept the work of Christ (John 3:18,36), or their own "good" works to gain the approval of God.
- c) Therefore, human good will be the basis of the unbelievers' indictment at the Last Judgment. (Revelation 20:12)

TEXT

18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. 19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. 20 Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. 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 basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; 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. 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. 29 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. 31 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 kneading troughs 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. 37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.

REFLECTION

Verses 18 – 20. These instructions will be given more fully for regular observance by the people with their priesthood functioning in Leviticus 23:1-14, Numbers 28:16-21. The command applied to everyone in the land of Israel. They were to ensure that no leaven was in their homes and none was eaten through this time, or that person was to be cut off from the people. It was a serious order, demanding total obedience by everyone, for all had to see the principle clearly; that this new nation was to be separate, and visibly different from others, and be holy unto the Lord their God.

Verses 21 – 23. These events occur well before the last days, so once again we are reminded that the time frame for the events of the warning of Pharaoh and the night of Passover is at least five days, possibly longer to ensure all the Israelites were warned, briefed fully and were able to be obedient over the four days of watching and then the night of Passover itself. They will also need the five days for packing and preparing their food for the journey that they were to take, finishing their tent repairs/making, and getting clothing and implements ready for packing.

Each family had to be packed and ready to move out of their homes by dawn of the day after the feast. There was enough time for everyone to be ready if they worked hard, and worked together as families. This was the challenge, but it was a preparation for their "wilderness journey"; for there they needed to work together to survive.

I refer to the "wilderness" but remember the lands of Sinai and Arabia in those days were pastoral and lush; they were not desert in this day. The Sahara and North Africa also were pastoral lands 3500 years ago. These areas start to become desert in the years after the collapse of the Roman Empire and with climate changes over recent centuries the deserts grow, but when Moses leads the people out of Egypt they had plenty of pastoral land to feed their flocks through the years of wanderings. It was "wilderness" to the ancients because it was not arable land and did not look like the "civilized" lands of Egypt or Ur, but it was still fertile and able to sustain the animals they put there.

The Angel of Death is most likely the Lord (verse 23). This is a surprise to many, but the Lord who is gracious is also the judge of all who reject Him. Grace is offered, but it has a limit, and that limit is reached for Egypt. The blood of the sacrifice alone will stop the judgment, for it speaks of His own future work, and that alone saves man. Acts 3:12-26, 4:12, 16:31, Hebrews 10:28-31, 36-39, 11:28, 12:28-29.

The blood was to be "struck" against the door posts with a bunch of the hyssop plant. It is a picture of the lashing of the Lord by the Roman scourge, but also it is of note that the plant to be used was a healing herb for the ancients. "By his stripes we are healed" from the penalty of sin and death. Isaiah 53:5. He has offered salvation, and is gracious in his provision of it, but there is judgment and the Lord at his Second Advent is blood spattered from his judgment. Isaiah 63:1-10.

Verses 24 – 28. This feast was to be the hallmark feast for Israel as it reminded the people of their birth from slavery and their deliverance from the judgment of man and God. It is to be celebrated by the nation Israel – until time ends. It is the one feast that will continue until the end of time. Other things may change in the world's history but this feast has been celebrated without any break for 3400 or more years now and it will continue to be celebrated until the end of the Millennial Kingdom. This feast was their "reasonable service" to the Lord, for His deliverance from slavery and their entry into the promises of God made to Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob.

The elders of the twelve tribes bowed to Moses and Aaron and did as they were told, informing all their people of the commands of God and ensuring they were obeyed. The organizational system that will be crucial to survival in the wilderness journey is now being tested and proved reliable. Our reasonable service is the total dedication of our body, mind and spirit to the Lord's daily use as His ambassadors upon this earth. Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Verses 29 – 33. The day of grace and forgiveness is over, and the night of judgment begins and through the entire night the cry of death and mourning goes up throughout the entire land. There is no house that is not visited by death. That very night Moses and Aaron are called for and Pharaoh says the words he has said before, but this time he is without hesitation, or hypocrisy, and he strongly urges the Israelite people to leave immediately, and he asks again for prayer for himself, that he might be blessed as they go; that the curses might now stop.

Remember that the Israelites had suffered genocide attempts by the Pharaohs of Egypt. Exodus 1:11-22. The death of the first born comes no-where near the deaths of the Israelites caused by the evil of Pharaoh, and he knows it. Their own sins against God and Israel have come back to rest upon their own heads and they have no accusation of unfairness to level at God. Psalms 105:36-38.

As day dawns after that terrible night, no-one has slept after midnight and all the Egyptians are overly keen to have the Israelites leave their land. All are informed of the doings of Moses and the answers and games of their Pharaoh, for these events played out before them for at least five or six months. Their words are urgent and fear filled; "Go, for we are all dead!" they fear that the death plague will strike all of them rather than just the first born if there are any delays this time. Having seen and felt the increasing power of the God of Israel they do not want there to be any further increase of punishment for their nation, for the only possible next step is the death of them all.

Verses 34 – 37. The people of Israel are able to cook their last unleavened bread for that day's journey in the coals of the fire that roasted the lamb. This is the "bread of affliction" referred to in Deuteronomy 16:3. It was not as tasty as the leavened bread that would normally be made. They are also instructed to bind their kneading troughs (for the bread making), spare clothing and valuables into a bundle with the large piece of carrying cloth, that in the east and Africa is used to carry babies even to today, and put the bundles on their shoulders, and leave Egypt in their families and tribes, under the leadership of their elders.

There is organization that has been tested and tried over the last six months. The people are used to receiving orders and information from their elders now and obedience is "normal" and swift. The Egyptians are so keen for them to leave that they will give them anything to send them on their way permanently. They receive gold, silver and jewellery in abundance to assist them on their way. They literally "spoil" the Egyptians. They receive the back wages of up to 200 years of slavery.

The numbers of the march in our Bibles are potentially one digit or more too great, as at this distance in time the way numbers were calculated opens some questions. It may be 600,000, but it is equally likely that there were 6,000 men; either number may be correct, and this is not an issue to argue over theologically. The word used in question here records 600 "units" – "eleph" and at this time the unit may be as small as a section of ten, a company of an hundred, or a group of a thousand. By the LXX 1200 years later eleph meant a thousand, but not at this time of Moses.

However many people there were (3 million, 300,000, or most likely 30,000) we have a vast host of people moving out into the deserts initially towards the Red Sea and the Sinai and Arabian Peninsula beyond. Initially they appear to be heading for the gap between Lake Timsah* and the Great Bitter Lakes*, (as at that time there is archaeological evidence of a blocking defensive canal linking the Mediterranean as far south as Lake Timsah*). The entire route is now blocked by the Suez Canal. In recent years excavations have uncovered most of these forts described by Moses. He may even have been the general who built or re-fortified them. He would certainly have good knowledge of them – there was a connecting wall between them all and no way through.

At that point, in Succoth* (modern Tell el Maskhuta*), God tells them to turn and head north. Exodus 14:2. This was to head back into the greatest military danger, with the great fortresses and a deep canal blocking the way, and the instruction in Exodus 14 indicates they camped between several of these fortresses; although they are the smaller ones, with only 250 soldiers in each. They then faced the waters of an area known as the Yam Suf, or "The Reed Sea*", a swampy marsh area stretching from the El Ballah* Lakes to the Serbonitis lagoon* (Sabkhat-Bardawil Lagoon –the "Sea of Reeds" – or also called the Gulf of Serbonis) that opened to the Mediterranean Sea.

To assist your study, explore on an internet search engine, the names identified with an * through this next section, as then you will be able to access the latest archaeological data. We are living in a time when study has advanced in this specific area. For the first time since the days of Moses we are able to be sure of the identity of most of these places. Remember however that sea levels were much lower than today and the coastline quite different to today's.

The actual places through which they passed are still partly conjectural at this distance of time, but evidence has built over only the last decade for most of them. Older Bible Encyclopaedia will not have any reliable details as they have only been uncovered over recent years. Moses is precise, for as a prince of Egypt he knew these places like the back of his own hand. The site called Ramesses* was their central settlement point and start point for the order for the formal march of the tribal groups. It is around here that Moses lived, but the people's living quarters are spread ten to fifteen miles to the north west and south east from that point over the plains of the Delta region called then the province of Goshen.

From their living areas they all headed for Succoth*, and thence to the north east, onwards past Etham (Exodus 13: 20), on the edge of the desert, and then on to Hachiroth* (Exodus 14:2ff), between Migdol* and the water (Yam Suf in Hebrew – the “Sea of Reeds”), where they were caught by Pharaoh's chariot forces. This camp is also described as opposite to Ba'al Zephon* (possibly the settlement/temple of Zeus-Casius* on the Mediterranean coast).

The term “Red Sea” in Exodus was used in error, first by the Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew in the 3rd century BC, and has then been used erroneously in English translations since the 16th century. So the “yam suf” is well north of the Red Sea. This is not to eliminate the miracle of the “parting of the Red Sea”, it is just to correctly name the sea as Moses referred to it, rather than the Jewish translators of the 2nd and 3rd centuries in Alexandria, and locate the miracle (which is significant) further north than the translators made it appear to be.

Several things emerge from Moses' description of their initial march. The actual places have proved hard to finally and absolutely identify at this distance. Moses is precise because he is using the names he knows of the places he knows, but over 3500 years the places have been lost to the swamps and the deserts and the place names have changed with the waves of invaders who have swept into and through this land. This is all evidence of the early date of the biblical record, as Moses knew where these places were, but 1200 years later the Septuagint translators did not.

The ancient coast line was also significantly different to the one seen today. Studies recently by Daniel Stanley* of the Smithsonian Institute, with core sample drilling, have revealed that the coast line of Egypt* in this area may have been up to twenty miles different to today's in places. Most Bible maps at the back of the Bible are drawn with present towns marked and present coastlines in place. The actual sea levels and coastline that Moses faced are totally different to today's, and with these changes the roads taken are often very different, although some remain constant through time.

Even in the last eight years a series of vast fortresses have been found on the Sinai/Red Sea borders of Egypt by archaeologists and these may give us a clue to these places and the reason for the otherwise strange and circuitous journey they take. Exodus 13:17. These twelve great forts appear on a relief sculpture from Karnak* from the reign of Seti I* (1294-1279BC) and pre-date him. They formed an impenetrable barrier along the coast road towards what we now know as Gaza and initially stopped the Israelites heading directly north by the fastest road. Pharaoh had clearly left instructions that they were to “worship in the desert” in front of the fortresses, but were to be let go no further.

Even in defeat he had tried to hold them under his control. Refer to the Biblical Archaeological Review* Volume 33 Number 1 (January-February 2007) for the article on this sculpture and discussion of the fortresses and the route north of the Israelites. Pharaoh still believes with these manned forts that he can force the people back after their forty days in the desert to worship.

One of these forts (Tjaru* on the Karnak sculpture) at Tell Hebua* has been excavated by Egyptian archaeologist Mohamad Abd el Maksoud* since 1999. It measures 865 yards long and 430 yards wide. It was a significant fortress. Just three miles to the south east is another smaller fortress, Tell el Borg*. It is apparently the site of another fortress of the New Kingdom, possibly the “Fortress of the Lion” from Seti's sculpture. The walls are twelve feet thick, it is surrounded by a fired mud brick moat, and measures approximately 100 yards square and would have held about 250 soldiers. It has been excavated by James K Hoffmeier* since 2000. If this is correct then the next fortress in the series on the sculpture is Migdol* or Menmaat-re, and should be about 3-5 miles from Tell el Borg. This helps us greatly, for in Exodus 14:2 we hear that the Israelites camped “between Migdol and the Yam Suf (sea of reeds)”.

We have some clues to assist us and several archaeological factors that make the task difficult. The Psalmist appears to believe Pharaoh's palace was at this time at Zoan*, or Tanis*, or at least for the plagues to centre around the “plains of Tanis”. Psalms 78:12. The city of Tanis however was the capital of the Delta region only after 1075 BC, and remained so until Greek and Roman times. The previous capital Pi-Ramesses* (in Moses time) was on the Pelusaic* branch of the Nile* and the river had meandered away from the city and silted up by the days of King David and so the capital moved to Djanet*, or Zoan (Hebrew), or Tanis (Greek name). The city of the Pharaoh of Moses time was thus abandoned and itself fell into the swampy soils of the Delta by the days of King David, so the later Psalmist refers to a general region rather than a city as such, for the city Moses knew by the Psalmist's day only 500 years later had ceased to exist. More evidence that Moses wrote the early record well before 1000 BC. I believe Moses wrote this 1440-1400 BC.

The Delta region is swampy and the water table has fallen and risen through the years. This is seen up the coast at Caesarea*, part of which is well under water now and marine archaeologists in full diving gear are required to study it. This is also true of city suburbs of Alexandria* in Egypt which are now able to be studied only under water. It is extremely difficult to study the New Kingdom* occupation levels of the Delta cities of Moses day in the entire Delta region because their occupation levels are presently below the water table and any excavations require constant pumping out. No papyrus has survived from Delta sites because it rots in the water. Digs in this area have been extremely limited and only in most recent years have archaeologists had the mechanical means to dig and not drown in the process!

Let us start with the first facts Moses gives us in Exodus. The two cities that mud bricks were made for by the Israelites were Pi-Ramesses and Pithom*. Exodus 1:11. Recent excavations by the German Archaeologist Edgar Pusch*, have uncovered only one site that would qualify as a capital city from this period as Pi-Ramesses; it is in the area now known as Qantir*. The swampy soils make excavation difficult but magnetometers indicate a city of six square miles in extent; and this is the only realistic candidate for the capital from that period.

Pithom, the second city's name, means "the house of Atum" (p-r-itm) – house of the sun-god. The sun god of Heliopolis* was the patron deity of an area known as Wadi – Tamilat*, and is now known as Tumilat* (Tell el Retabeh*). Site surveys and initial digs have confirmed Retabeh is the likely site of Pithom. Over just the last twenty five years then we have identified the two cities that the Israelites helped build during the New Kingdom period. Before 1995 all biblical study texts lack any information on these sites, as they were then still unknown!

It helps us now identify the general living area of the Israelite people, and the start point, or full assembly point, for the Exodus. The distance from the site that will be Tanis (yet to be built as a great city in Moses day) through to Qantir (Ramesses), through to Tell el-Retabeh (Pithom) is about 25 miles, and covers the area that the later Psalmist would call the "plains of Tanis" in his day. The Israelites, who built both Ramesses and Pithom, would be spread in their living areas over this area of the Delta, the most south easterly group close by the city of Pithom, and the most north westerly group camped on the plains between Ramesses and what would become the city of Tanis later.

The entire nation when given the order to move, would then be heading in the one south easterly direction, and would be able to assemble in the vast open ground around Succoth (Tell el-Maskhuta) about five miles east of Pithom. From an organizational point of view this would allow Moses to direct their initial march, and then assemble and organize the order of final march and give orders to all the captains, whereas until this time he had been working through the twelve tribal elders group only.

All the people would be together in one confined place also for the first time in 400 years. They wouldn't need to pitch tents at this point, as sleeping in the open a group this size is easier to organize, and it is easier to organize defence also. I suspect they didn't pitch any tents until they are well away from Pharaoh's army and across the water barrier that stood between them and the expanses of the Arabian Peninsula. They could not afford to camp until they were through the fortress line by the coast and well into Sinai.

The date of the Exodus remains conjectural. Tradition has dated the Exodus on the basis of the dates and times given in 1 Kings 6:1. Solomon's Temple was founded in 965 BC and the Exodus is dated by the scribal author of that book as being 480 years before that time. This gives a date of 1445 BC which places the days of Moses in the period thought to be ruled by Thutmose III. I have earlier tied the Exodus into that time period, and still hold to it, waiting any further changing of dates of archaeology in the land of Canaan and Egypt. I believe this so called "early date" is correct.

Now it is to be noted that Zadok, the first priest of the temple of Solomon counted twelve generations of exactly forty years each back to Aaron to get his figure of 480 years; being $12 \times 40 = 480$. With this in mind we need to be careful of being exact in this matter! Dates of the rulership of the kings of the second Millennium BC have also varied widely through the years depending on what information is available and who is historical "flavour of the month" amongst "scholars" also.

Egyptian chronology is still in debate in this time period. The so called "certain" dates from archaeology are as follows. By around 1230 BC the son of pharaoh Rameses II called Mernptah (1236 – 1223 BC), erected a stele that has been found recording his defeat of the "Israelites" or Habaru (Hebrews) in Canaan around 1230 BC. They were clearly there in the hill country by that date, and this is well before the "Sea Peoples"(Philistines) arrive 1210-1175BC, and that makes sense of Judges and Joshua, as the early conflicts of the twelve tribes are with Canaanites not Philistines.

Most modern "scholars" date the Exodus to the reign of his father Rameses II, around 1300 BC, although it makes more sense to me still to move to a mid fifteenth century date (around 1450 BC). This earlier date fits more neatly with the arrival of Joseph in Egypt and his rulership, and Moses reference to the 430 years in verse 40 below and the events that occur during the years of Joshua and the Judges, still makes me think the mid fifteenth century is correct for the date of the Exodus. Things are not clear over dates here. I will stick with my viewpoint until proven wrong, and I don't think I have been yet, but I will not fall out of fellowship with a person over differences in the dates in this area!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Just as the children of Israel had to be careful in their obedience, just so do we. The Lord is the Lord of the details and He wants us to get things right before Him. We are called to be careful in morality and in all aspects of daily life, for we are the Lord's ambassadors before the world.
2. When they see us we represent the Lord and testify to what He has done in our life. If our life is not controlled by the Holy Spirit we cannot testify to anything positive for others. Let us walk in the Spirit and purge out the leaven of unrighteousness wherever we find it.
3. As we discuss the dates and places associated with the Exodus we are reminded that we are not to fall out with people because of differences over these things. While much is known much is still to be known, and the next ten years will see many discoveries which will assist us from the Delta region and with underwater archaeology off the coast.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF SEPARATION

1. Believers are instructed to be separated from habitually carnal believers. (1 Corinthians 5:10, 11)
2. Separation is ordered from apostate religious organisations. (2 Corinthians 6:17)
3. Separation is commanded from unbelievers where scripture is compromised by the relationship or marriage, business partners. (2 Corinthians 6:14 ff)
4. Separation is commanded from the human viewpoint. (Romans 12:2, Romans 16:17, 18)
5. Separation is commanded from pseudo spirituality. (Romans 16:17, 18)
6. Separation is commanded from those who seek pleasure in fast living - pursuit of parties, immoral situations. (1 Peter 4:4)
7. Separation is commanded from other believers who reject Bible doctrine. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15)

TEXT

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. 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. 40 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. 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. :43 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 home born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. :50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 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.”

REFLECTION

Verses 38 – 40. Many people wanted to be part of the Exodus who were not fully part of Israel. Over the centuries there had been intermarriage with the Egyptian community. This was not wrong in itself, as interbreeding will weaken any gene pool if it occurs too early in a people’s development as a nation, but those who entered the nation of Israel needed to embrace the spiritual hope and destiny of Israel and commit to it.

Israel would through the years welcome additions from outside, but all had to embrace their belief system and become “Hebrews” themselves through faith. This meant submit to the covenant sign of circumcision as a testimony to their belief in the Abrahamic Covenant and the special role of the Israelite people in history. The parents of each male child were challenged to express their faith in the promise of Israel and have their sons circumcised.

There had been failure to do this through the recent years of slavery and hardship. This oversight needed to be dealt with quickly and it is by Moses. The “mixed multitude” had joined the nation of Israel because of the great signs and wonders, and they had not fully understood or accepted the special role and destiny of the Hebrew people, and they had not practised the circumcision of their sons.

The other main problem with the “mixed multitude” was that they had not been integrated into the tribal structure and so were not under clear lines of authority and responsibility at this early point. They will become a problem on the march, as a result of this lack of integration into the army of Israel. They are left outside the camp, neither Egyptian any more, and not quite Israelite; it was an issue that needed attention, but there were so many other things to do, that nothing was done at this point.

Inaction on a crucial leadership-authority structure point will always lead to a serious deterioration in the problem over time. Moses draws attention to these people at this point, for they will be the source of his greatest trouble, and we are not to blame him for “leadership failure”. It is not his failure to integrate them fully into the nation that will create the problem; in the end it will be their own failure to embrace the God of Israel by faith that will lead to their open rebellion.

They want to share in the power of the God of Israel and be part of making history, but they are not ready for the hardships of the way, and they hanker for their homeland. Many through the ages have desired to be a part of powerful events and experience an encounter with the true God, but they seek it for entertainment reasons; whereas the genuine seeker seeks service in the place of God's power. Zechariah 8:23.

As we will see, they will lead the rest of the nation astray, but their failure is no more serious in the end than the full Israelites who also fail to adopt the humility of service before God and simply want to enjoy the rest of Canaan rather than embrace the challenge to fight their way through in God's power. Numbers 11:1-6. These people left Egypt, but Egypt never left them. They felt it to be their home, and where we feel we are at home is where we long to be.

Our challenge is to be "at home" in heaven, and see the places of this earth as the temporary tents that they in truth are. We are challenged to be unattached to the details of this life and seek the service of the Lord here rather than rest and comfort. Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16, 38-40, 13:8-15. Our place of retirement is in heaven; and until then we are left here to do the Lord's work.

Notice again that Moses mentions the unleavened bread, because this will be a source of disorder also. Many resent hardship, for they are basically self centred and they believe they are entitled to receive all the good things, and that others are here to suffer and go without, but that they are the "blessed of the Lord" and so they can only have good things. These people must get used to going without as members of the army of the Lord they will need to be prepared to walk and fight on tough rations.

Moses mentions that they don't have any "victuals". This word refers to meat. They have not had the time to salt their meat on that last day and so there is no meat ready, and all they can take is the unleavened bread they have ready from the day before. Now pause for a minute and reflect upon the time frame for the miracles of Moses before Pharaoh. They have gone over at least four to six months.

Had any family had faith in the certain future deliverance of the Israelites, they could have been salting meat for six months and would have had plenty of supplies ready. They have their tents for later; why do they not have enough salted meat and fish? These people have not fully "stepped out in faith". They are not ready for their deliverance. Check yourself out on this matter. If the Lord has called to you to work, then ask what is needed to be prepared to achieve the task, and as the Nike advert says, "Just DO IT!"

To pray in faith means that you act as if what you pray for has already arrived and so you are ready to move when it does arrive. If you believe the Lord wants you in missions, then start learning the language and studying theology, then when the order to move comes you are ready to get into gear immediately. Each of us stepped out in faith, well before there was any money, or buildings, or people, and so when the Lord provided them we could immediately start the work. **THIS IS FAITH IN ACTION**, and it is to this that the Lord calls us daily.

The time in Egypt was referred to as a time of "sojourning". The concept that this entire life upon the earth is a temporary thing, a time of sojourning, is a major theme of the Pentateuch. Moses had lived in a palace but he was content to live his last days in a tent, for he saw that all that we have here is temporary. The people of Israel were in Egypt for 430 years, but they were as a moment when they left. It is the same with each individual life; it appears as a vapour, so quickly gone. All that lasts is what is beyond space-time; our eternal life with God. James 4:13-17.

Verses 41 – 43. They had been released from slavery on that Passover night by the command of Pharaoh, and Moses notes that it was the exact day that 430 years before Jacob had entered Egypt. Now there is debate over this also! Does the 430 years date from Jacob entering Egypt or from Abraham receiving the promise in the land? Genesis 12:1-3, 15:13, Acts 7:4ff, Galatians 3:16-17. It makes more sense to view the time frame from entering Egypt to leaving it again, and also the number of generations between Joseph and Joshua are roughly ten, which is too tight for a short sojourn in Egypt, but equates well with a 430 year time frame.

From the dates we have for Abraham the short time frame in Egypt also does not work at all, nor does it with the Exodus time itself. The biblical passages to check out the genealogies, if you are interested in this discussion here are, Numbers 26:29ff, 27:1ff, Joshua 17:3ff, Ruth 4:18ff, 1 Chronicles 2:5-6, 18, 20ff. Each of these passages indicates too many generations for there to be any less than around 400 years for the people in Egypt.

The significance of the Passover was it marked the beginning of their nationhood as free people; free because of the blood shed for them. It was a believer's feast only and all who were to be a part of this feast had to commit to the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They had to stand with the patriarchs in circumcision, expressing in their bodies the belief that the Lord had set them apart for His service, and that "In Him" they had a destiny. The feast was the centre around which Israel was to spin; the yearly reminder that their national life depended upon redemption and salvation.

Verses 44 – 47. Those servants that have been purchased as slaves are to be treated, not as slaves without nation or rights, but as full covenant members of the household of Israel. This was a revolutionary concept, and was to be illustrated by their circumcision into the nation and family to which they belonged. In future generations there were to be no "mixed multitudes", but all who permanently dwelt in the land were to be attached to a family and a tribe, so that they were an integrated part of the nation; be they slave or free. Any foreigner, just visiting the land was not to eat of the Passover as a rule, and no hired servant, who had not joined himself to the household celebrating the feast, was to eat of it. It was a believer's only feast; exactly as the Communion Table was to be later. 1 Corinthians 11:23-34.

The food was to be consumed in one household; it was not to be carried back and forth between houses. It was a feast that was not to be broken by going to and fro to other places. Once it began it was to be eaten until it was finished. No casual attitude was to enter into this feast, for it spoke of blood bought salvation and deliverance; they were born as a nation by the grace and mercy and sacrifice of God for them. Just so with ourselves; no casual and cute attitudes or practises are to be allowed to enter into the Communion Table. 1 Corinthians 11:27-34.

They were to be careful in the preparation of the Passover meal, and not a bone of the lamb was to be broken in the process. The whole process was to be done with care, reverence and holy devotion to getting every detail right before the Lord. This is a challenge to ourselves regarding the Communion Table. It is to be a holy and careful service, saturated with prayer and care.

Verses 48 – 51. Every Israelite was to keep the feast; few excuses were acceptable to fail to attend this feast. The only reason not to attend was to be the service of the dead which might render a person unclean for seven days. This alone was to keep a person from Passover. When a visitor from another people was staying with an Israelite family as their guest there was a remedy for that person to keep the Passover if they believed in the God of Abraham and wished to do so. That man and his male sons were all to be circumcised as a sign of their belief in God and their acceptance of the covenant.

All who believed were able to be added to the nation Israel. Israel was a nation established upon faith, and so all who shared that faith were able to attend their feasts and serve their God as full members of the nation. Moses has added these verses during the wilderness march as a permanent record of the regulations, and he records here also that all the people did keep this Passover as they were supposed to.

God asked them to celebrate this feast as a testimony to their expectation of deliverance, and Moses ends this chapter by reminding his people and ourselves, that God did indeed deliver His people that very day.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. How careful the Israelites were in the Passover! How careful and prayerful we need to be in our celebration of the Passover/Eucharist also. No casual attitude or action is to creep into the Communion Table. It is a holy feast, speaking of the sacrifice of the Lord for us, and ought to be taken in prayer and quietness of spirit before the Lord and man.
2. No-one was to share the Passover without personally committing to the covenant of Israel. Only believers were to be present at the table, for only those who had accepted the Lord's salvation were able to celebrate His deliverance. Just so today, the Communion Table is for believers only and we all need to examine ourselves regarding sin and our spiritual status before partaking. A solemn warning should be given before Communion, for none may eat casually without endangering their lives!
3. Where is our true home? Do we see heaven as our true home or are we pre-occupied with the details of this present life? The mixed multitude is with us still and we may be influenced by their lusts for the things of this world ahead of the service of the Lord. Let us ensure we are guided by the Lord and the Holy Spirit, not the desires and priorities of those around us.
4. Hardship is a normal part of military life, but many in the Christian life feel personally insulted if they are asked to "rough it" by the pastor or the Lord. It is not a retirement lodge we have been called to, but to serve in the Lord's army. Let us remember that we are on active service and the enemy is active. Let us focus on the battle ahead and strive to win it without complaint.
5. Faith in action means we step out in obedience expecting the Lord to provide along the path He has ordered us to walk. We are obedient and we expect the provision to arrive in time. We step out believing in the power of God to do what He has called us to accomplish in His strength, for that is what He does! Let us be sure of our orders and then let us step out in dynamic faith that expects the Lord to be there for us.

REFLECTIONS UPON ETERNAL LIFE

1. DEFINITION: Life belonging to the ages (Greek word aionios). This is the life of the believer who had a beginning in time but whose life will continue through the other side of death into the infinite future.
2. Mankind were created for eternity. God's purpose was to create a being to enjoy fellowship with forever. 2 Peter 3: 9.
3. The issue for entry into eternal life is faith in Christ. The choice for man is clearly stated in John 3:36, 5:24, Acts 13:46, Galatians 6:8, Matthew 25:6.
4. Those who are serious about life and concerned about death ask about it. Matthew 13:40-43, 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 10:25, 18:18.

5. The Lord's words provide the answer to the questions about eternal life. John 6:68, Romans 5:20, 21, Romans 6:22, 23.

It is the Lord who gives eternal life, John 5:39, 40, 12:50.

6. The Lord gives eternal life to those who believe on him, John 10:28, 17:2,

The door to fellowship and all that goes with it is opened by faith in him as Saviour. John 3:15,16, Acts 13:48, John 6:40, 47.

"To Eat His Flesh and Drink His Blood" is graphic language to picture his work and our need to appropriate it for ourselves. John 6:54, 4:14.

7. While it may only be fully known in heaven the believer may grasp a glimpse of eternal life here and now by way of anticipation and relationship. Knowing God is a glimpse of eternal life now, John 17:3, and fellowship with him is the joy of every believer now and forever. 1 John 1:1-4, 5:10-12, 20, 1 Timothy 6:12, 19.

8. Eternal life is received in full at the resurrection/rapture when we all receive our new bodies from the Lord. Rewards are received then to enjoy with the Lord forever. We are all urged to live each day with the eternal life perspective in mind, thinking of our place with the Lord forever. Matthew 19:29, 30, Mark 10:29-31, John 12:25, John 4:36, Romans 2:6,7.

9. Eternal Life is the believer's hope, associated with the Rapture and Resurrection, and should be on our mind through each day, as it sets us apart from the unbelievers who have no such hope. Philippians 3:20, 21, Titus 1:2, 2:13, 3:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 4:13, 1 Peter 1:3,

10. The assurance of eternal life is grounded in the promise of God given through Christ. 1 John 2:24,25, 1 John 5:13-15.

REFLECTIONS UPON OUR ETERNAL SECURITY

1. When a person truly trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, he is saved forever. He cannot lose his salvation.

2. POSITIONAL APPROACH (Romans 8:38-39)
We are united with Christ ("in Christ"). Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.

3. LOGICAL APPROACH (Romans 8:32, Romans 5)
As unbelievers we are enemies of God (Romans 5), as believers we are his children. If he did the most for his enemies what will he do for his children? This excludes loss of salvation for he saved us while we were his enemies.

4. GOD'S HANDS APPROACH (John 10:28, Psalm 37:24)
Neither shall anyone seize them out of my hand. God is all powerful.

5. EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH (2 Timothy 2:12-13)
If we deny Christ He is going to deny us rewards (context=suffering and rewards). If we renounce Him, HE REMAINS FAITHFUL. The believer is in Christ and Christ indwells the believer. He cannot deny Himself.

6. THE FAMILY APPROACH (Galatians 3:26, John 1:12)
When you believe in Christ you are born again as a child of God. You cannot be unborn, once a child always a child.

7. THE INHERITANCE APPROACH (1 Peter 1:4-5)
We have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God. Perfect tense - it will always be reserved, since it is kept by God, not us.

8. THE SOVEREIGNTY APPROACH (2 Peter 3:9, Jude 24)
He is not willing that any should perish - refers to the whole human race (2 Peter 3:9) Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling (from perishing). Once you are saved, it is His will that you don't perish.

9. THE BODY APPROACH (1 Corinthians 12:21, Colossians 1:18)
Christ is the head, we are the members of the body. If any are lost, the body of Christ is incomplete.

10. THE GREEK TENSE APPROACH (Ephesians 2:8-9)
"For by Grace are ye saved". Perfect tense of the verb "sozo". For by Grace have you been saved in the past so that you go on being saved forever.

11. THE SEALING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT APPROACH (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30)
In the ancient world the seal was a guarantee for protection. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit guarantees our security.

CHAPTER 13**INTRODUCTION**

Remember as you read this that these instructions were given before the first Passover, noted and followed by Moses, but only written and fully communicated once the Exodus march was well under way, for on that first day the whole nation was on the move, and there was no stopping until they reached Succoth, and then only to change heading and move north to their date with destiny by the Sea of Reeds (Yam Suf).

The people had cleansed their houses of leaven in advance of Passover, and made all the unleavened bread they could on the last day so there was a number of days supply of the unleavened bread, which keeps better than leavened bread and possibly they would have taken bags of wheat with them to bake later. They would keep the feast of unleavened bread on the first seven days of the march, for there was no other bread able to be baked, and probably no fires lit, possibly for the first seven days at least.

They would have eaten the fresh fruit and vegetables that they had stored in their houses on these first days and the unleavened bread, and when the food runs out the Lord will provide manna, but they must walk out in faith, heading into the wilderness and watching their food supplies dwindle by the day. This will be the visible test for them all; do they trust the Lord to provide for them as they move out in obedience or do they think the Lord will let them starve?

They are to dedicate themselves to obedience to the Lord and they are to consecrate their first born to the Lord in perpetuity in memorial of the deliverance and salvation of Passover night, and as a testimony of hope for the future. You do not dedicate the first born to service later in their life, if you do not expect them to have a life!

TEXT

13:1 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. **3** 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. **9** 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.

REFLECTION

Verses 1 – 2. The first born of all Israelites was, from this day onwards to be dedicated to the Lord in thanks for the deliverance of the first born on Passover night. Deuteronomy 16:1-12. They were not to be the priests, as the Egyptian's first born were, but to be the memorial of the Lord's deliverance. A special sacrifice was set aside in the Law of Moses that was for the thanksgiving and redemption of the first born. Down the years each family would dedicate their first born in the Temple and pay a price that went to support the Levitical priesthood that interceded on their behalf, and stood before the Lord for them and their first born. Leviticus 27:26-28, Numbers 3:11-13, 8:14-26, Luke 2:21-32, Hebrews 12:22-29.

Verses 3 – 4. The call is repeated again and again to "remember" the day that they were delivered from Egypt. This remains the key call to all believers in today's world also, for we need to remember the goodness of the Lord or we will be overcome by the cares of this world. If we fail to remember the past goodness of God we will fail to walk in the present in His grace, and so our futures will not resemble the glorious past. Deuteronomy 4:1-9, Mark 4:19, Luke 8:14, 21:34, Philippians 4:4-13. This is the heart of the Communion Service also. Luke 22:15-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-34.

They had been slaves to the will of the Egyptians and the Lord had delivered them by His power, and they were to remember that all the powers of men are as nothing alongside the power of the Creator Saviour God. They were to daily recall that their God had the power to deliver them and they were to rest in the assurance of His character and power and in the timing of His plan. Deuteronomy 4:32-40, 11:1-8. No person who claims the power of God is to distract any believer from obedience to the truth of God as revealed in His holy Word. Deuteronomy 13:1-11, 18:9-22.

Verses 5 – 6. There is no doubt that the Lord will bring them into the land He swore to their fore-fathers. The Lord's promises will be fulfilled and the land that is owned by all the pagan tribes and peoples will be taken from them and given to the tribes of Israel. It is a blessed land and it will be their own by grace. The first seven days will be unleavened bread and the last day will be a feast to the Lord. Now think a little here, for they have dwindling food supplies, and yet on that day they are told to cook and eat and celebrate. As we go through the next chapters we will see that day come and the challenge to faith that this involves. Psalms 78:1-8, Ephesians 6:1-4.

Verses 7 – 8. The leaven has been left behind in Egypt. There is none taken on the march into Canaan, nor will any leavened bread, in the old Egyptian sense, be made in the wilderness march for all the stored yeast has been cleansed out of the houses of Israel in those last days. The only leaven (yeasts) would be airborne ones in any baking process. This will be unnecessary during much of the Exodus as there is only the grain they brought with them and that will be used up quite quickly, then only the manna collected each morning.

Their mixing bowls that they used for bread (Exodus 12:34) will be used for the last of the grain, after the first seven days, and then manna in the march for the next forty years. These bowls brought out of Egypt will be used by the Exodus generation's children in the land for the first time in forty years for real bread once they have entered the land. They are to tell their children, that these bowls were the places that the last leaven was used, and the place of the unleavened bread, and then of the manna, and that the Lord provided all they needed as they left Egypt.

These bowls will be a standing reminder that they had no leavened bread for forty years, yet the Lord provided for them the manna of heaven to eat. Moses tells them to eat unleavened bread for seven days and trust the Lord in this. They are to keep their forward momentum, even though they can see their food supplies dwindling by the day. They are ordered to have a feast on the seventh day, even though they are heading into the lands of Arabia where they do not know if there is food to buy and their supplies are running lower by the day. They are being challenged to walk in faith, in trust and obedience to the commands of the Lord their God. Jesus will use this analogy of leaven in His teaching. Matthew 16:5-12, Luke 12:1-7.

Verses 9 – 10. The feast/fast of Unleavened Bread was to be a memorial forever for the people of Israel, to remind them of their walk before the Lord and His provision for their needs when they walked in obedience to His commands. Deuteronomy 6:4-14, Proverbs 6:2-23. The Lord removed these people from slavery with "a strong arm", in mighty power, defeating the gods (demons) of Egyptian religion. The nation Israel is to celebrate the defeat of their enemy and the certainty of the defeat of their enemies when they cling to the truth of God's revelation to them.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. The call goes down the ages for all believers to REMEMBER God's word, works, and way, and so walk in obedience to the Lord and receive the blessings that He has for them in their day. Let us saturate ourselves in the words of the Lord and the certainties of the plan and power of the mighty God. Moses mentors a great bible teacher, for he repeatedly taught the people, and so ought we to do.
2. The Israelites are on "hard rations" for a week and then, after their grain is used up, they will be eating the manna. They must get used to simple fare, but there will always be enough. This is our lesson; that the Lord will provide enough for us if we walk in obedience before Him. Let us be content in our walk before the Lord and not complain when we have to eat simple food.
3. Feasts and Fasts ought to be equally important to us as we walk through this life, for the Lord wants us to be ready for hardship and for celebration. In the midst of hardship we are also to celebrate the Lord's grace, mercy and provision of all we need. Let us praise the Lord in the midst of our wilderness walk right now!

REFLECTIONS UPON THE DESTINY OF THE NATION ISRAEL

1. Israel has a future which was promised to Abraham. (Genesis 12:1-3)
2. Israel's future is based on regeneration. (Romans 9:6-14)
3. Israel's future is related to the land of Palestine. (Genesis 15:18, Numbers 34:1-12, Deuteronomy 30:1-9)
4. Israel has a King forever - the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ in the Millennium. (2 Samuel 7:8-16, Psalm 89:20-37)
5. The promises were confirmed to Jeremiah in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31ff, Hebrews 8:8-13)
6. Israel's most dramatic future begins as a nation at the Second Advent of Christ. (Zechariah 14:1-9)
7. Israel's future is guaranteed, even though the nation is now in dispersion under the discipline of God. (Isaiah 5:26-30, 14:1-3, 10:20-23, 11:11-16, Zechariah 10:6-12)
8. Israel had a purpose in the past.
 - a) To witness to the holiness of the one true God. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 43:10,12)
 - b) To illustrate to the nations the blessings derived from serving the one true God. (Deuteronomy 33:26-29, 1 Chronicles 17:20-21, Psalm 144:15)
 - c) To receive, record and broadcast the Scriptures. (Deuteronomy 4:5-8, Romans 3:1-2)
 - d) To receive and proclaim the promised Messiah. (Genesis 3:15, 12:3, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Isaiah 7:14, 9:6)

9. The nation Israel is now in dispersion under the discipline of God. The Church has replaced the mission of Israel during the Church Age. (Romans 11) When the Church is removed in the Rapture, Israel will again take up its purpose during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:4-8).

TEXT

“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, 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. 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. 17 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. 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. 20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21 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.”

REFLECTION

Verses 11 – 13. There is no doubt that the land will be taken and the Canaanites destroyed. The Lord does not speak to Moses as if there is any doubt, for there is none in the Lord's Plan. This is what we must all get a strong hold onto. The Lord's plans are not our plans and His timing is not ours. We seek to do things in ways that make sense to us, but faith demands we see what the Lord wants and do things in a totally different way at times. The Lord also demands of us that we see from before an event, that it is certain if He has ordered us to advance to do the job! Moses is to “see” Canaan as already conquered, and he does. This demand will be given to all the people but sadly only Caleb and Joshua will get it!

The people are challenged by the dedication of the first born to see every first born child as special unto the Lord, and see in the baby the actions of the adult it will become. They are to praise God for their children and raise them to grow up godly and powerful in the Lord's grace and love. All the males of the animals are dedicated to the Lord as offerings, and also later as food for the priests. If the people are not going to do that then they are to strangle the animals and render them unusable by anyone. If they are not to follow the Lord's instructions then they had better not try to take the Lord's anointed as their own!

Those that were not offering material (like the Ass) were to be redeemed by the offering of a lamb from the flock. The first born child was to be redeemed by sacrifice made in thanks, and then a monetary offering given to the Lord's work in the Temple. Numbers 18:15-19. The first offering was the Lord's. It was to be a habit of thanksgiving to God that was to make these people separate from all others. They were to be thankful for their deliverance and their tenure of the land the Lord had given. They were to withhold nothing from the Lord that was His, for their generosity towards the Lord's blessing would be their acceptable sacrifice to Him for His greater grace towards them. **Romans 12:1-2, Philippians 4:17-19.**

Verses 14 – 15. When the children ask why there is a payment made to redeem the first born, then the fathers are to take the personal responsibility of telling their children why this law has been brought in. They are to tell their children about Pharaoh's refusal to release the children of Israel, and how the Lord had to slay the first born of Egypt, and how only then were the people let go. They are to tell their children that it was God's mighty power alone that delivered the people, not any power they had, and in memory of that every first born child is dedicated to the Lord's service, and if it is not a Levite, then it is to be redeemed by a payment, which will then support the priesthood that stands before the Lord continually to give thanks on behalf of the people for their deliverance.

God didn't/doesn't need our gratefulness, but we need to remember God's grace and power, or we will fall away from our holy worship and holy lives before God. To forget the One who gave them the land, was, over time, to lose tenure to the land, and sadly that would occur – just as we lose blessing today. Leviticus 26:3ff, Deuteronomy 6:20-25, 28:1-14.

The Canaanites had lost their tenure of the land due to their evil and sin, and so would the children of Israel if they followed the way of the Canaanites. Deuteronomy 7:1-11. Holiness was required to hold this land, and to fall short of God's standards was to lose the right to occupy the land. God made the conditions clear from the beginning, but His people would fail again and again.

It is just so with us in the church today. We are called to receive and walk in the many blessings of the Holy Spirit's ministries. To receive and walk in these blessings is to walk worthy of the Lord and walk in the light of His Word. To walk in a worthy manner means to live in a way that honours God by the fruit of the life. It is a command of the Lord that we live in a worthy manner; worthy of the one who died for us on the Cross. **Matthew 10:37-42, Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-11.** To walk through this life in any other way than the filling of the Holy Spirit is to walk outside the blessing of God.

Verses 16 – 17. Worthiness of life means that spiritually you are aware of sin and deal with it quickly, and more than that, you seek active ways to glorify the Lord in and through your life. Both the rejection of sin and the embracing of opportunity to serve are required to meet the Lord's demands of His servants. I used the word "demands" deliberately, for the Lord demands of us the standard of holiness; complete separation of the life from worldliness and dedication to the Lord's service and the glory of the name of the One who gave Himself for us. **Ephesians 4:11-32.**

This passage of Ephesians is a strong statement of this demand, and it is the same as that made of Israel, if anything, it is a little stronger, but we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to achieve the result the Lord expects. The demand is made of us because of the One who indwells us. 1 John 4:4. Refer to the BTB study on **WORLDLINESS**.

The Word of God was to be bound to the wrist and to be in the forefront of the mind at all times. The people were to saturate themselves in the promises and commands of the Lord their God. What the legalists of the nation did was literally bind biblical verses placed in little boxes (tephillim/phylacteries), Matthew 23:5, and tie them to their wrists and between their eyes on their foreheads as they prayed. God did not want the Word in a box on the skin, but in the fleshly tablet of the heart and mind! God wanted reality in faith and practise, not form of religious ritual. Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 3:1-8.

Moses now mentions the route that the people were to take into the Promised Land. The order of march was not to go by way of the coastal road, for only one reason according to the Lord. The one we have already seen, (that it was guarded by large fortresses and the orders of Pharaoh were that the people were not to pass them and move up the coast road), was irrelevant to the Lord. That is not the one mentioned by Moses here, for in the plan of God it was irrelevant.

Now pause and reflect upon this statement, for I explained the strength of these forts and the route the people will take will bypass them, but they were not the reason the people were not to take the coast road. The Lord could have broken down the forts as He would do to Jericho, and the people were numerous enough to overwhelm them by sheer numbers if they had been required to. Their presence will not be the reason for avoiding the direct coastal route to the land.

The presence of the Chariot equipped Canaanites (Philistine area later) on the coastal strip of the land was the reason for avoiding the coast road, for that journey, only taking seven to ten days, would have brought the people of Israel to battle against these warlike people well before they had learned enough spiritual lessons to be able to fight with the courage and skill needed to win. Straight spiritual power in baby believers is not enough to win some battles in the Angelic Conflict; spiritual maturity and skills learned over years is required to achieve some goals in the path of life. We are to mature in faith over time, by believing God's Word and learning both obedience and trust through years of daily application. Some enemies can only be defeated by mature believers operating in mature faith, with full understanding of the spiritual issues involved.

This is why so many "alive" Pentecostal and charismatic churches fall apart after a few years of apparently fruitful ministry. If the baby believers there try to do things that only spiritually mature, stable and strong believers can do, then they will experience defeat, because they have over stepped the will and plan of God for them. God has a plan for each of us, and we are to be obedient, grow spiritually, and taking on only the battles that the Lord places before us, and no others, until we grow spiritually strong enough in our faith to be able to do the advanced tasks the Lord asks of us. We must walk with Jesus, neither ahead nor behind. We must walk step for step with Jesus, and at times we may appear to be going a very "long way round" to get to our goal. Trust and obey and so be safe at such times. When you look back you will see what God did.

The Lord will not ask us to do things we are not ready for, and these people were not ready to face the Heavy Armoured Forces! We must pray seriously and long about missions and ministry "opportunities" to be sure we are moving ahead in the Lord's Plan, not our own, and in the Holy Spirit's strength and guidance, not our own enthusiasm. I stand in fear for many spiritually young believers (of all ages) who go off on what they call "missions" into spiritually dangerous places without fully understanding the nature of evil, let alone the situations they will face in those places.

I am staggered at the number of young believers who get tropical diseases in mission situations when they have not had vaccinations, and who get defeated by evil spirits they were not expecting! They did not step out in faith, but in foolishness! We are to learn from these verses and be "very scared" of stepping beyond the Lord's will for our life. We are to learn from the Exodus Generation and study the Word, and so prepare ourselves by knowing our Lord and knowing our enemy as we should, and then obeying our Lord's commands for our life, but not moving ahead of the Lord.

Verses 18 – 19. The Lord led the people north from Succoth into the desert and then the marshlands of the Yum Suf (Sea of Reeds in Hebrew – not Red Sea as the Greek Septuagint translated it). This area of land was the best place for natural defence against chariot forces and also the way that would lead them to the Lord's exit point from the land of Egypt. The great highway of the Egyptians on the coast was not the road God was going to use; He was going to

open His own road through the Sea of Reeds. He was going to start to teach these people the faith that they would need to defeat their enemies on the way.

The first test was to have their backs to the enemy and their faces to this vast sea of water and reeds, where only God could deliver them, and to express the same faith they had when they painted their door posts with blood, but this time under a little more pressure! This is how God builds our faith; and it is always under pressure. Pharaoh under pressure hardened his heart against the Lord God, but the believer under pressure is to open their heart and life to the power of the Holy Spirit, and then step out into the plan of God for them and claim the Lord's promises. As they step out the Lord will provide if it is His will we walk in, and if there is no provision, then prayer needs to be made, for it may be we have stepped out without the Lord's approval into a path that is not His.

These people will hear direct orders through Moses and so they will have straight forward instructions to be applied by clearly understood action, but once they head north from Succoth they will also see the visible presence of the Lord with them each day in the form of the cloud or the fire. We face the greater challenge to pray and study the Word and listen to the voice of the Lord within, but we have the Holy Spirit to assist us within. God wants us to walk closer and closer to Him and so make fewer and fewer mistakes. He wants us to stoke the fire of the Holy Spirit's presence and let the Lord's reality glow within, and His word burn daily into the fabric of our life. These people will head out under Moses orders and they are already organized into tribes and sub-groups by the time they leave Succoth. It appears to have been their marshalling area.

The word translated "harnessed" in verse 18 in the AV English Bible means they went up from Succoth armed and in orderly columns, as soldiers in an army. This tells us that the tribal elders had organized their men into sections and companies already, and they had organized themselves makeshift weapons.

Weapons are clearly another thing that they took from the Egyptians on their departure, for as slaves they would not have been able to have arms. They have either taken or made, leather belts and scabbards, (that is behind the word "harnessed" – it means the weapons are properly bound on with the right webbing to hold them properly, and the ranks are properly organized), and all the men have some swords and spears and shields, and they are marching under accepted leaders of sections and companies. They will not be fully equipped yet, but God will see to that at the Yam Suf!

They are yet to be fully trained in the use of weapons after years of slavery, and that is why they are not ready to fight the tough Canaanites of the coastal cities; they must train and fight lesser foes to build their military skills in the next years. This is just the same as a pastor today, learning to use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. We must practise and practise with God's Word and use it skilfully in order to advance in ministry. We must be saturated in the Word and use it daily, for only then can the Lord give us greater and greater tasks and enemies to deal with.

They also have a strange flag to follow as they leave, but one that is their "banner". They have the mummy of Joseph with his bones within. This coffin is their head of column in their march. They have remembered the words of the one who brought the people into Egypt and they are taking him out. Genesis 50:24-25, Joshua 24:32.

Their banner is the banner of faith, and the bones of Joseph speak of the faith of that man in their eventual leaving of Egypt. As they look at that box they remember that the promise of God was believed by that man, and they are now seeing it fulfilled, and they will see all the other promises fulfilled as they keep stepping out in faith just as Joseph did.

Verses 20 – 22. They have now the visible presence of the Lord to guide them. This is the Shekinah Glory of the Lord that appears before the people at this time. The glory of the Lord appears as they camp at Etham on the edge of the desert. The Lord's presence is protective and comforting.

Moses is making this commentary a fair way into the wilderness march, and clearly added what is our verse 22 right at the end his life and the end of their journey into the land. This section gives us some insight into the writing of the Pentateuch, with a rough draft made early and then teaching notes developed and then a final draft just before his death to ensure everything was recorded.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. There is no doubt about the fulfilment of God's Plan for our lives. Doubt is the fruit of the Old Sin Nature and to be opposed and rejected. Worship and saturation of the Word supports our faith and develops it further. We need to remind ourselves that the Lord is the King of kings and Lord of all lords and there are none that can stand against the Lord. We serve the Saviour God of all – let us relax and move forward in the tasks before us with total confidence in God's power to keep us.
2. We are to take responsibility to teach our children the truth about God and His Word whenever we can. We are to take every opportunity to pass on the truth that will save and deliver them from all evil. We begin to train our children in righteousness and the Lord continues through experiences they will have later. We need to bring our children up with the expectation of the actions of God in their life.
3. The Canaanites lost tenure of the land due to their evil. We lose blessing through being out of fellowship with the Lord. We grow in strength and power by feeding on the Word and applying it in faith through the filling of the Holy Spirit. We are called to advance in faith and power through application of the Word into daily life.

4. The Coastal Canaanites Cities were not to be attacked by these people, and even under Joshua they would not defeat them. The Exodus Generation were not ready to deal with such serious enemy forces, and they would be destroyed by the later Philistines. (Note Ezra's edit of the Torah may have changed Moses label for these coastal towns to "Philistines" as that was understood in his day, but they don't arrive until 200 years after the early date for the Exodus).

We must grow in spiritual strength and the Lord will allow us to face the enemies we can deal with. We are protected on the Lord's path for our life. Let us walk with God and then we need fear no-one and no thing. 1 John 4:4. God's way through some problems will be by direct deliverance, and other times by ordinary means. Some enemies will actually be dealt with by other satanic forces – as Satan doesn't do great team work. Let us walk with the Lord and relax about how He brings us through, but walk with certainty that He will.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life (love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance). (Galatians 5:22-23) Note that "fruit" is singular - all the characters are produced at the same time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Fruit of the Spirit is also listed as follows:-
Romans 14:17 - Righteousness, Peace, Joy
Colossians 3:12-15 - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness
1Thessalonians 1:3 - Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope

2. In principle, it is the imitation of God (Ephesians 5:1). The reason we are left on the earth after salvation is to produce fruit. (John 15:16, Philippians 4:17)

3. We produce fruit by hearing the word (Mark 4:20-28) and applying it to our lives. (Hebrews 4:2)

4. Failure to grow and produce fruit means divine discipline even to the point of the believer's early departure from this life. (Luke 13:6-9 John 15:2)

5. Rewards in eternity are distributed on the basis of faithful production. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10)

6. Fruit is not to be confused with spiritual gifts. These are listed in (Romans 12:6-8; 15:18-19; 1Corinthians 12:8,10; 1Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:1) and other places.

7. One can know Christians by their fruit (Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-45; 1John 3:10 & 11; John 15:8) especially by their love (John 13:35) but not by their gifts, as Satan can imitate them (2Thessalonians 2:9).

8. Three natural fruits represent some of the facets of the fruit of the Spirit: Apples - love, Grapes - Joy, Pomegranates - Peace.

9. In Galatians 5: 22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is divided into three sections

[a] Love, Joy and Peace towards God;

[b] Patience, Goodness and Kindness towards others;

[c] Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control towards oneself.

THE MENTAL ATTITUDE OF GENUINE HUMILITY

1. Humility is to be sought - Zephaniah 2:3

2. Humility is manifest in restraint - Luke 6:28-29

3. Humility is produced by the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23

4. Humility is essential in teaching - 2 Timothy 2:25

5. Humility is essential in learning. - James 1:21

6. Humility is valuable to God. - Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

7. Humility is the path to promotion - 1 Peter 5:6

8. Humility gives proper self evaluation. - Romans 12:3
9. Examples of humility
 - a) Moses - Numbers 12:3
 - b) David - 2 Samuel 16:11
 - c) Jeremiah - Jeremiah 26:14
 - d) Stephen - Acts 7:60
 - e) Paul - 2 Timothy 4:16
10. Evidences of humility
 - a) Forbearance to others - Ephesians 4:2,6:9, Colossians 3:13
 - b) Endurance in trials - 1 Corinthians 13:7, James 1:12
 - c) Compassion - 1 Thessalonians 2:7
 - d) Peaceability - James 3:17
11. Humility was the primary characteristic of Christ - Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 11:29, 21:5
12. Promises to the humble - Psalm 22:26, 37:11, 147:6, Isaiah 29:19

THE ENEMY'S POLICY – "WORLDLINESS"

1. Worldliness means to follow the beliefs and philosophy of man rather than that of God
2. Worldliness is the opposite to Godliness; it is thinking/doing in opposition to God's revealed word. Titus 2:11-14.
3. All people are faced with the constant choice of following God's way or the world's. Romans 5:12, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20.
4. Satan is the "prince of this world", and has power to deceive those who are negative to God's plans. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Peter 5:8,9.
5. We must not love the world, 1 John 2:15-17.
6. We must hate all the world stands for, in thought and in deed. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 11:30-32, Galatians 6:14, James 1:27, James 4:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 19.
7. We must not return to our old behaviour patterns, Ephesians 2:1-7.
8. This evil world system and the prince of this world will be condemned. Matthew 18:7, John 12:31, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 2:1ff.

WHAT IS THE SHEKINAH GLORY?

1. The Shekinah glory is the visible manifestation of the presence of God. The usual title used is the glory of God
2. It is from the Hebrew word "shachan" meaning dwelling.
3. It took the form of light, fire, cloud or a combination of these.
4. At times it is associated with the following, the Angel of Jehovah, the Holy Spirit, The Cherubim and the motif of thick darkness.
5. Appearances of the Shekinah Glory in the Old Testament
 - a) The Garden of Eden [Genesis 3:8]
 - b) The time of the Abrahamic Covenant [Genesis 15:12-18]
 - c) The burning bush [Exodus 3:1-5]
 - d) At the Exodus [Exodus 13:21,22]
 - e) At Mount Sinai [Exodus 19:16-20]
 - f) The special manifestation to Moses [Exodus 33:17-23]
 - g) The Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant [Exodus 29:42-46]
 - h) The book of Leviticus [Leviticus 9:6-7, 22-24]
 - i) The Book of Numbers [Numbers 13:30-14:45, 16:1-50, 20:6-13]
 - j) The period of Joshua and the Judges [1 Samuel 4:21-22]
 - k) Solomon's Temple [1 Kings 8:1-13, 2 Chronicles 5:2-7:3]
 - l) The departure of the Shekinah Glory [Ezekiel 1:28, 3:12,23, 8:3-4, 9:3a, 10:4, 18-19, 11:22-23]

m) The Shekinah glory was not in the second Temple Haggai 2:3,9

6. Appearance of the Shekinah Glory in the New Testament.

a) To the Shepherds Luke 2:8-9

b) The Christmas star Matthew 2:1-12

c) It comes in a new form John 1:1-14

d) The transfiguration Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36, 2 Peter 1:16-18

e) The reflection of that glory. 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

f) The Book of the Acts Acts 2:1-3, 9:3-8, 22:6-11, 26:13-18

g) The Revelation Revelation 1:12-16,

h) In the Tribulation Revelation 15:8

i) The Second Coming of Christ Matthew 16:27, 24:30, Mark 13:26, Luke 21:27

j) The Millennium Ezekiel 43:1-7a, 44:1-2, Zechariah 2:4-5, Isaiah 36:1-2, 58:8-9a, 60:1-3

k) The Eternal State Revelation 21:1-3, 21:23-24