

**MOSES**  
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# & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

There is hardly a more exciting man in the whole Old Testament. Man of God and man of sin. God used him to perform some of the most outstanding miracles in the Bible. God also used him to organize and establish the nation of Israel.

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## MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

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## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 1. SLAVERY & OPPRESSION (Ex. 1:1-22)

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A visitor to Israel saw a shepherd bringing flocks into their fold. All walked on their own but one, which he carried because it had a broken leg. When asked how the leg got broken, the shepherd said he had broken it himself because the sheep was stubborn and kept wandering away from the shepherd. With its leg broken, the sheep was dependent on the shepherd for everything: food, water and transportation. The shepherd said that by the time the leg healed the sheep will have learned to trust the shepherd and obey him, not wandering off on its own any more.

You know, God does that same thing to His people – only we don't learn so quickly! He's been doing that throughout history, up to today. A clear example of it is with the Jews in Egypt.



**INTO EGYPT** No nation on earth is so mixed up with the history of Israel as Egypt. From patriarchal times through today, Egypt and Israel have been closely connected. When God formed a nation from

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph He told them to stay pure, to not marry unbelievers. This was necessary for Him to grow a nation of His people. Instead they intermarried with the Gentiles around them and their faith in God fades as they brought idols and other gods into their families. Thus God had to intervene to save them from themselves.

Through Joseph and the famine, He had all 70 of them move into Egypt (Exodus 1:1-5). There they had to stay pure and marry only among themselves, for the Egyptians were very prejudiced towards them and would not intermarry among them. This was God's loving way of teaching them to obey and depend on their Shepherd (Hebrews 12:5-10; Rev. 3:19). It was, in effect, a "time out" for the nation of Israel. The prodigal son had to go into the world to learn his lesson the hard way. Often we must, too.

**IN EGYPT** Eventually Joseph and his contemporaries died (Ex 1:6) and the nation of Israel grew (Ex 1:7) from 70 to 2 ½ million over 400 years. God has said He would make a great nation of them, and God always keeps His promises. However Egypt wasn't a vacation spot but a furnace to refine and mature them. They were there to grow spiritually. When they didn't God kept gradually turning up the heat more and more.

**PLAN 1: LABOR CAMPS** When a new dynasty arose in Egypt which was antagonistic to outsiders, the Jews felt the brunt of his persecution (Ex 1:8). In the Bible, Egypt is a type, a picture of the world system under Satan's (Pharaoh's) control. It is the place of material wealth and power (Heb 11:26) and fleshly wisdom and false religion (Ex 8:7; I Ki 4:30). It appeals to the flesh with its leeks, garlic and onions. God's manna is not found there. It persecutes God's people (Deut 4:20) and is eventually overthrown by God's judgment (Ex 12:29; 15:4-7).

Pharaoh took out his hatred of foreigners by oppressing the Jews. Of course Satan is always behind anti-Semitism just as he is behind persecution of Christians. If he can't get at God directly, he attacks those He loves – His children.

To keep them from growing larger (and joining with enemies of Egypt to overthrow the government) he put them to hard slave labor (Ex 1:9-14). This would weaken them, discourage

and disorganize them, and also help his economy. God allowed it to happen to the Jews so they would turn to Him for help. He did it for their benefit, because He loved them (Psalm 119:67, 95).

God was behind all this. He even foretold that they would be slaves in Egypt (Gen 15:13). In order to cut loose the bonds that bound them to Egypt, the sharp knife of affliction must be used. Pharaoh was God's instrument in weaning them from the Egyptian world and helping them take up their own place as God's people.

A little girl was traveling on a train, romping up and down the isles, free from care and worry. Suddenly the train entered a long, dark tunnel. She was terrified and immediately fled to her father's lap as fast as she could.

All of us sometimes need a tunnel to send us back to God's lap. Slavery in Egypt was such an event, only they didn't run back to God. Even so, God kept His promises and they continued to grow stronger (Ex 1:12), so Pharaoh came up with another plan.

**PLAN 2: SUBTLE GENOCIDE** Pharaoh turns up the heat by ordering the midwives to kill all male babies (Ex. 1:15-16). It was a simple matter of shutting off their breath while being born and having them born dead. By killing the males there would still be women as slaves to work for Pharaoh, but no soldiers to fight against them. Obviously Satan was behind it all – trying to destroy the line of Christ (the same as he had babies killed in Bethlehem).

The plan didn't work, though, for the midwives put God before Pharaoh and didn't kill the male babies (Ex. 1:17-19). God limits Satan's opposition, and uses it for His purposes (Romans 8:28). God controls and limits Satan's efforts against His people, using it for His purposes. Here is was to cause the Jews to turn back to God.

The people continued to increase, as He had promised, and the midwives were rewarded by God for their obedience to Him (Ex. 1:20-21). But Pharaoh/Satan isn't done yet!

**PLAN 3: OVERT GENOCIDE** Then Pharaoh turned up the heat, ordering that every male born be cast into the Nile River. Gradually the pressure gets worse, all to get the Jews to turn back to God. God allows painful experiences to come into the lives of His children when they drift from Him so they will turn back to Him.

One day a workman was stuck on a high ledge of a building. He needed to get the attention of someone below so they could send for help for him. He called and no one heard. He dropped a little pebble but it fell unnoticed. A larger one wasn't felt by the person it hit, either. He kept dropping larger and larger objects until finally someone felt the hit and looked up. That's what God was doing to the Jews. He was dropping larger and larger objects on them so they would look up and He'd get their attention. He does that today, to us, as well. How big an object does He have to drop to get your attention? Could He be trying to get your attention about something now.

Unfortunately it's going to take another 80 years before the Jews finally look up. Then they will be ready to obey God and follow Moses out of Egypt.

Please understand that not all suffering is discipline from God. You should know in your heart if things are right between you and God or if there is something there that needs attending to. His Spirit will convict you of anything wrong. Make sure you don't rationalize, justify or explain away what His Spirit may be convicting you of. If He isn't showing you anything then there is nothing to confess, but if there is something between you and God please confess it now. Remember, "All things DO work together for the good of those who love the Lord" (Romans 8:28).

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### 2. MOSES' BIRTH (Ex. 2:1-9)

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Sometimes God makes everything as dark as possible just so the light may shine through more brilliantly. Ishmael must faint before Hagar is led to water. Joseph must go into slavery before his family can be preserved. Daniel must go into the lions den before being made the number two man in the nation. The early church had to be persecuted before it grew. We must face trials to stretch and mature us. The same was true when Moses was born.

**MOSES HIDDEN FROM PHARAOH** Amram was a grandson of Levi and Moses' father (Ex 6:20). He was the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation in Egypt, making Moses the 4<sup>th</sup> – when God said He would deliver them (Gen 15:16). Jochebed was Moses' mother (Ex 6:20). They trusted God and lived normal lives in times of extreme danger and trials. They married and started a family while in slavery and male babies were being killed. They hid Moses for 3 months after he was born, for he

was something very special about him (Ex 2:2).

This brought a great risk to everyone in the family, including Aaron (4) and Miriam (12). Still they hid him by faith (Heb 11:23). Most of their neighboring Jews were apostate and idolatrous, but Amram and Jochebed had a strong faith in God. Maybe their faith wasn't as 'glamorous' as stopping lions mouths or marching through fire, but it was just as great. It wasn't a once-and-done, spur-of-the-moment faith. It was a planned activity every minute of the day and night for 3 months. As God was allowing the pressure to come on the Jews to turn them back to Him (see article 1), some were responding and returning to God.

But before long they could no longer hide their baby. As he grew he cried louder and louder. Jealous neighbors were sure to find him, or spies among them would hear, or even a periodical house search by the Egyptians would find him. Thus they came up with another plan. This didn't mean they lost faith, for using common sense doesn't mean we don't have faith. Being reckless and presumptuous isn't a sign of faith. Faith does overcome carnal fear, but not common sense. They made some wise decisions and didn't 'test' God by foolish actions. We drive carefully, watch our health, lock our doors and look both ways before crossing streets. Is that lack of faith?

**MOSES PROTECTED BY PHARAOH** What a plan they came up with to preserve Moses! At first it seems strange to put him in a basket and float him in the river (Exodus 2:3-4), but when we look at their thinking it seems to make perfect sense. Let's develop the story and see what was really happening.

The 'basket' they made was woven reeds. I guess this makes Moses the first 'basket-care' in the Bible – but not the last! The word translated 'basket' is really the Hebrew word for 'ark.' It is also used of Noah's ark and the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle – both places of protection and deliverance. That it was covered over with tar and pitch is also significant. 'Tar' was mud from the Nile which was very hard when dried. 'Pitch' was mineral tar, waterproofing. It is the same word used for 'ransom' in the Bible - a picture of Christ's atonement. Thus this 'ark' is a picture of Christ's atonement as being our deliverance and redemption. What a beautiful picture this is, but there's more. Many years ago the director of Standard Oil Company read this

verse and knew that where there was tar and pitch on the surface there was oil underneath. He drilled there and found much oil, with 30 wells soon functioning there. That shows the amazing accuracy of the Bible.

Back to our story. Notice the text says Miriam put him in the reeds by the bank – right where he'd be found! He wasn't floated out in the water, as if this would hide him. He would drown or starve to death – and people would certainly hear his screams when he got hungry. No, there was more to the plan than that.

For one thing, this was the only branch of the Nile that wasn't infected with crocodiles and therefore safe (Ps 78:12-13). Thus baby boys thrown into the river weren't drown, they were eaten by crocodiles – as an offering to their crocodile gods. Isn't it ironic that the way God chose to save Moses from death in the Nile was by putting him into the Nile? The world and Satan's instrument of death became God's means of life – just like with the cross and Jesus. Worldly wisdom says to run from the Nile, but God says "I'll use their evil for my own purpose" (Romans 8:28). Maybe what He is doing in your life doesn't seem to make sense, that He is leading you in the wrong direction. Trust that He knows what He is doing! That's what Miriam did.

Miriam risked her own life to help those in her family. That's how families need to work together. She wasn't watching to see if he was found, the plan was to put him where he would be found. They put the basket in the path where they knew Pharaoh's daughter would come about that time that day. They wanted her to find Moses!

It seems she was coming for a religious ritual (Ex 2:5-6) – that isn't where she'd go for a bath, it was way too muddy and public a place. Moses was crying and making a real racket. When she looked at him she knew he was Hebrew. She could probably tell by the material he was wrapped in. Also when a servant changed his diaper to stop the screaming, they could see he was circumcised – something the Egyptians abhorred and never did. But then why did she keep him, why not throw him back into the river as her father commanded?

Here's where Amram and Jochebed's plan and faith came in. They must have known something of the princess. Some say they worked on the grounds and that's how they knew her habits and their way around. They knew she had a kind heart, and trusted God to touch it. They knew that Egyptians believed strongly in life after death, based on the record of their deeds done during life (one of Satan's oldest lies). One of the most important considerations was how they treated helpless babies. To make it even more certain, and to explain the reason they chose to put Moses in the Nile to be found, we need to understand some Egyptian history. The great Egyptian pharaoh Sargon I of Akkad, had been placed in a basket of reeds covered with pitch and put him in the river. Pharaoh found him and raised him as he own son, to be the next Pharaoh. Pharaoh's daughter knew the story, and would see history repeating itself.

The plan worked! Major events in history often turn on small hinges. Because of this act God's promises and prophecies will be kept. Pharaoh's daughter will be heart-broken and Egypt's power crushed. The Jews will be delivered from Egypt to their own land.

Now here's why Miriam was waiting. A diaper change is a start, but a hungry baby won't stop screaming until fed. Babies were nursed in those days – there were no bottles. The princess and her servants were unable to feed the baby, so what to do? Up steps Miriam, who as a servant working there would be permitted access to the area, and offers a wet nurse to solve their problems (Ex 2:7-9). Who better than a Hebrew wet nurse, for an Egyptian woman wouldn't want to nurse a Jewish baby, and it was against the law!

Notice how marvelously God works? Moses is saved alive, his own mother is allowed to keep and raise him, and she is actually PAID by the Egyptian government to raise him! Is that wonderful or what? God does take care of His own in times of adversity, despite what enemies may try to do (Prov, 15:6). Trust Him to take care of you in your situation, no matter how impossible or ridiculous it may seem! God takes care of basket cases today, too!

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### 3. MOSES' 1<sup>ST</sup> 40 YEARS (Ex. 2:10)

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The US Army Naval War College has a course known as “Command and Decision” to teach officers how to make decisions. One class was talking about the importance and difficulty of making sound decisions under pressure. A visiting officer from a small foreign navy was sitting in one day and spoke up: “You talk about decisions. I was 700 miles to sea in my destroyer when I received a dispatch from my country which said, ‘We have just had a revolution. Which side are you on?’”

That decision has major consequences. Naturally one would want to go with the winners. Moses had a similar decision to make. He could choose to go with the winners (Egyptians masters) or loses (Jewish slaves). The decision had eternal consequences.

**MOSES' DELIVERANCE (TO EGYPT)** Moses was raised by his mother, Jochebed, and father, Amram, until he was about 4 years. At that time he was weaned and turned over to Pharaoh's daughter to be raised. Still, those years formed the rest of his life (Prov 22:6). The faith his family instilled in him lasted and was the basis for his life-changing decision. The first few years in life are very important in planting the seeds for future spiritual growth and faith.

It was actually the Princess that gave him the name “Moses” (Ex 2:10) meaning “born of the Nile God” in Egyptian but “drawn out of the water” in Hebrew. Years later the passive “drawn out of the water” will change to the active “the one who draws out of the water” as Moses leads the people through the Red Sea. From the delivered he will become the deliverer.

**MOSES' DEVELOPMENT (IN EGYPT)** The rest of the first 40 years of Moses' life were spend growing up in Egypt (Acts 7:21-22). Moses was raised in Thebes, a city of splendor with the finest cultural benefits in the world. He had the best education and was raised to be the next pharaoh. Hebrew tradition, Josephus and archaeology fill in some details about these years. It seems Moses was an excellent athlete, perhaps the best in Egypt. He had a very pleasing personality. He mastered Egyptian hieroglyphics in 40 years, a feat which usually takes a lifetime. He also could read and write in Akkadian and Ugaritic cuneiform. He was a fast learner, brilliant, a real genius in many areas. He would go on to write more of the Bible than any other person, 25% of it (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Job). He was reputedly a tremendous public speaker and also very advanced in mathematics (Egypt was very advanced in this, even beyond some things we can do today) and music. He designed some of the great cities of Egypt. He had a great reputation as a soldier, too.

Reportedly the Ethiopians conquered north Africa and moved against Egypt. One by one Egypt's four armies marched to face them, and one by one they were destroyed, leaving Egypt open to their advance. It seems Moses gathered the remnants of these armies and the national guard, organized them, and marched against the Ethiopians and defeated them. Of course this made him a great public hero! The world was at his feet!

With the possible exception of Solomon, no other Old Testament person was superior to Moses in training or ability. He was one of the greatest men who ever lived, a real genius. Charleston Heston in the “Ten Commandments” actually falls short of the real man!

In order to correctly understand all that was involved in Moses' decision, we need to know something about Pharaoh's family. First of all, “Pharaoh” is a title, not a name. It's like ‘king.’ It

actually means 'crocodile', which was a sacred animal. Not too long after Joseph and his family moved into Egypt a group of foreigners called 'Hyskos' took over key government positions. They were disliked, actually hated, by the Egyptians. Ahmose I drove them out and brought power back to the Egyptians. His son, Amenhotep I, was the ruler who put the Jews into slavery. Hatred for all foreigners (non-Egyptians) was strong.

Thutmose I, his son, was Pharaoh when Moses was born. He didn't have a son by his official wife, just a daughter Hatshepsut. He did have sons by concubines, but they weren't in line for the throne. Hatshepsut, who found Moses when she was a young princess, was forced to marry one of the concubine's sons, who was called Thutmose II. She was a strong woman who was the real power behind the throne but she, like her mother, failed to produce a son as an heir. She had a daughter, Nefrure. It seems she actually poisoned her husband and took over the throne herself. The people followed her because she was of royal blood and a strong leader. She was the first great queen in history, superior to the better-known Cleopatra.

She legally adopted Moses and groomed him to be the next Pharaoh. His only rival for the throne was an illegitimate son of Thutmose I. Because of this Hatshepsut hated this person and did all she could to keep him from the throne. History will prove that he, Thutmose III, would go on to be one of the greatest Pharaoh's in Egyptian history but Moses was more gifted and far more popular. All he needed was to marry Nefrure to make him legally the Pharaoh. History tells us that he deeply loved her and she greatly loved him. According to Jewish law he couldn't legally marry and take the throne until he was 40, and Hatshepsut was holding the throne open for him until he reached that age. Now the state is set for Moses' decision.

When he turns 40 Moses must decide. Why not be Pharaoh and help the Jews that way? The Egyptian Pharaoh was also the priest of Heliopolis, trained in the Temple of the Sun there. To be Pharaoh would be to present himself as a god and to lead the people in worship of false gods. It was all the world had to offer to the maximum: all the wine, women and song, versus faithfulness to the God of the Hebrews which his family had taught him about during the first few years of his life. Take all the world had to offer and be a god, or turn it all down – what a choice?

**MOSES' DECISION (FROM EGYPT)** Moses' faith in God caused him to turn it all down (Heb. 11:24-26). It's one thing to decide to give it all up to follow God when you are on the bottom, but to do so when you are on the top is much greater. And we think we have some hard decisions, some things to give up for God! Moses looked beyond the day to the future. He made his decision based on what would be best 100, 1,000 even 1,000,000 years from then. That's an important part of maturity, not doing what is easiest and most pleasurable for the moment but what is best for eternity.

Moses wasn't satisfied with just having salvation, he was committed to living for God in this life. That's the difference between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is free for us, Jesus paid the price and all we do is accept the gift. Discipleship does cost us everything. It means giving up our own pleasure now to serve Jesus and do what He wants, to live for His kingdom not ours. Salvation is for eternity, discipleship determines who we will live for in this life. God wants and needs us to accept salvation but then make the commitment to be disciples.

Moses knew he had only one life to live, and NOTHING he could gain in this life for himself was better than serving God and living in light of eternity. He now has no regrets. What about you? Whose kingdom comes first for you? When you get to heaven, will you have regrets if you keep living as you are? NOW is the time to do something about that.

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### 4. MOSES' 2<sup>ND</sup> 40 YEARS (Ex. 2:11-25)

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Have you ever watched a child trying to get a knot out of its shoelace? He will pull here and there with all his might. What happens? He just makes it worse. Only when he realizes he can't do it on his own will he turn to a parent for help and then the knot will come out. This is true in our lives, too. It was true of Moses as well.

Moses made a great decision to give up the throne to Egypt as well as the woman he loved so he could stay faithful to God. But then he developed a knot in his life. The more he pulled at it the worse it got until, finally, he took it to his heavenly Father for help. Let's see how this all developed for Moses.

**A NEW KNOT** We are always very vulnerable to defeat after a great victory. Following through on his commitment to serve God and identify with His people, Moses acted quickly. He killed an Egyptian who was beating a Jewish slave (Ex. 2:11-12). He knew it was wrong

for he looked around to make sure no one saw him and he hid his body in the sand to cover up his sin. He wanted to help God, but wasn't doing it God's way with God's strength. It was Moses' plan and Moses' strength, and it backfired!

Moses was guilty of murder, as was Paul (both leading writers and theologians, Moses of the Old Testament and Paul of the New Testament). Covering up the sin didn't eradicate it. Man has been trying to cover up his sin from Adam on. Think of David. Think of President Nixon. Sin leaves its mark.

**A NEW DIRECTION** Moses expected the Jews to respond to his actions on their behalf but instead rejected his sacrifice for them (Ex 2:13-14; Acts 7:27-28). Israel isn't ready for deliverance. The heat has to be turned up higher. Both the nation as a whole and Moses have lessons to learn before they are ready to be in God's perfect will.

Thutmose III, Moses' long-time rival for the throne and the new husband of the woman Moses loved (and whom Moses loved), found a perfect excuse to get rid of Moses – kill him for murder (Ex 2:15; Acts 7:29). Somehow word had gotten to him of Moses' rash act. Sin will find you out. No one is immune to its consequences, no matter what you have given up to follow Jesus. Moses' decision to follow God puts him in the position to be trained and taught by God, and that's next on the agenda for Moses. To save his life Moses runs away from Egypt.

**A NEW COUNTRY** Geographically there weren't many directions for Moses to go. He fled southeast to the area of Mt Sinai, at the bottom of the Sinai Peninsula (Ex 2:15). It is very likely he knew the area, having traveled there to oversee Egyptian mining operations in the area. Also, he may have been aware that there were those living in the area who were followers of the true God. He would end up living with one such family.

**A NEW FAMILY** Again Moses has an opportunity to help the oppressed (Ex 2:16-17). This time there is no murder, no looking around and hiding his actions. Male shepherds are taking advantage of some female shepherds, using water they drew from the well to water their sheep. Now he has nothing to gain personally, he just does it because it is right.





God uses this to bring him into the family of Reuel, a follower of God (Ex 2:18-20). He married his oldest daughter, Zipporah (Ex 2:21). He finds himself with a new family (Ex 2:22), new country and new opportunity. God isn't punishing him, but educating him.

**A NEW EDUCATION** At 40 years of age, after all he has gone through, Moses now finds himself a shepherd. For the next 40 years he will lead a herd of sheep. Little did he know that at the end of those 40 years God would have him leading a people worse than sheep – the Jews. They will come to this same place. God is now teaching him the geography of the area so he will know it when he leads the Jews there. God is beginning a new phase in Moses' education.

Moses has lots of knowledge, not God is teaching him wisdom. He needs to learn to do God's work God's way. With all his responsibilities and activities in Egypt, Moses probably didn't have much opportunity for time alone with God. Now he will have 40 years in the wilderness, traveling from water hole to water hole with his sheep. Perhaps God allows us to find ourselves in a desert so we will spend more time with Him, learning what He wants to teach us.

All the luxuries of Egypt are gone in the desert. It is hot, sandy, dry and rocky. Old patterns and habits need to change for Moses to be used by God. He must learn to be content with just God. He had no way of knowing he would ever leave the desert. He must have assumed, and rightly so, that he would be there the rest of his life.

Obviously God is trying to teach Moses patience. In Egypt he went ahead on his own and killed the Egyptian. Now he will spend 40 years, from age 40 to 80, his most productive years, taking care of sheep in a desert. For 40 years he will learn patience. All together God is training Moses for 80 years. God is quite patient, in no hurry at all. We must be the same.

All of this must have been very humbling for Moses. From the grandeur of Pharaoh's court and the adulation of the whole nation, now he sits alone with sheep. What will it take for God to humble us? He can't use us until He does.

The lessons Moses must have learned during those years! He got his B. S. degree (Back Side of the desert). Moses really learned about God during that time. Reuel must have taught much. God used him to write down the story of Job during this time. What lessons that must have had for him!

**A NEW BEGINNING** God is a God of new beginnings. If you have failed God, I mean REALLY failed Him, God will use that to train and mature you for a new beginning. Even if you haven't failed God, He will put everyone He is going to use through a personally tailored training program. God found a desert for Moses (Deut 32:10). He will find a desert for you, too. There God will spend time with you, train you, teach you patience and humility, and prepare you for upcoming service. In doing so He'll give you a new start, a new change.

He did this with Moses and Abraham, with Jacob and David, with Peter and with Paul. Abraham became a 'friend of God' after being a coward and liar. Jacob started as a 'chisler' but became the 'Prince with God.' Jonah was very disobedient, but was used to lead the greatest revival ever. David was an adulterer and murdered, but then became 'am man after God's own heart.' Peter denied Jesus, then led the early church. Paul murdered Christians, then became the greatest missionary ever.

He'll get the knot out of your life when you let Him. Then he'll teach you what you need to keep that from happening again. Jeremiah 18 explains how God, our great Potter, will take a vessel that is misshapen or marred and remake it into a thing of beauty. He doesn't reject it and throw it away, but transforms it by His hands into something beautiful and useful. Let Him do so with you.

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## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 5. THE BURNING BUSH (Ex. 3:1 - 4:17)

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Recent Gallup polls show that nearly everyone in America believes in God, even the vast majority of those who have no church involvement. But look at our country: the crime, hatred and morality show that belief in God is far different than obedience to God.

That is nothing new today. It was true on Moses, day too. In fact, it was true of Moses himself. He firmly believed in God, but he didn't always obey Him. God had put Moses in a desert for 40 years, turning up the heat on him so He would follow God. At first it didn't seem to be working. The same could be said for the Jews in Egypt.



**THE LOCATION** Moses is now 80 years old. He spent the first 40 years of his life in Egypt learning the world's knowledge and skills. Then he spent 40 years in the desert shepherding sheep learning God's wisdom. Now its time to put it to work. God meets him as he is shepherding near Mt Sinai (Ex 3:1).

**THE BUSH** It wasn't unusual to see a dry, dead bush burst into flames in the hot, dry air of the desert. It would flair up and soon be gone. But when the one Moses was watching kept burning and burning it got Moses' attention (Ex 3:2). Of course, it doesn't take much to get one's attention when sitting around the same desert day after day (Ex 3:3). When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, Moses really started paying attention (Ex 3:4). "Here I am," Moses answers. That's what God is looking for from Moses: availability. Moses looks at his ability but God doesn't care about our ability, only or availability.

**THE REVELATION** As a sign of respect, Moses was told to remove his sandals (Ex 3:5). Where ever God is, the place is holy. Moses was in the presence of God almighty. It was His Shekinah glory that was in the bush, no ordinary fire. Then God reminds Moses of His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 3:6) and says He is ready to fulfill them at this time (Ex 3:7-9). God's people had forgotten Him, but He hadn't forgotten them. Things were bad for them, but things were about to get much worse. God would deliver, but they had to be willing to let Him.

**THE COMMISSION** God tells Moses that He will now do what Moses tried on his own to do 40 years earlier, but this time it will succeed (Ex 3:10). "I will send you," God says. This is why success is guaranteed. All He needs is for Moses to be available for God to work through him. It's not Moses' ability but availability. To God, any bush will do. It's the fire in the bush, not the bush itself. "My grace is sufficient," God says. "You tried in our own strength and failed, Moses. Now let me do the work through you." But Moses isn't so willing.

He should have said, "You bet I'll go! I'm sorry about last time and I appreciate another change. This time I'll trust you, just use me!" But Moses doesn't say that. At least you'd have thought he'd say "At last! It's about time I get to do something worthwhile, after all the time I've wasted watching these sheep!" He doesn't say that, either. What he does say, in effect, is "No."

Was he afraid to take the risk, choosing instead to stay safe and secure in a familiar environment? Had he lost zeal and become apathetic, in a rut? Was he thinking only of himself and no longer willing to sacrifice to help God's people? Was he afraid of rejection again?

**THE OBJECTIONS** **1. Who am I?** Moses' first response is to question God's choice (Ex 3:11). He doesn't oppose God delivering the Jews, but why did God choose Him to do it? God tells Moses that He will be with him (Ex. 3:12). It's not that God needs Moses, it's that Moses needs to do this as the next step in His growth and spiritual maturity. God doesn't ask Moses for His sake but for Moses' sake. Moses needs to do it for himself. The next step in his training is practice trusting God for more than a few sheep.

**2. What's Your name?** Then Moses, still thinking only of himself, says he is afraid he won't know what to say if the people don't believe that God sent him (Ex 3:13). It sounds very similar to the excuse we often use to not witness. God reminds Moses that He is in charge (Ex 3:14-22). He explains that He is Almighty God of the universe. He has everything planned and is in charge of each detail. His plan will be done!

**3. What if they don't believe?** "What if" is the worry-wart's motto. Moses is worried, fearful, thinking only of himself (Ex 4:1). What if he is rejected again? Moses hasn't forgotten the pain of last time. In response God gave Moses 3 signs that he could use to convince the Jews that God was with them (Ex 4:2-9). First Moses, rod turned into a snake. Then God told him to pick it up by the tail. Anyone familiar with snakes, as Moses was, would know you pick it up behind the head so it can't turn and bite you. Moses obeyed God and the snake turned back to his rod. Second God turned Moses' hand leprous – a deadly and incurable affliction. Moses knew he was as good as dead – a slow and painful death where he'd have to avoid any contact with any other people the rest of his life. God then healed His hand, showing His greatness to Moses. Finally God turned some water to blood. What more would Moses need to convince the people that God was with him. It truly wasn't Moses's ability God wanted, just his availability.

**4. I can't talk well.** Moses still thinks of himself, underselling the gifts God has given him and focusing on his ability (Ex 4:10). He was a good speaker (Acts 7:22). God reminded Moses that He had made Moses' mouth and could put the necessary words there at the necessary time (Ex 4:11-12). Moses would only have to trust God. Moses was just to be the vessel, the mouthpiece. Unfortunately Moses hasn't learned his lesson yet.

**5. Send someone else.** "Do it, but use someone else!" Moses says (Ex 4:13). "Stop asking me so I won't have to keep saying 'No.'" This is the final straw. God gets angry, very angry at Moses (Ex 4:14-17). He's done trying to work with him. "OK," God says, "I'll let you off the hook and send Aaron instead." Moses must have felt relieved, but it turned out that was a tragic mistake for Moses.

For one thing, Moses is now in God's permissive will, not His perfect will. For another thing, Moses lost the priesthood to Aaron and his family. Instead of Moses' sons and descendants being the priestly family, that privilege went to Aaron.

Worst of all, Moses had to put up with Aaron's blunders and sins. He eventually got so disgusted with him that he went ahead and did the speaking himself anyway. He could talk – he just didn't want to!

**THE LESSON** What about you? Does God have someone He wants you to speak to? Is there something He wants you to do? What excuses are you using? Are you too busy? Do you think you won't know what to say? Are you afraid of being rejected or criticized? Is there some past hurt you haven't gotten over? Are you fearful - a worry wart? Remember, God wants your availability, not your ability. He doesn't care about ability – He can give or take that at will. He wants availability. He won't force us against our will. He wants us to be willing.

# MOSES MOSES MOSES

## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 6. MOSES' RETURN TO EGYPT (Ex. 4:18-31)

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Your good-byes are said.



Have you ever moved from one area to another? You get a big opportunity for a new job or home. You pack and get ready to move. You are all packed and ready to go. Last minute details are completed. You are anxious and excited with anticipation. However there is also a sadness, a hesitation about cutting the ties with good memories and experiences. Feelings are mixed. Finally it is time to go. The door changes on one chapter in life and opens on another one. That is what Moses was experiencing when he left Midian and started back to Egypt.

**LEAVING MIDIAN** Moses has spent the first 40 years of his life in Egypt learning worldly wisdom. Then he spent 40 years in the desert learning God's wisdom. Now he is ready for the last 40 years of his life. Moses has said his good-byes to his father-in-law Jethro (v. 18). God had gotten things ready in Egypt, for Moses' rival for the throne, the one who would have killed him if possible, was dead (v. 19). Moses then packed up his family and started back to Egypt (v. 20). Before he left, God reassured Moses that He would be with him so Moses could perform the miracles God showed him. God also said that He would harden Pharaoh's heart so he wouldn't let the Jews go. This must have confused Moses, but He trusted that God knew what He was doing. The same is true for us today. God will ultimately have his will done (v. 22-23).

Notice that there is no arguing from Moses. He obeys God. He leaves and follows. But there is some area where Moses is not ready. He knows it. God knows it. Now that he has committed to follow and serve God, God must remove this problem.

**TRIP TO EGYPT** When Moses, Zipporah and their two sons stopped for the night, God struck him down so he almost died! It might seem strange that God would do this. Here was Moses, His servant, obeying and giving up all to follow Him and serve God. Why would He kill His obedient servant? Because there was an area in his life where he wasn't obedient. It was no little thing, or God wouldn't have done this. At least God didn't kill him instantly, but gave him in effect one final chance.

**SIN UNTO DEATH** I John 5:16 says that if we see someone committing a sin not leading to death he should pray for that person, but that if it is a sin unto death we shouldn't pray for the person. The question is, what is this sin unto death? Nothing is mentioned, here or anywhere in the bible. If it is that serious, why doesn't God say what it is? Because it isn't any one (or group of) sin. It is an attitude to any sin we won't give up, a willful and continual refusing to give up the sin, even after God prods and disciplines. The result is death. Examples of this abound in the Bible. King Saul died for his sin (I Chron 10:13), so did Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) and Corinthian believer who partook of the Lord's Supper with unconfessed sin (I Cor. 11:30). All of these were believers and didn't lose their salvation. God just removed them prematurely, as He does the branch that doesn't bear fruit (John 15). Why does God do this? For one thing, He is

showing the seriousness of sin and that He is a holy god. For another thing, He wants to keep the sinning believer from more sin in life (he won't lose salvation, but will lose reward). Also removing him keeps him from having a negative influence on others. Actually it is mercy. It's like pulling a football player who is fumbling, causing penalties, and hurting his team and his reputation. That is mercy for all, not punishment. That's what God does for His people.

**MOSES' SIN** So what was Moses' sin? He listened to his wife! No don't misunderstand, that in itself isn't a sin, but when a man listens to his wife when he knows God is telling Him the opposite, then it is sin. Evidently when Moses' first son was born he was circumcised, as God had commanded the descendants of Abraham. For whatever reason Zipporah didn't like this and seemed to put her foot down when the second son was born. As a result he was never circumcised. Zipporah had a rebellious attitude. She wasn't following God or Moses. Still, Moses, as the head of the family, was responsible. Man is the leader of the family and God directs the family through him. When Satan removed Job's whole family he left his wife, who told him to curse God and die.

Don't think that all women lead all men into sin! It's just that women are more subjective, more feeling-oriented than men. While that adds richness and meaning to life, feelings can be misleading. That's why God says men are to be leaders (I Timothy 2:11-15). Men are more rational, objective. This doesn't make them superior to women, but it does mean in the area of judicious decision-making men as a whole are usually better able to consider just the facts and consequences of each. Zipporah emotionally didn't like to see circumcision done to her son, even though on day eight suffering was very minimal. Maybe Moses wasn't the father he should have been. Maybe he was gone with the sheep too much. How much of Zipporah's rebellion against God and Moses was her free will choice to sin and how much was because Moses failed as a father and husband, we will never know. Still, it was up to Moses to be the leader in his family and guide them in obedience to God (I Timothy 3:14). No matter how much Zipporah would nag, pout, get angry, etc., Moses is responsible to obey God. Since this had been going on since the birth of the second son, and that could have been as long as 35 years ago, it's natural to assume that Moses and Zipporah didn't have very much of a loving relationship between them. She couldn't respect a man she could manipulate. He couldn't honor a woman whom he allowed to control him.

**MOSES LIVES!** Moses is too sick to perform the circumcision so he tells Zipporah to do it. Local superstition, though, said that if she didn't carry out her husband's dying wish she would be cursed for life. Thus she did it, not for Moses or for God, but for herself. When she was done she threw the foreskin at Moses' feet in rejection of what circumcision stood for. She called Moses a "bridegroom of blood." Then she stomped out in anger. The implication was that "If you want to be with me and you sons you'll stop this nonsense and come back home with me. Then you better straighten up! You owe me big time and you know I always collect!"

Moses could either have his wife and sons or His God. He had to decide between the two. Jesus says this will happen when we follow Him (Luke 14:26). This was actually the second time Moses gave up a wife to follow and obey God.

**THE REST OF THE STORY** Zipporah did return home with the sons. It seems her father tried a reconciliation about a year later but nothing came of it. God did provide Moses with a fine wife later, however. Still, it doesn't seem he saw his sons again. That was the sequence of his sin of compromise, of giving in to 'keep peace' with Zipporah.

God did provide for Moses, though. Long before this ever happened He had started Aaron on a trip towards where Moses was. Seeing his brother again must have really encouraged and helped Moses. The Jews in Egypt were glad to see him and responded well to his message from God and the miracles he did. God came through again!

**MOSES**

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**MOSES**



## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 7. PHARAOH'S DENIAL (Ex. 5:1 - 7:7)

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Have you ever had a day that was a bad day, I mean a REALLY bad day? We all have ordinarily bad day, but I'm talking about a bad day to beat all bad days? The day starts off like all others but soon you can't believe all that's happening. It's more like a dream than reality – EVERYTHING seems to go wrong. Can you think of a day like that?

Moses certainly could. In fact his terrible day is recorded in Exodus 5.

**MOSES TALKS TO PHARAOH (5:1-4)** The big day for Moses finally arrived, the day he was to go before Pharaoh and ask for the Jews' freedom. This was the culmination of the first 80 years of Moses' life. God had trained him in human wisdom for 40 years and then in spiritual wisdom for the next 40. All his training, gifts, natural ability and God-given talent came to this point. He's ready to obey and serve

God. He even lost his family over this commitment. So Moses gives Pharaoh God's message. To make it easier for Pharaoh to comply, God starts out only asking for a short leave of absence so the Jews could go worship to their God. God is making it as easy on Pharaoh as possible.

The Pharaoh now is Amenhotep II who was a very great pharaoh. God chose the greatest nation in the world up to that time, and at its peak in greatness, to challenge. This will all the more show His greatness. The stronger our adversaries, the more impossible humanly speaking our situation, the more God is glorified as He provides and protects His people.

Amenhotep II had never met Moses, but he certainly had heard of him! His father, Thutmose III, was Moses' rival for the throne of Egypt and the hand of the princess Neferure in marriage. Moses beat him out in both counts. His grandmother Hatshepsut had kept the throne open for Moses, but he turned it down instead of worshipping false gods and being worshipped as a god. When Moses murdered an Egyptian for beating a Jew, Thutmose III sought to kill Moses. Now, with Thutmose dead, Moses' life was no more in danger, but it is easy to understand why Amenhotep II hated this man whom his own mother chose over his father!

Thus Pharaoh had no desire to let the Jews go to worship their God. He didn't want to recognize their God's claim on them, and he didn't want to let them stop working. Also, he didn't want them to organize as a group for they were far too large and he didn't want them to turn against the Egyptian rulers.

Why didn't God immediately destroy Pharaoh right away? It would have made things quicker and easier, but that isn't important to God. He wanted to give Pharaoh more opportunity to obey. He was willing to let Egypt (and Satan) take their best shot at His people so that His deliverance would be all the more obvious. This would bring more glory to Him. Also, the Jews weren't weaned off Egypt yet. God knew they weren't ready to leave. Oh they were tired of the misery Egypt brought, but that didn't mean they were ready to follow God wherever He led them.

**PHARAOH TALKS TO THE JEWS (5:5-14)** Not only did Pharaoh say the Jews couldn't go to worship their God, he then makes a proclamation that the Jews would have to gather their own straw to make bricks. This was a real hardship on the Jews. God is allowing this so the Jews will want to follow Him completely. This day isn't going the way Moses had figured, for God has

assured him of success and told him that Pharaoh would let the Jews go free. God didn't say that it wouldn't happen right away. Moses needed patience to await God's deliverance, as do we today! The day isn't over, though, it's going to get worse!

**JEW'S TALK TO PHARAOH** (5:15-19) The Jews went to Pharaoh asking for relief. They were told this was all Moses' fault for asking them to go worship their god.

**JEW'S TALK TO MOSES** (5:20-21) Instead of trusting God to bring their deliverance, the Jews complained and blamed Moses. All he is doing is obeying God. When we follow God we, too, will get blamed for things that are less than perfect, even by (especially by) God's own people. There's never been a godly leader who hasn't experienced this.

The day started out with so much promise. Now Pharaoh is against Moses, and so are the Jews. God is using this to stretch Moses' faith. How does he respond to this test?

**MOSES TALKS TO GOD** (5:22-23) Moses does the right thing in going to God with his problems, but he does the wrong thing in that he blames God for it all! Moses' old weakness, impatience, is still active. He was impatient when he killed the Egyptian. He'll be impatient and strike a rock twice and thus not be able to enter the Promised Land. God is working on Moses to help him develop patience. Tribulation brings patience (Romans 5:1-5). You see, there are real advantages to our disadvantages!

So Pharaoh dumps on the Jews who dump on Moses who dumps on God. How does God respond? With lightning and judgment? No, God has what Moses and the Jews lack – patience.

**GOD TALKS TO MOSES** (6:1 - 7:7) First (6:1-9), God reaffirms His plan and purpose to Moses. He reassures him that He is in charge and control of it all. He promises ultimate deliverance from Egypt. What God does is give Moses promises to claim. That's where we need to turn when things are tough for us, when we have a bad day. God has promised all we need!

Second (6:10-13), God reaffirms His charge to Moses to lead the people out and tells him to go back to Pharaoh and insist on their release. Nothing has changed, Moses is just impatient.

Then God inserts a genealogy of Moses and the Jews (6:14-27). I think He does this at this point to remind all that He is in sovereign control over history, as is seen in the lives of Moses' ancestors. Also, He is composing a passenger list of those who will leave Egypt as proof that the Jews will leave Egypt.

Third (6:28 - 7:7) God again repeats His orders to Moses and His command for Moses to carry them out. Moses must be patient and trust God. That is lesson number one in serving God! Moses is willing to obey God and do what God says (7:6). Now when he talks to Pharaoh it isn't with the assurance everything will work out right away, but with the knowledge that Pharaoh will use the might of Egypt and do all he can to keep Moses from carrying out God's orders. Moses must trust God's promise of deliverance and act on it!

It's been an awful day for Moses, but God uses it for His glory and Moses' growth.

## **GOD TALKS TO US**

Today, too, God expects us to patiently trust God and His promises no matter what happens. That means we must know God's promises. Memorizing promises that apply to your situation is wonderful ammunition to fight whatever comes your way. Writing the promises out and putting them in prominent places is another good idea. Make sure you know and use God's promises – it's our only refuge when we have a bad day. And any day without God's promises is a bad day!

# **PROMISES**

nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:38-39

My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. Exodus 33:14

## **PEACE**

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:7

## **REST**

Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Mt. 11:28

My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. Exodus 33:14

## **REWARD FOR PATIENCE, FAITHFULNESS**

But those who hope (wait upon) the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isa. 40:31

I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Ps. 40:1-3

## **SECURITY IN CHRIST**

I am the gate: whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. John 10:9

## **STRENGTH FOR WHATEVER COMES**

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Phil. 4:13

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Cor. 12:9

Your strength will equal your days. Deut. 33:25

He gives power to the tired and worn out, and strength to the weak. Isaiah 40:29

## **VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION**

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Cor. 10:13

## **ALL OUR NEEDS MET**

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. Ps. 84:11

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name sake. Ps. 23:1-3

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Mt. 6:33

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:19

I will never leave you or forsake you. Hebrews 13:5

## **ANSWERED PRAYER**

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Mt. 7:7

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Mt. 21:22

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. John 14:13

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it John 14:14

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him. John 5:14:15

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

You will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you. Jeremiah 29:12

## **BLESSING THROUGH TRIALS**

Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. Ps. 126:5

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem. Isa. 66:13

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28



You know the testing of your faith develops perseverance. James 1:3

No temptation/testing has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted/tested beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted/tested, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Cor. 10:13

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield. Ps. 91:4

"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble I will deliver him & honor him. With long life will I satisfy him & show him my salvation. Psalm 91:14-16

### **FAITHFUL WITNESS**

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. Mt. 10:32

I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever. But now the LORD declares: Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. I Samuel 2:30

### **FEAR**

The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Ps. 118:6

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me. Ps. 23:4

"I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham." Gen. 26:24

Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." Gen 15:1

"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. Ex. 14:13

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isa. 41:10

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid. Mt. 14:27

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the King of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and fight our battles. 2 Chron. 32:7-8a

### **FORGIVENESS OF SIN**

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Mt. 6:14

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me. Jeremiah 15:19

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### **GUIDANCE**

For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to the end. Ps. 48:14

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name sake. Ps. 23:1-3

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Prov. 3:5-6

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Ps. 32:8

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. Isa. 42:16

### **NEVER ALONE**

"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Gen. 28:15

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any powers, neither height

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## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 8. MIRACLES (Ex. 7:8-13)

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Satan is a deceiver who will do everything and anything to draw people from God and to himself. Nature provides a fitting illustration of Satan's tactics. Observers tell us that in the spring of the year the cuckoo bird can be seen mimicking the flight of the sparrow hawk. Flapping, gliding, and soaring like a natural predator, this impostor frightens songbirds and distracts them to the point that they leave their nests unattended. She then moves in and devours an unguarded egg, leaving one of her own in its place. Satan counterfeits God to distract mankind so he can swoop in to destroy and kill. This has always been his way. We see it clearly in the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh, which was really a confrontation between God and Satan.

**GOD'S MIRACLE (7:8-19)** God had already set Moses up with 3 miracles, which He had used at the burning bush to prove to Moses that He was with him. Moses then used them to show the Jews God was with him. But when Moses spoke to Pharaoh, his request was flat denied. Now he uses the first 'sign,' the walking stick to a snake and back to a stick, to show Pharaoh that God is really with him.

**SATAN'S MIRACLE (7:11-12)** Instead of believing, though, Pharaoh sent for his "wide men and sorcerers" and they were able to do the same miracle. We know the names of the two leaders as Jannes and Jambres. Their reputation went so far as to be known by Paul, so he called them by name in II Timothy 3:8 when talking about false teachers who imitate the product of godliness but instead bring uncleanness and death.

As we said before, Pharaoh is a picture, a type of Satan as Egypt pictures the world which tries to hold God's people in bondage and oppression. Pharaoh or his wise men don't try to discredit Moses' miracle for they know it is genuine. What they do instead is to depreciate its value. They counterfeit it. Perhaps they thought Moses, whom they had taught 40 years earlier, was using the same power source they were using to bring this about.

Note that this was not a trick, a slight-of-hand deception. Satan has the power to do miracles. In the past he used the forces of nature such as storms and lightning (Job 1:16) and strong winds (Job 1:19). He instantly took Jesus to the top of the temple when he was tempting Him. Paul was confronted by this same power in Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8).

In the future Satan will give the Antichrist power to do signs and false wonders. "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders," II Thes 2:9. "He (the Antichrist) performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived." (Revelation 13:13-14).

Not only with the Antichrist do miracles, but the False Prophet as well. "But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur." (Rev 19:20)

In fact, in the last days “false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect-- if that were possible.” (Matthew 24:24)

It's not just a few select ones that will be used by Satan to do miracles, Satan will use many to confuse and deceive. “Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'” (Matthew 7:22-23)

Satan's purpose in all this is to get attention away from God and onto himself, so he is worshipped instead of God. He counterfeits God and His words in order to deceive man (Rev. 12:9,11). “For Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (II Corinthians 11:13-14). The closer it appears to the original, the more dangerous a counterfeit is.

Nature provides us with an illustration that closely parallels the insidious tactics employed by our adversary. According to scientists, Arctic polar bears feed almost entirely on seals. To enjoy such a meal, they sometimes resort to a cunning bit of trickery. If the hole through which the seal gets his food is near the edge of the ice, the polar bear will take a deep breath and swim under water to its exact location. Remaining below the surface, he will then make a tiny scratching sound, imitating a fish. When the charmed seal hears this, he dives in for a quick supper, only to find himself suddenly entrapped in the huge, hungry embrace of his predator. One of the ways Satan does this with people is by counterfeiting God's miracles. He has power and he uses it to get people to follow him.

Today the occult is in and is growing rapidly. There are over 200,000 registered witches in the U.S. and many more are not registered. In fact, the famous witch, Sybil Leek, who now resides in Melbourne Beach, FL said in the New York Times that there are over 8 million witches in the world today.

**GOD'S MIRACLE IS GREATER** (7:12) So if Satan has power equal to God's, how can any of us be safe from him? Even though Satan has power, God's is greater! It must have been exciting to watch Moses' serpent slither over to the many serpents the smug wise men had created – and swallow them all whole! “The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (I John 4:4). That was an obvious statement of who was greatest!

**PHARAOH'S CHOICE** (7:13) Now it's up to Pharaoh to decide if he will submit to God's power or not, and he doesn't. He wanted an excuse to not believe in God, and his wise men gave him one. No matter that they didn't have as great power, it was enough to distract glory from God and give man an excuse to not follow God. Satan is a master at that strategy today, too. He throws an inferior scientific ‘theory,’ called evolution, against the pure facts of creationism but that is enough to give many men an excuse to keep from giving God the glory due to him.

A boy and his father went to the zoo. While there they saw a lion in a cage. The boy was really frightened while the father was not. The boy was frightened because he saw the lion. The father was not frightened because he saw the cage with the lion in it. Which do you see? The lion has power and can cause fear if you focus on him. Jesus defeated him on the cross, thus the bars. When we look to Jesus we can have peace. Satan has power, as seen in the life of Job. However he can't do anything without God's approval, also seen in the life of Job. When we stick close to our Shepherd, we are safe from the onslaught of the lion who would devour us. Don't fall for Satan's tricks. Just because something miraculous or supernatural happens doesn't mean it is from God. Test the spirits. Just wait for God's power to ‘eat up’ Satan's counterfeits!

**MOSES**  
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## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 9. BLOOD, FROGS, LICE & GNATS (Ex. 7:14 - 8:32)

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In Virgil there is an account of an ancient king who was so unnaturally cruel in his punishments that he used to chain a dead man to a living one. It was impossible for the poor wretch to separate himself from his disgusting burden. The carcass was bound fast to his body, its hands to his hands, its face to his face, its lips to his lips; it lay down and rose up whenever he did.



Repulsive as that sounds, it shows how man is locked up with sin. We may not think of sin as that disgusting, but it really is. We get locked into our sin and get so used to it that it doesn't seem bad to us any more. God tries to open our eyes, but we don't see what we don't want to see. That was true of Pharaoh and the people in Egypt in Moses's day as well as today.

God's electrocardiogram of the human heart says it is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:10). God's solution is a new heart - being 'born again' (John 3:3). Sinful man must see his sin and need for cleansing. Man, like Pharaoh, has a sinful, stubborn heart and refuses to turn to God no matter what (Exodus 7:14).

**THE NILE TURNS TO BLOOD (Plague 1)** To alert Pharaoh to his sinful condition God turned the Nile to blood (Exodus 7:14-15). The Nile was the heart of Egypt. Egypt was the Nile. The country was 10 miles wide and 750 miles long, following the Nile River. The Nile brought life. There was no rain water so the Nile provided water for drinking, cleaning, industry and agriculture. The priests called the Nile "Father and Savior of Egypt." Many gods were associated with it. Khnum was the guardian of Nile sources. Hapi indwelt crocodiles and was the spirit of the Nile. Crocodiles were very special. In fact, 'Pharaoh' means 'crocodile.' Osiris was one of their greatest gods, the god of the underworld, and the Nile was his bloodstream. Neith was a warlike goddess who took special interest and care of the large fish in the Nile. Hathor protected smaller fish. Fish were an important food source. Without them starvation would come to many people. The Nile was worshipped daily (as when Hatshepsut found Moses). One reason Moses rejected Egyptian priesthood was because he would have to worship the Nile. The main time of worship of the Nile was yearly when it began to rise (mid June), for that fertilized the whole land and assured crops for another year. Parades through the streets (like Mardi Gras) celebrated this. It seems this was what was going on when the water turned to blood. What a way for God to take on the greatest gods of Egypt and show His superiority! The Nile, bloodied with the blood of Hebrew babies, now turns to blood (7:16-21). What an obvious way of showing that judgment on sin requires blood!

However the Egyptian magicians were able to also turn water to blood. What was needed was to turn blood to water, but God didn't allow them to reverse His judgment (7:22). This was enough, though, to give Pharaoh the excuse to reject that he wanted (7:23-25).

**FROGS (Plague 2)** To the Egyptians, frogs were a blessing. When the Nile receded in late August frogs were left behind. They were a sign of fertilization completed and thus they were worshipped. Hapi was the god who controlled the waters and deposits on land. Heqt was a goddess composed of a woman's body and frog's head. He was the symbol of resurrection and

fertility. Frogs were so sacred they couldn't be killed – even accidentally, under punishment of death. So God, in effect, said, "If you want frogs, we'll give you frogs"! And He did (8:1-6).

Frogs came everywhere! Small green frogs, distended toads the color of mud, mottled frogs like bloated vegetation, frogs motionless, frogs that leaped into the laps of screaming children, frogs like droppings of much, frogs trailing their slime after them, frogs that died and bred death. Like a blanket of filth the slimy wet monstrosities covered the land until men sickened at the continued squashing crunch of the ghastly pavement they were forced to walk upon. If a man's feet slipped on the greasy mass of their crushed bodies, he fell into an indescribably offensive mass of putrid uncleanness, and when he sought water to cleanse himself, the water was so solid and soiled from frogs that he got no cleansing there. There were frogs in the dough when they tried to bake bread. There were frogs in their beds when they tried to sleep. There were frogs in their hair, clothes – everywhere. For a people who worshipped cleanliness this was awful! God was attacking their pride, showing them how awful their sin of pride was. The magicians could make more but not remove others (8:7). Pharaoh said the Jews could leave if they would make the frogs leave (8:8-14) but when relief came Pharaoh changed his mind (8:15). Still, there were huge piles of rotting frogs left all over Egypt.

**LICE & GNATS (Plague 3)** God again shows Pharaoh and the people the awfulness of their sin and the coming judgment it brings by sending lice, perhaps from the rotting frogs. He sent great amounts of lice, gnats, ticks and similar insects that suck blood and carry disease (8:16-17). This brought judgment on the land of Egypt. Seb, the earth god, was unable to protect his ground from these.

These insects came from the dust (8:18). In Genesis 3:17 the ground was cursed, and this curse comes upon the ground, which they worshipped for its fertility. It was a picture of what results from man's sin. Adam's sin resulted in the ground of Eden being cursed. Pharaoh's sin results in the ground of Egypt bringing forth a curse.

This time, however, the magicians were unable to do what Moses did – not that more of these insects were needed (8:18-19). They were stopped in such a small matter, turning dust to lice and gnats. Satan's power is limited, as seen in Job. He can bring judgment (water to blood and frogs) but can't tamper with that which speaks of God's curse on man. Gnats and lice are small but have great results. They defeated the idols, gods and demonic powers in Egypt. They defeated the priests of Egypt, but their pride kept them from turning to God. Still, Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not listen to them (8:19).

Still, despite these things, God's grace is shown in that He always gave a chance to repent. God is trying to show man the awful sin he carries around with him so he can come to God for cleansing and deliverance. His first step is to recognize our sin and need for forgiveness.

Today, too, God tries to show man his pride and rebellion, the sin he carries around with him everywhere. Why would anyone want to carry a dead corpse around all the time if it could be removed? Why would anyone want to carry sin around, when a loving and merciful God is available to forgive and remove it? Have you accepted His gift of salvation so that your sin is removed? Don't let your pride stand in the way! If you have accepted this gift of salvation, you may still be carrying a sin around with you. Come to Him for its removal. Only God can defeat sin, and it's already been done! Don't live in that bondage one more moment, confess it now (1 John 1:9). There is mercy and forgiveness in God!

**MOSES**  
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## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 10. DISEASE, HAIL & LOCUSTS (Ex. 9:1 - 10:20)

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One day Satan called a meeting of his officers to discuss the best method of getting sinners into hell in the greatest numbers. Each one made a suggestion. One said, "Tell them there is no God." "No," said Satan. "Only a fool would believe that." "Tell them there is no hell," said another. "No, conscience refutes that." Finally one said, "Tell them there is a God and there is a hell, but there is no hurry!" The resolution was unanimously endorsed. It's been said that Satan has many whiles, but his favorite is 'wait awhile.'

That strategy works today, as it worked with Pharaoh. He didn't disbelieve in God or hell, he just kept putting off obeying God. God kept the pressure on him, though, through a year-long series of plagues. God turned the Nile to blood. He covered the land with frogs. Then he sent lice and gnats to suck blood. Still Pharaoh is putting off doing what God has required of him. Therefore more plagues will come.

**SWARMS (Plague 4)** Pharaoh was probably lading a procession to open the solemn festival which was held 120 days after the first rise of the Nile. Thus it would have been in late September. Even though the Nile had been totally defeated, they still worship it. God says that if they don't obey Him they will be hit with swarms of insects (8:20-21). The test just says they are 'swarms' and doesn't say of what, but the Septuagint translation (done in Egypt) is more detailed. It says these are dogflies, which are worse than gnats or lice. Their bite is more painful and they, too, suck blood. They were abhorred in Egypt because they contributed to the unusually high rate of blindness. Isaiah 7:18 says that flies were part of these swarms. This was the most numerous and troublesome insect in Egypt (and often a symbol of Baal-zebub, Satan himself). They fasten to the moist and tender parts of the body and won't let go (eyes, nose, ears). In addition, Psalm 78:45 says "devouring beetles" were included. These devour vegetation and food as well as biting people. They were very rare, and thus worshipped as a sign of the sun god. "Have a beetle" in Egyptian meant to "have a good day." Probably similar insects were included like mosquitoes, bees, wasps, hornets, etc. There were huge amounts of them eating, stinging, biting, ruining food and crops and spoiling property. They brought much destruction, torment and even death. They are a picture of the eternal torment in hell for those who continue to put off submitting to God.

Notice how the plagues gradually get worse and worse as they go on. The first plagues pictured consequences of sin in this life, something believers and unbelievers had to face. Now, however, they picture eternal judgment on sin. This only applies to unbelievers. Thus God keeps His people, the Jews, free from this and all coming plagues (8:22-23). There is no judgment for God's people (Romans 8:1; II Corinthians 5:21) for Jesus took all of it on the cross. That was God's way with Noah as well as Lot. That's why we won't have to go through the Tribulation or ever face God's judgment.

This plague shows an increase in God's warfare against Satan and his forces in Egypt. The magicians are out of the picture. The judgment is worse. There is an obvious pattern in these plagues. The first 9 lead up to number 10 which is death. Thus these 9 can be divided into 3 groups of 3. 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9. In each group Pharaoh was warned about the first plague in the morning, the second was announced beforehand, and the third not announced. These aren't arbitrary, random acts of nature. These are well-planned, meaningful announcements by God. These clearly show God's greatness and His desire for all people to repent and turn to Him. They may seem like judgment, but they are mercy for they are warnings of judgment to come. Their purpose isn't to punish but to alert people, to give them opportunity to repent. Still, Pharaoh rejects. He tries to get Moses to compromise, but Moses doesn't (8:25-32).

**ANIMALS DISEASED (Plague 5)** Plagues 1 and 2 were against the Nile (blood, frogs), 3 and 4 composed of insects (lice/gnats and swarms), and 5 and 6 are of disease (on man, then on animals).

When Pharaoh refuses God's warning (9:1-3) a "severe pestilence" comes on the land. This is some kind of highly infectious and very fatal disease on the livestock. Naturally, this has a great impact on the land. The economy is based on livestock for labor (oxen), transportation (camels, donkeys and horses) and for food (cattle, etc.).

Many of these very animals were worshipped as God. They believed Jupiter dwelt in the ram, Apollo in the crow, Bacchus in the goat, Diana in the cat, Juno in the white heifer, Venus in fish and Mercury in birds. We know that demons do like to take refuge in animals. Apis was worshipped as a sacred bull who was treated like a king in life and embalmed and buried in a pyramid when dead. Hathor, a cow, was a goddess of love. Mnevis was a sacred bull and Osiris, their savior-god, lived in a bull. These gods couldn't even save the animals their own souls dwelt in.

Again, God protected the livestock of the Jews (9:4). He had grace on the Egyptians, though, in that He gave them a day's notice (9:5) and a way out. This only applied to animals "in the land" (9:1-5). Those inside or in barns would be safe. Still, most didn't avail themselves of God's grace but instead suffered the consequences of their sin (9:6-7).

**PEOPLE DISEASED (Plague 6)** This plague, being the last in its group of 3, comes unannounced. Moses is to take soot from a kiln and throw it into the air, bringing boils on people (9:8-9). These boils were open, running sores which were very painful and could result in death.

This was a direct attack on many Egyptian gods. Imhotep was the god of medicine and the guardian of healing. The Egyptians were very advanced and skillful in their medical treatments. Sekhmet was a lion-headed goddess who had power over epidemics. Isis was the most celebrated goddess. She was a preventer and healer of disease. Typhon was the god of healing. God is taking on some of their greatest gods and showing them to be powerless before Him. The severity of the plagues continues to increase.

The connection with the kilns is clear, too (9:10-11). These were used for making bricks, which the Egyptians used to plague the Jews. They were also used for human sacrifice to Typhon, the god of evil. God is turning this around and using it to curse, not bless them. The magicians, who were extra responsible and accountable for misleading the Egyptians, received extra punishment from this plague (9:11). Still, Pharaoh didn't repent (9:11-12).

**HAIL (Plague 7)** Next God sends hail which destroys all the crops which were growing (9:13-18). He gives them opportunity again to bring in livestock to keep it safe (9:19-21). This plague attacked Nut, the sky goddess, Shu, god of the atmosphere, and the gods of agriculture, Iris, Osiris and Seth. Water (hail) and fire (lightening) which brought destruction were also worshipped (9:22-25). The Jews were safe (9:26). Pharaoh submits until the plague is over, then again refuses permission to leave (9:27-35).

**LOCUSTS (Plague 8)** Locusts can be one of nature's most awesome example of collective destruction. God sent this plague (10:1-6) to destroy what vegetation grew back after the hail. Seraphis, the god which protected them from locusts, was impotent. This was in March, when vegetation was at its full and it brought tremendous economic troubles and famine. The Egyptians wanted Pharaoh to let the Jews go (10:7) and Pharaoh tries another compromise (10:8-11) but the judgment comes anyway (10:12-15). When Pharaoh gives in it is stopped (10:16-20) but once more Pharaoh turns back.

The 'wait awhile' attitude of Pharaoh and the Egyptians is making things much worse for them. Not only are they suffering the consequences in this life, but they are in danger of passing into the next without God's forgiveness and thus having much worse consequences of sin. Don't put off getting right with God. Don't put off serving Him. Don't put off living for Him in all ways. It may be that God, in His love and mercy, is allowing you to suffer the consequences of some of your sins so you will turn to Him for forgiveness and cleansing. Remember, Satan's strategy is to get you to "wait awhile." God says that "NOW is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). Don't wait!

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## & the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

### 11. DARKNESS (Ex. 10:21-29)

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Man always denies what he doesn't want to face. A perfect example of that is hell. Surveys show that 70% of people believe in life after death but only 30% believe in hell. Hell has become so trivialized it has even lost its force as a curse. It is a whimsical place, more joke than a reality. It's no wonder people want to deny its existence. Pharaoh denied it, too. God gave him a preview of what it was like but he chose to ignore the warning.

**DARKNESS (Plague 9)** This is the worst plague so far (only #10 will be worse). God sent a darkness like none other (Exodus 10:21). It's the same word used for the darkness the world was in before God created light. It was a perpetual, supernatural, absolutely impenetrable blackness of darkness. If you've ever been way down in a cave when the tour guide turned off the lights you'll know what it was like. You couldn't see your hand 1 inch in front of your face. It was a picture of God's judgment of hell, showing the nearness of His final judgment of

hell on them.

Hell is described as being bound in chains of darkness (II Peter 2:4; John 8:12), bound in everlasting chains under darkness (Jude 6), blackness of darkness (Jude 13), and outer darkness (Matthew 8:12; 22:113; 25:30). God is light (I John 1:5). He will be the light for eternity when even the sun won't be needed. Therefore the absence of God (hell) is the absence of light. Satan and his demons today try to bring darkness to the world. With it comes depression, despair and hopelessness. Hell will be eternity in darkness with unsatisfied desires, hopelessness and terrible physical and emotional suffering.

What made this plague all the more powerful was that it was directed at one of Egypt's greatest gods, Ra, the sun god. Egypt had a cloudless, rainless climate so nothing hid the sun. This also defeated Orpheus, the god of darkness, which was Satan worship pure and simple. He couldn't control or remove that which he was to be a god of.

For three days there was this total darkness over all Egypt (10:21-22). It was so bad, so oppressive, that people didn't move from where they were for 3 days. Imagine: they couldn't eat, wash, get comfortable, or go to their bathroom facilities. They could talk to each other but not see each other. For three days this went on. To really make it a picture of hell, Psalm 78:49 says God allowed demons to have free access during these times. Jewish tradition says Satan and his angels went among the Egyptians, frightening them with fearful apparitions, piercing their ears with hideous shrieks and groans, driving them almost to madness with the intensity of their fears, making their flesh creep and their hair stand on end. It would be worse than the most awful horror show on TV or in the movies – and it was real!

Contrast this with God's people in Goshen. They had light in their homes (10:23). God's Presence was with them, and God is light. It was the same Shekinah glory that would lead them in the cloud and dwell in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. This is how Noah had light on the 3 levels of the ark (with only one window at the top). God's presence provided the light. Thus the Egyptians had a darkness they couldn't light but the Jews had a light that couldn't be put out. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior you, too, have gone from darkness to light (I Peter 2:9).



Unbelievers prefer darkness to light, so God is just giving them what they want and warning them of eternal hell judgment at the same time. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God." (John 3:16-21)

Today, too, sin is attracted to darkness. Bars, X-rated stores, seances, occult worship – all take place in the dark. Windows are shut, lights are low. Crime is higher at night than during the day. Darkness is a picture of spiritual blindness (II Corinthians 4:4; I Corinthians 2:14; I John 2:11). When Jesus healed physical blindness, He was showing He could heal spiritual blindness.

**COMPROMISE...** this darkness so affected Pharaoh that said the Jews could go – on his terms (10:24-26). He offered Moses a compromise. This wasn't the first time he did that. Satan is good as offering compromises. If he can get us moving just the slightest bit from 100% strict obedience to Jesus he knows he has us moving in the right direction and its only a matter of time until we move a little more, and then a little more. Satan is very patient.

**Compromise 1** was for them to go worship, but to stay in the land (8:25). Worship God, but don't get so carried away that you leave Satan's system! Be a Christian, but stay in the world! God is OK, but don't give up everything for Him. There's room for everyone to worship however they want right here. Don't be a fanatic! Moses turned the offer down (8:26-27). Pharaoh then modified the offer to let them go, but not so far they couldn't easily return (8:28). Satan is willing to lengthen the chain, as long as you don't cut it! Don't give up everything you have here! Keep the best of this world nearby so you can return when you want. Don't leave your friends, priorities and values. Follow God, but stay close to the world, too.

**Compromise 2** was for them to worship, but leave their children back in Egypt (10:8). Moses knew that if they didn't take their children they wouldn't be obeying God, so he rejected this, too (10:9-11). Today, too, Satan tells us that we can be totally sold out to God, but not bring our children. We don't want to deny them all the 'fun' the world offers!

**Compromise 3** was for them to leave the land, with their children, but not take their possessions (10:24). Moses knew that they couldn't leave their possessions in the world and still serve God, that we much bring our material things with us and offer them to God, so he rejected this compromise as well (10:25-26). You can't give your heart but allow your possessions to be controlled by worldly principles. God wants all of us and all we have!

When Moses turned down this compromise, he told Pharaoh it was over, he'd had his last chance and Moses would never be back with another offer of mercy from God (10:27-29). They never met again. This was Pharaoh's last warning. For a year God has been gradually turning up the heat. Next would come death: first of the firstborn, then of the army in the Red Sea.

Yes, sad as it is to think about, hell awaits those who reject God. He is merciful in trying to warn the Egyptians of what they are bringing on themselves, but He is holy and will judge sin. Thank God that, if you have accepted Him as Savior, you never have to fear hell! Thank Him for the light in your life, and make sure you live in that light without any compromise.

**MOSES**  
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& the DELIVERANCE from EGYPT

## 12. DEATH OF FIRSTBORN (Ex. 11:1-11; 12:29-36)

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On July 3, 1826, Thomas Jefferson, ill since February at Monticello, aroused himself from sleep. "Is it the Fourth?" he asked. When the doctor said it soon would be, he appeared content. He died at 1 PM on July 4<sup>th</sup>. In Quincy, Mass., John Adams, his political opponent, lay dying on the very same day. "Thomas Jefferson survives," he said. He was wrong. Both died on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which they had much to do with.

How people die is sometimes surprising. That people die shouldn't surprise us at all. "It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment" (Heb 9:27). A sociologist traveling in a third world country asked an official there what the death rate was. "The same as everywhere else," the man replied. "One per person."

We all know we will die, yet somehow many people manage to ignore that fact. They live as if they will never have to give an account of their lives. They live as if this life is all there is. That isn't new. Pharaoh was a prime example of this as well.

**DEATH (Plague 10)** Moses had told Pharaoh he would never see his face again (Exodus 10:28-29) and he was right. God had told him that deliverance was coming, that Pharaoh wouldn't just let them go, he would force them to leave (11:1). God also told Moses, during the 3 days of darkness, that the Jews should ask their neighbors for silver and gold and they would be given much of it (11:2-3). This would be payment for the work they did as slaves and would finance their building of the Tabernacle as well as their years in the wilderness.

God also told Moses that it would be the death of the firstborn that would bring about their deliverance (11:4-6). The firstborn male had the prime position. He received a double portion of his father's inheritance (Deut 21:17). He received the special blessing from the father (Genesis 49:3). He took over family leadership when his family died. The firstborns were groomed for positions of power and leadership in the nation. They were (and still are) the overachievers. Almost all the astronauts are firstborns. The vast majority of those listed in "Who's Who in America" are firstborns. In Egypt the firstborns owned all the property and therefore ran the country. Thus they were responsible for the cruel treatment of the Jews. They are 'reaping what they sowed.' They killed all the Jewish baby boys, now their firstborn males would die. This included all firstborn males, no matter how old. This was true of the cattle, too. Thus there was no way anyone could say it was a sudden illness or some such thing. It was totally obvious it was God and only God doing this.

Israel was called God's 'firstborn' because they enjoyed this place of special privilege in His sight. Thus God was, in effect, saying, "If you don't let My firstborn (Israel) go, I'll take your firstborn." God called His people to leave and offer sacrifices to Him. They weren't allowed to. They were supposed to worship where they were, but they couldn't offer blood sacrifices. God offered the blood sacrifice for them – the firstborn of Egypt, the very ones who wouldn't let them go!

**THE MERCY OF DEATH** Death shows God's mercy. Without it we'd live in this world, separated from Him, for all eternity. Death is a warning sign to everyone that this short life is temporary. Just think how people would live and act if they knew they would never die! Like pain, death is a warning sign. Suppose you never felt pain? Sounds great – but think about it. Suppose the warning lights on your dashboard didn't work... Death is a warning that this life is temporary and we will then live somewhere for all eternity. God lets us slowly age to show us that this life will one day be over. The threat of death at any moment should help keep us 'honest' and keep this life in its proper perspective.

God is using this threat of death to warn them of the coming eternal death and judgment. He tells them the firstborn will die at midnight. Would you like to know when and how you would die? I don't think that would be good at all! The Egyptians knew the firstborn would die at midnight – but God didn't tell them what day. Actually it was 2 weeks until the death came. That was plenty of time to repent and turn to God – or ignore it as something that wouldn't come to them. Funny how people always think of death as something affecting others but not them!

**NO DEATH FOR THOSE UNDER THE BLOOD** Another act of mercy was God's provision of an escape from the death to come. Those who were 'under the blood' of the sacrificial lamb wouldn't have their blood shed (11:7). It wasn't because the Jews were better than the Egyptians that they were spared. Actually they were worse, for they were much, much more accountable to God since they and their ancestors had clearly known His word for generations. The reason the Jews were spared was because they applied the innocent blood of the lamb to their homes and lives. Any Jew who didn't would also die, and any Egyptian who did was spared. There were probably many of each.

Unfortunately most of the Egyptians followed Pharaoh's lead (although they were accountable on their own as seen by their suffering the consequences of their own disobedience). Two weeks after Moses delivered this final warning (11:8) it happened, just as God has said it would (11:9-10; 12:29-36).

**DEATH COMES** Death came to every home in Egypt that didn't have the blood applied. It seems Pharaoh himself was either exempt (a worse penalty than death for he would see what the consequences of his disobedience were) or not a firstborn. Any male of any age who was the first male born to his mother died, unless the substitutionary blood had been used. What an awful time for those families!

They shouldn't have been surprised. They had been amply warned. That they would die should have been no surprise. When it came might have caught them unprepared, but they had plenty of warning, as do we all. We should never be surprised when we die, for we have known all along it was coming.

If you visit Washington and Lee University you can see Lee's study just as he left it the last time he went out of his office. He thought he'd be back the next day to continue his work but he never returned. He was prepared, for he was a fine Christian man. The timing might have surprised him, but he never should have been surprised that he would die.

Imagine going into a nice restaurant and ordering a fine meal then walking out without paying. When stopped you'd say that you didn't expect to pay and aren't prepared to pay. You just wanted a nice meal, you didn't want to pay for it! That's how many face death. They don't want to pay, but they haven't make provision for another (Jesus) to pay for them. How foolish. How inexcusable. How about you? Are you ready?

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## 13. PASSOVER PREPARATIONS (Ex. 12:1-10, 22, 46)

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Sheep are mentioned more frequently than any other animal in the bible - about 750 times. This is natural since the Jews were wandering herdsmen, a occupation well suited for Palestine's dry plains. The sheep were used for food (milk, cheese, butter and mutton) and clothing (wool, skins). By nature sheep are helpless and depend on the shepherd for water, pasture, guidance and defense. They are often used as an example of how God takes care of us (John 10:1-18; Psalm 23).

**'LAMB OF GOD'** It is no coincidence, then, that the first descriptive name used of Jesus was LAMB. It happened when He first went public in His ministry. He wasn't seen as King, Lord or even God, although He was all these things. He was seen as "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). That's what John called Him when Jesus came to where

John was baptizing. Why 'lamb'? Because that describes Him and why He came. Sure, He was called Jesus, Savior and Christ/Messiah, but all of these refer to what He did as the Lamb of God. Jesus means 'saves,' Savior means 'deliverer,' and Christ/Messiah' refers to His being 'anointed' for death. By calling Him the 'Lamb of God' the people would all understand that He was the once come to pay for the sins of all. How would they know this? Because they knew all about the Passover Lamb.

**ANIMAL SACRIFICES** When Adam and Eve sinned innocent blood had to be shed to cover their sin. It was God Himself (God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, is the One who appears to man in both Old and New Testament). This picture of covering sin by innocent blood continued through Able, Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

This is clearly seen when Abraham took Isaac to offer to God as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:7-8). God provided a ram to die in Isaac's place, as a substitute. This very rock became the spot where the temple was built, and the blood poured each year on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) to cover the nations sins. It was on this same mountain that Jesus was crucified and died. Ultimately Jesus was Abraham's substitute for Isaac, so he didn't have to kill his son. God, however, had no other Substitute, for Jesus was the only One who could pay for our sins, so Jesus Himself died there as our substitute. The analogy is beautiful and striking.

**THE PASSOVER LAMB** The most complete and detailed picture of this, though, is given in Exodus 12. The Jews were in slavery and bondage in Egypt and, after a year of plagues, God is about to redeem them by killing the firstborn in all of Egypt. The problem, though, was that the Jewish firstborn was as deserving of death as the Egyptian firstborn, maybe more so because he was more accountable to God. How could God just overlook their sin? As a just and holy God, He couldn't. What He could do, though, was provide a substitute. The Passover lamb was the substitute, a picture of the ultimate Substitute which would one day die for all of our sins.

The blood of animals only 'covered' sin. Only Jesus' blood removed it. It would be like having a grape juice stain on a nice white rug. Without any way of cleaning the rug, all you could do was put a throw rug over it and 'cover' it up. Then one day someone shows up with a stain

remove that will get the stain out. The throw rug is no longer needed. Animal sacrifices are like that throw rug. The blood of Jesus is the only cleanser for sin

**THE LAMB CHOSEN (Exodus 12:3, 5b)** Lambs were innocent, gentle, meek, helpless animals, a picture of Jesus as a man. The lamb had to be unblemished (perfect, spotless Jesus) and a male (the strength and energy of Jesus). It had to be 1 year old (in the prime of life).

**THE LAMB KILLED (Exodus 12:6a)** The lamb alive did no good, though. It had to die. It's blood had to be shed. Jesus' perfect life only condemns us, showing that a perfect life can be lived. It is only His death that saves us.

The person owning the lamb would place his hands on the animal's head and confess his sins, thus making the lamb accountable for the sin. Thus the animal had to die, for sin brings death. It was killed by having its throat slit and the blood caught in a bowl.

The lamb to be the Passover substitute was chosen and set aside on 10 Nisan to make sure it was spotless and unblemished. Four days later, on 14 Nisan, it would die. For almost 4 years Jesus ministered in public, under the careful eye of all who watched, showing He was perfect and without sin. Then He died on 14 Nisan. Both died at 3 PM – same time on the same day. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Passover lamb.

Killing a lamb you had raised from birth was a good picture of the wastefulness and death that sin brings. Innocent blood must be shed to cover the guilty. The whole sacrificial system was built on this premise. Within the next year the Jews would be putting the finishing touches on the Tabernacle, where sacrifices would continue until the time of Jesus. The tabernacle, then the temple, were designed by God to show that innocent blood must be shed to cover sin.

**THE LAMB'S BLOOD APPLIED (Exodus 12:7)** The living lamb couldn't save, neither could the lamb killed. It was only as the blood was applied personally that sin was covered. If the blood was on the door, the family was safe. If there was no blood then death entered. Nationality didn't matter, or how well educated, or how rich – only the blood mattered.

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:27). "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Our good works are like "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) or a "dung heap" (Phil 3:8). Only the blood counts, because it stands for Jesus' life.

The blood had to be applied in such a way that it was publicly visible. It was applied to the front door by the person responsible for the house. Hyssop was used. It was used in rituals of purification and cleansing. The lamb was slain on the door stoop and the blood painted on the top and sides of the door. Actually this formed a cross, with the blood being at the same places where Jesus bled on the cross: head, hands and feet.

After the blood was applied the people had to enter into the house, 'through the blood' as it were. When they entered there was blood above, below and on both sides of them. Then they had to stay inside all night to be safe. Outside was death, inside was life. When the angel of death saw the blood he would "Pass over" and not stop to bring death to that home. The blood was sufficient. "When I see the blood I will pass over." It was a 'sign' – to the angel of death, to neighbors (believers and unbelievers alike), to angels and to Satan and his forces. It was a 'brand' of security. Jesus' blood is our security, our 'sign' of eternal life (Eph 1:7; I John 1:7; I Peter 1:19; Mt 26:28; Heb 9:12; Rev 1:5; Rom 5:8-9).

(Continued in next article.)

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## 14. PASSOVER CELEBRATION (Ex. 12:11-14, 21-28)

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(Continued from last article.)



**THE LAMB'S BODY EATEN (Exodus 12:8-10, 46)** After the lamb died the blood was applied, and the body had to be used in it's way, too. The body was eaten. The lamb didn't die just to be looked at but to be personally identified with by eating. This would give them nourishment and sustenance for the coming journey. Jesus died for our sins, but He also provides the nourishment and strength we need to go on after salvation (John 6:53-57). The Jews had to feed on the lamb that same night, we can't put off partaking. There was nothing to be left over so it didn't decay (Jesus' body didn't decay). It was to be eaten roasted, not raw or boiled. This was to be a picture of Jesus facing not just death but also fire – hell judgment on the cross. It couldn't eaten raw, it had to go through the fire. Jesus had to go through our hell to redeem us. It

couldn't be boiled in water, for there was no water to slacken Jesus' thirst. No bone was to be broken, a common practice to eat the marrow within. This was prophesied of Jesus.

Thus the lamb had to be chosen (Ex 12:5) as Christ volunteered to die for our sins in eternity past (I Pt 1:20). It has to be kept (Ex 12:5), a picture of Christ in life (Mat 3:17; 17:5). Then it was slain (Ex 12:6), Christ sacrificed (I Cor 5:7). Then it was roasted (Ex 12:8), a picture of Christ's sufferings (Ps 88:7; 89:46). Then it had to be fed on (Ex 12:5, 8) as we feed on Christ, pictured in the Lord's Supper (I Cor 5:8).

**INSIDE** The Jews were to eat standing up, dressed, with outdoor traveling clothing on, sandals on their feet and walking staff in one hand. This was a reminder that Egypt was not their home, they weren't to settle there, they were there temporarily and just passing through. That must be our approach to life in this world as well.

**UNLEAVENED BREAD** Along these same lines, they were to not take time to let their bread rise. There was to be no leaven in it. Leaven is a picture of sin. It is a yeast (fungus) which grows and decays. It will destroy the whole batch unless stopped (by cooking). Sin is like that (I Cor. 5:6-8). For 7 days they were to eat unleavened bread. This pictures Jesus' sinless life and body, and why we are to make sure there is no sin in our lives when we partake of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:23-32).

**DEATH OUTSIDE** While those with blood on their door were inside, safe, feeding on the lamb, the others were facing God's judgment of death. They were not safe. In the early days of this country those crossing a prairie were in danger of fires out of control traveling rapidly to where they are and beyond. The Indians showed them a way to be safe. When they saw a fire coming they would start a fire near where they were, then when it burned itself out move into that area with their possessions. Thus when the main fire came roaring through they were safe. As the Indians said, "Where the fire has been, the fire cannot come." When we enter through the blood, and place ourselves at the foot of the cross, we are in God's 'burnt-over' area. Jesus took our judgment so we have no danger of ever being under judgment (Romans 8:1).

**SACRIFICES THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT** When the Jews left Egypt they went to Mt. Sinai. There got gave them many regulations about offering sacrifices: who, when, why, where and how. Much of Exodus and most of Leviticus cover this. All this was to cover sin until God's stain-remover came. For 1400 years this picture continued, then came the Lamb of God.

**JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD** It was prophesied that the Messiah would be the Lamb of God (Isaiah 53:7-8). John recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of this (John 1:29, 36), as did Paul (I Cor 5:7), Peter (I Peter 1:19) and Philip (Acts 8:32).



**LORD'S SUPPER REPLACES PASSOVER** When Jesus had the Last supper with His disciples, He took the matzo that represented the Jews leaving Egypt and said that it now applied to His body. "Take, eat; This is my body" (Mt 26:26). The cup of grape juice that they drank was a picture of the lamb's blood. When the Jews left Egypt and were living intents they didn't have door posts to paint with blood, so they used the blood of the grape as the same picture. By drinking it they were identifying with the lamb's blood, applying it to their lives. Jesus said this way now to picture His blood. "This is My blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:28). Thus Jesus was saying that the Passover no longer applied to the lamb of Exodus 12 and the physical deliverance from Egypt, it now pictured the Lamb of God and the deliverance from sin and death.

The number one miracle in the Old Testament was the Passover and Red Sea deliverance. This was a picture of what would be done by Jesus and was the focal point of the Old Testament and Jewish history. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was, of course, the number one New Testament event. In fact, it was the number one event of history of all time.

**THE LAMB AROSE** In the Old Testament, when the Passover lamb died it stayed dead. However when the Lamb of God died, He came back to life!!! Imagine a dead lamb, blood applied and body eaten, come back to live and run and jump around – not with a physical body but with a new, eternal body! It's amazing, but it's true! The Lamb still lives today, that's why we worship and praise Him. Dying paid for our sins, coming back to life assures us of eternal life.

**THE LAMB TODAY** The Lamb continues to live today, in heaven. In fact, "The Lamb" is the title given to Jesus throughout Revelation. Thirty three times He is called the 'Lamb'! As the lamb, He is in the position of sovereign glory and honor (Rev 7:17). He shares glory and grace equally with the Father (Rev 22:1, 3). He is the leader and shepherd of His saints (Rev 7:17; 14:4). Angels and believers are worshipping the Lamb (Rev 5:6,8,12,13; 15:3) singing "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise." 'Lamb' is more than a title, it is the description of Him. When we see Him we will see gentleness and purity which was slain for us. The marks of crucifixion will be on Him. We will worship Him, not because of His sovereign power, but because of His work for us as the Lamb of God, which took away the sins of the world.

**THE LAMB IN THE FUTURE** One day soon the Lamb will return for His bride – us. Then we will together share in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7,9) while the Tribulation rages on earth. Many of those who come to salvation during this time will be martyred and will gather around the throne praising the Lamb in heaven (Rev 7:7-14; 13:8; 15:3).

Then the Lamb, to whom all judgment is committed (Rev 6:1,16; 13:8), will come and do war against the dragon (Satan - Rev 17:14; 12:11). This return will end the Tribulation (Rev 14:1) with a marvelous victory (Rev 19:11-16). No one will escape the wrath of the lamb (Rev 6:16). The Lamb will return as a lion. When Satan and sin are gone, the Lamb will reign on the throne forever, with all worshipping Him forever. Truly, "worthy is the Lamb!"

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## 15. UNLEAVENED BREAD (Ex. 12:15-20, 34, 39; 13:6-7)

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There is a true story about how a stolen bucket started a war and ended a career. One day long ago a soldier took an attractive bucket from a public well, just for the fun of it. The bucket got passed on from one person to another until it was given to prince Henry of Sardinia. A great fuss was made over it, ending in a war to get it back. Prince Henry himself was captured and put in prison. His father, the king, offered a golden chain 7 miles long to get him back. The offer was refused in anger. The prince lay in prison for 20 years until he died. The war continued until most of the governments of Europe were involved. Thousands of lives and much property was lost, and all because of such a 'little thing' like taking a bucket! It was just a little thing, but look at the consequences.

Now think for a moment. Is there such a thing as a 'little' sin? Maybe in our sight some sin has more serious consequences and brings greater guilt, and other sin seems to be beneficial and pleasurable – but is there really any difference in God's sight? "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point is guilty of breaking the whole law" (James 2:10). It doesn't sound like God thinks ANY sin is small, does He?

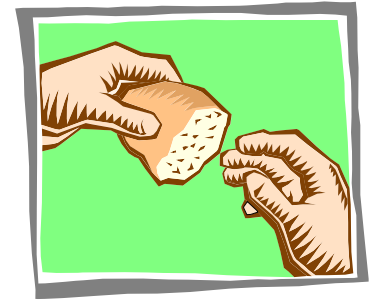
**SIN IS SIN** 'Sin' means 'to miss the mark.' "For all have sinned (missed the mark) and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our target is to be like Jesus, as holy as God. It doesn't matter if we miss by 1 inch or 1,000 miles, we still miss. A pass is incomplete in football if it is off the fingertips, or 20 yards over the receiver's head. All sin is sin. In fact, 'little' sin can be said to be worse than other sin because it is more subtle and dangerous. We are more apt to commit 'little' sins, as our enemy knows. That's why we are tempted in that way more often. Often we get so used to them we don't realize they are really sins. Actually victory in the Christian life doesn't come so much from winning the big battles as the little battles, for if the little battles over sin would be won, there wouldn't be any big battles. Big battles mean sin has been left go and not defeated when 'little.' The only way to win big battles is to start winning some of the 'little' ones related to that area of life, then the big battles will be won. Thus avoiding 'little' sin is a very key truth for God's people. It is an important lesson to learn.

In fact, it is so important, it is the very first lesson God teaches His people after salvation (Passover blood on the door). The first truth He teaches them is not prayer, knowing God's will, or spiritual gifts. It is about the deadliness of 'little' sin. God uses leaven as an illustration of this point, making His point clear.

**FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD** During the time of darkness God had told Moses all about eating bread without leaven (Exodus 12:15-20). Moses passed this on to the people (Exodus 13:3-10) and the people obeyed God's instructions (Exodus 12:34, 39). On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the new month, Nisan, they were to set aside an unblemished male lamb one year old and then on the 14<sup>th</sup> kill it and eat it after applying the blood to the door posts. They were to eat the meal standing and ready to leave Egypt, so there was no time to let dough rise and then bake it. They were to mix dough and take it with them to cook along the way, but to not put any leaven in it. For 7 days they were to eat bread with no leaven, Nisan 14 to 21. This became called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.



**LEAVEN** Everything focused on the leaven – or lack of it. Yeast is a microscopic plant invisible to the naked eye which is placed in a substance called leaven. It is actually a fungus which can be dried for long periods of time which springs to life when it comes in contact with moisture and warmth. The cells will multiply with tremendous rapidity. Starch and sugar turns into carbon dioxide gas and alcohol. This causes the dough to 'rise' as the air bubbles in it expand. This process would continue and turn the dough sour if the yeast wasn't killed by high temperatures at the right time. This is where the baking comes in. The heat kills the growing cells and stops the fermentation (decomposition). Thus unleavened bread is flat, more solid, lacking in air bubbles. For this reason leaven is a picture of sin.



**LEAVEN = SIN** Nothing in the world spoils like sin. It ruins whatever it touches unless stopped by confession and cleansing by the blood of Christ. Leaven must be destroyed before bread can be eaten. Sin must be destroyed before a Christian can become like Jesus. Paul, in I Corinthians 5:6-8, uses leaven as a picture of sin. He says it is little and hidden, but grows and spreads to destroy everything unless stopped.

Recently a huge tree in Colorado fell to the ground with a resounding crash. It was over 400 years and had just started growing when Columbus came to America. It had been struck by lightning 14 times, stood through winds, earthquakes, fires and storms. Yet it was killed by a little beetle which bored under the bark and chewed away the mighty fibers of the tree, one tiny bite at a time. That's how sin works. That's what leaven pictures.

Paul takes this leaven analogy a step further. He equates leaven to Christ, referring to Christ's sinlessness in order to be our sin sacrifice. Just at the unleavened bread was 'sinless' (no leaven), so Christ Himself was sinless. The unblemished Lamb of God was also the unleavened Bread of God. Thus when Jesus said 'this is My Body' about the bread, it truly applied for it was a picture of His sinless body.

**PASSOVER TO LORD'S SUPPER** Every year since He was 12 Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover and Unleavened Bread. The events of His final days and hours on earth center around these feasts. In fact, Jesus changed the meaning of the juice from the blood of the Passover lamb to His blood. He also changed the meaning of the unleavened bread from being a reminder of their quick flight from Egypt to be a reminder of His sinless Body broken for us (Luke 22:14-22).

Paul passed this significance on in I Corinthians (11:23-32). He enlarged the analogy to show that we, too, must be sinless when we partake of the Lord's Supper. Like unleavened bread, we must not have sin we hold onto in our lives. We must remove all leaven/sin from our lives. If not, God will discipline us to remove it. It is a serious contradiction to partake of that which symbolizes Jesus' work for us on the cross while still having sin in our own lives.

In Mexico and tropical zones of South America a so-called 'Strangler' fig grows everywhere. It is a tree-killer. This fig can only be eaten by cattle and birds. It is so sticky a bird must clean its beak on a nearby tree after eating it. Small seeds can stick to bark and germinate in rainy season. Tiny roots make their way down into the heart of the tree. In a few years it covers the once beautiful tree and kills it.

That is exactly the way sin is. It starts small and grows until all is destroyed. That's what leaven is a picture of. Why not take a moment now to search your heart and life, asking God to help you find and root out the 'little' sins that lead to big defeats in your life? Confess each one and ask for His victory over them. Become like unleavened bread for the Lord.

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## 16. DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT (Ex. 12:37-51)

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A man was once visiting a large sheep ranch in Australia at the time of shearing. The guide took a baby lamb from its pen and placed it with thousands of other sheep where the noise of their bleating and the shouting of the shearers was absolutely deafening. The unweaned animal, looking dazed, remained still for a moment. Then, realizing it had been separated from its mother, began to let out weak, distressed baa's. The faint cries were answered immediately by the mother even though she was at the far end of the enclosure. Amid the noise and confusion she still heard the pitiful bleating of her own frightened offspring.

If sheep are like that, what was the God that created them? God sees us as if there are no others around. He rushes to our aid at our faintest cry. Witness the Jews in Egypt. They cried out to God and He heard them. He sent Moses, then the 10 plagues ending with the death of the firstborn. Now He is delivering them.

**DELIVERANCE!** During the plague of darkness God had revealed to Moses information about the last plague of death, asking neighbors for riches and the Passover as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Moses warned Pharaoh of this but Pharaoh didn't repent.

Two weeks later, at midnight, the firstborn of all without the blood died while those with the blood celebrated the first Passover. Pharaoh sent word that the Jews **MUST** leave Egypt. At sunrise they started their trip. They had their wagons packed and everything ready to go. There wasn't even time to let their bread rise. Out they came, one by one, through the blood applied to the door posts. They were saved by the blood, now they are delivered by the blood.

**POPULATION** There were about 600,000 men who could be fighters (Exodus 12:37). Add to that young men, cripples and older men and the total must have been at least 750,000 men. Add the same number of woman and the total is 1 ½ million. The approximately 600,000 family units would average at least 2 children each (many had grown children) so that would be another 1+ million. All total then, there would be about 2 ½ to 3 million people leaving - quite a mob! That would be like all Philadelphia and its suburbs in southeastern Pennsylvania leaving their homes one morning to hike to California!

Remember, too, that they are slaves. Slave mentality doesn't initiate, get creative, or work together. Slaves do what they are told while resenting those who tell them what to do. These Jews had no inner structure, no organization of leaders and no chain of command. It was a most difficult situation indeed for Moses!

**JEWS & EGYPT** Not all the Jews left Egypt. Many stayed, others moved back later. Alexandria developed into the largest Jewish area next to Jerusalem. Jeremiah was taken there when the Babylonians attacked. The Septuagint was translated there. Mary and Joseph fled there with baby Jesus. There is still a large Jewish population there to this day.

While not all the Jews left, it is also true that not all the Egyptians stayed. A 'mixed multitude' of non-Jews also left (12:38). These were Egyptians who married Jews, Egyptians who converted to Judaism, and other Semitic slave people in Egypt who saw a chance to escape.

Scholars say there were about 20,000 of them – a small percentage but one that had a large negative impact on the whole group. Some were godly, dedicated people (Moses' second wife came from this group) but most caused trouble by their complaining and rebelling. They kept wanting the group to return to Egypt. Unfortunately that same story repeats itself in most Christian groups and organizations today. Even Jesus had one who was not with His program.

**PROVISION** The Jews left with all their possession, much gold and silver given them by their neighbors, and large herds of animals. Their clothing and shoes never wore out during the next 40 years, and they had perfect health (Psalm 105:37) until it was time for their death.

They didn't just flee like slaves on the run, but marched out like a victorious conquering army. There was organization and plan to their movement (13:18). God was taking care of His people in a grand way!

According to the U. S. Army Quartermaster General, Moses would have needed 1500 tons of food a day, filling two freight trains a mile long each. For fuel to cook food and stay warm on cold desert nights (and it does get cold in a desert at night) they would need 4,000 tons of firewood (3 more freight trains a mile long). Then what about water? For enough to drink and wash a few dishes (no bathing) would take 11 million gallons a day, enough to fill a train of tanker cars 1800 miles long! The space of their campground each night would be 750 square miles – the size of Rhode Island. Yet God provided all this.

**PREPARATION** The Jews left in total obedience to God. All sin had been confessed and turned from. That they left without any leaven in their bread was a picture of their leaving without any sin in their lives (12:39). When we follow God, too, it must be in 100% sinless obedience.

**PROMISE** Moses is quick to point out that the Jews left exactly on the day God had prophesied they would leave – to the very day (12:40-41). God promised they would leave on this day and they did! Only God can do that. God keeps His promises.

This is a great lesson for us today, too. There are 7,000 promises in the Bible for us today. They are like coupons which can be used over and over again. However there is an expiration date on them for they are only good while we live on this earth. If we don't use them, we lost them. From time to time we hear of someone dying of malnutrition in poverty, but those who clean up after the person find large sums of money in the shack. They had resources to live a better life but didn't avail themselves of them. That is true of us spiritually as well.

God has promised to help us in time of need (Hebrews 13:5-6), strengthen us in time of weakness (Isaiah 41:10), cheer us in despondency (Matthew 17:27) and guide us in perplexity (Psalm 32:8). He said He will give us peace in trouble (Isaiah 66:12-13), joy in sorrow (Isaiah 61:2-3) and power in service (Acts 1:8). We know these promises. We hang them on our walls, print them on our greeting cards and sing them in our songs. However we often don't claim and use them. We live as if they aren't true. What a waste!

When Crowfoot, the great chief of the Blackfoot Indians, gave the railroad permission to cross his land he received a lifetime pass to travel on the railroad for free. He was so proud of this that he hung it on a pouch around his neck for the rest of his life. However he never rode on the railroad. He walked or rode a horse wherever he went. How like us this is. We have God's promises but, unless we trust Him and await His provision, we will live in fear and worry. He will keep His promises to deliver us, as He did the Jews, but we will lack peace and joy while awaiting their fulfillment. Do you know His promises to you? Do you trust them? Or do you live in fear and worry as if God weren't in control? The choice is yours.

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## 17. DEDICATION OF FIRSTBORN (Ex. 13:1-16)

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Years ago an Englishman was watching a group of slaves being auctioned off in the south. He was deeply touched at the plight of the victims. Especially touching was a fine young man who brought high bids. For some reason he joined in the bidding, even though the price kept going up and up. Still, he was determined to have him. When the slave was transferred to his new owner the Englishman unlocked the chains and said, "You are a free man!" In heartfelt devotion the slave fell down at his feet with tears, "No. master, I will be your servant forever!" He became the man's most trusted helper, living with him for the rest of his life as a free man and a son.

This is what God did with the Jews in Egypt. He bought them for Himself and set them free. Their response was to commit themselves to live for him in devotion and faithfulness the rest of their lives. For most this was a commitment they couldn't or wouldn't fulfill, but when God freed them it was their heart's desire. Because of God's free gift of salvation, which has freed us from sin and bondage, He wants us to voluntarily commit to living for Him forever.

**SANCTIFICATION** As a way of teaching this truth, God commanded that all the firstborn males be sanctified to Him (Exodus 13:1-2). Since the Egyptian first-born died in the last plague and He spared the ones who had blood on their door, He owned them. He paid the blood price to save them, so they are all His possession. Remember, the firstborn is symbolic of the whole nation. Thus by owning the firstborn, God is in effect saying the whole nation is His.

"Sanctify" means literally "set apart." It is translated "sanctify," "holy," "consecrate," "cleanliness," "godliness" and "separation." The root meaning is to set something apart from ordinary, regular use to be used for God's service. The person or object is set apart from worldly use and committed to God's use. The word is used of places like the ground at the burning bush, of God's dwelling place (the Tabernacle), of Jerusalem and of heaven. It is used of things like the priests' garments, offerings and Tabernacle vessels. It is even used of times like the Sabbath, Feast days and days of fasting. Being 'sanctified' does not mean it is made perfect, but that it is set apart to serve God.

**IN GOD'S SIGHT** At the moment of salvation (Deut 7:6-7) we have been sent apart to God. That's why we are called 'saints,' the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Sanctify." God sees us as perfect, because He sees us through the blood of Jesus. Therefore He expects us to live up to that in our daily life. It's like being born into a royal family and therefore being a prince by position. Still, it is up to that person to live like a prince – live up to what he is. God wants us to live up to our position by living in daily commitment to Him. Over 1500 verses in the Bible command us to be set apart to God (Lev 19:2; I Pt 1:15; etc.).

We are set apart from the world and sin (II Cor 6:17-18) and to God (I Cor 6:19-20). That's why the Bible so many times tells us not to live for self or the world because we have been set apart by salvation for God's service.

**TURN FROM SIN** Knowing this and doing it are two different things, though. Why don't we live lives of separation from sin? Because we choose to sin instead of turning from it. God taught this to the people by including instructions about the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 13:3-10). Sanctification means separation from sin.

**DONKEYS AND MEN** God then included instructions about firstborn animals belonging to Him as well, since they also were spared in Egypt (Exodus 13:11-12). The firstborn of all animals was to die, too.

God's provision was that a substitute could die for firstborn people. When Jesus was born He was taken to the temple to be circumcised and pigeons were killed in His place. Only a perfect animal could be used, as a picture of Jesus, our perfect substitute.

Lest people think of themselves as superior and become prideful, there was one animal that also could have a substitute offered for it. That was a donkey (v. 13). It's not that donkeys were superior animals for they weren't. They were unclean, had no spiritual sense, self-centered, stubborn, lazy and mere beasts of burden. Donkeys and people are discussed in the same sentence, with the same substitute and the same consequence if the substitute is neglected. It's like saying people and donkeys are interchangeable, no real difference! God is showing them (and us) that we must see ourselves as an unclean donkey to be saved! Self-righteousness has no place in our lives. We can't do anything about our sin, only God can do that. Thus the donkey was a vivid object lesson to them, and to us.

**FOR ALL GENERATIONS ...** This setting apart the firstborn for God in a special way was something the Jews were to do for all generations. Mary and Joseph did this for Jesus. This was to be done as a teaching aid for generation to generation (Exodus 13:14-16). As they recognize they have been redeemed by an innocent blood sacrifice, their response is to be one of willingly committing themselves to live for God their whole lives.

We, too, are to be set apart, holy, because our substitute died for us. For us today baptism pictures that public commitment. It shows we are setting ourselves apart from life without Jesus in order to live for Him in His death and resurrection.

On my desk at home I have several notes from my children hanging up. They aren't very neat, most have misspellings, and the art work isn't great. On the open market they would bring nothing. But they are invaluable to me because they are love notes from my children. It's their love that makes them special, not their beauty or artistic talent represented in them. When God looks at us and our works, He doesn't see the sin marks and the mistakes, but He sees our love for Him. That's what He wants from us. That's why He created us. That's why the things we do for Him in His strength He hangs on His 'heavenly refrigerator,' awaiting the day we come to heaven when He can reward us for them. It's not our perfect lives He wants as much as our loving hearts. He wants us sanctified, set apart from all other loves to be His alone. Does He have your undivided love? Make sure He has it today and always.

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## 18. TO & AT THE RED SEA (Ex. 13:17 - 14:20)

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Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside down because he didn't feel worthy to be crucified like Jesus. A famous artist painted a picture of this and placed it in the cathedral at Cologne. When Napoleon ransacked the city, he stole this painting. When the artist found this out he created another from memory. Eventually the original was found and returned, and now both hang side by side. Experts view them in great detail and can find almost no difference between them.

God is doing the same thing in our lives. As the Artist, he is working to make us as much like the original, Jesus, as possible. This is often a painful process of stretching, carving, sanding and polishing. When we have committed ourselves to live for God (Exodus 13:1-16), though, He then begins this process (Exodus 13:17-22).

**GOD THE FATHER DIRECTS** When the Jews marched out of Egypt they could have gone directly to the Promised Land in a few days, which is what they assumed would happen. We assume that we will quickly grow in spiritual maturity. God knew that they weren't ready for the kind of warfare it would take to get by the Philistine forts. The quickest way is not always the best way. God took them instead in almost the opposite direction! He knew they'd need time away and apart, with Him alone, to receive, learn and apply His word. So God the Father directed them to head toward the wilderness (Exodus 13:17-18).

God knows what will be too hard for us, too, and sends us in safer directions. Sometimes they seem far and round about, but God knows best (Psalm 103:13-14; I Cor. 10:13). His purpose is to make us into the image of Jesus, not give us heaven on earth ASAP.

**GOD THE SON ACCOMPANIES** Moses took Joseph's bones (mummy) with them (Exodus 13:19). Joseph is one of the most clear pictures (types) of Jesus in the Bible: lived a holy life as a servant, hated by brethren, conspired against, rejected, falsely accused, suffered at the hands of Gentiles, becoming the savior/deliverer of the world, forgave his brethren and then exalted and seated on a throne with a Gentile bride. Today, too, God the Father directs but God the Son goes along with us. He accompanies us. He will never leave us or forsake us (Deut 3:16; 31:8; Josh 1:5; I Kings 8:57; Heb 13:5).

**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES** It was the custom of ancient leaders such as Darius and Alexander to lead their armies by having a small iron vessel with a wood fire in front. It would send up much smoke, and the army scattered for miles in all directions could see it and follow. At night highly flammable materials were burnt so the flames shot into the air. God, as the leader of Israel, sets up His own similar command station. He sends a cloud to lead during the day which was a pillar of light in the dark (Exodus 13:20-22). This is a picture of the Holy spirit. Both are freely given after salvation to guide God's people and light their journey. They are a protection (for the Jews the cloud gave them shade in the hot desert) and spokesman for God.

Thus God the Father directed them, God the Son accompanied them, and God the Holy Spirit guided them. With this the Jews were assured of victory, how could things go wrong? All

they had to do was follow and everything would be fine. Right? Right! Only God led them right into a great big trap (Exodus 14:1-2).

**THE TRAP** Please note that they were in God's perfect will, following His leading, when they entered the trap. The Sea was in front of them and large mountains on each side with an old fort (migdol) at the entrance. They walked right into it. God led them there. He was using them as bait for the Egyptian army. Can you identify with that? Do you ever feel like 'bait' left out to dry? Here the Jews thought their problems were over, they were on their way out of Egypt and would be in the Promised land in a few days, they had great riches given to them before they left, and God promised to feed, clothe and care for them. That's when God throws a pop quiz – unannounced. They are given an opportunity to practice what they learned at the Passover, to trust God for their deliverance.

Humanly speaking they are in a hopeless situation. Moses is the only one who realizes it right away, for he knew the area. Still he obeys God's leading and follows Him. God wants all of the people to trust Him and obey. This is part of His process in making them like Jesus.

When Egyptian spies report that the Jews are wandering lost and boxed in, it gives Pharaoh the idea to follow them and take their revenge out on them (Exodus 14:3-9).

**THE TRAPPED** However when the people realize they are trapped they panic (v. 10) and blame Moses for it all (v. 11-12). They question his motives in leading them, one of the tricks Satan still uses on people today. What is your first reaction when you realize you are boxed in, trapped with no way to go? Do you, like the Jews, look for someone to blame? "Whose fault is it?" "Who messed up?"

Moses, though, stands faithful to God. "Do not fear" he tells them (v. 13). Fear is the opposite of faith. We can't have both, one replaces the other. Fear is a feeling that has no patience. It must be satisfied now. Faith raises above the visible and present to the unseen and the future. When afraid, put your trust in God (Psalm 56:3).

**"STAND STILL"** Moses told the people to stop panicking and stand still (v. 13-14). Evidently they wanted to do something, anything. They wanted to get back out if they could, cross a mountain, do something! They had no patience to quietly trust God. Long-suffering is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, not something we can whip up on our own. The patience of Job is developed by facing trials and tribulations with faith in God as Job did. God uses all these things to form us more and more to the image of Jesus.

Abraham patiently waited for God to provide a son, Isaac, then was willing to sacrifice that son to God. He didn't understand what God was doing. He didn't see deliverance until his knife flashed over Isaac's heart. He patiently trusted God and God provided.

When tempted to panic and run around trying to do something, anything - "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (v. 13). But then there is a time to act.

**"GO AHEAD"** When they calm down and pray to God for help, He gives them directions – keep going ahead, no matter if the sea is there (v. 15-16). He even tells them to stop praying and act! There is a time to stop the panic and quietly trust, but then when God says to move ahead we must do so! Maybe some of us right now are still crying out to God when He has told us to move ahead. We see the obstacle, but God sees the deliverance. We must move ahead, even if we feel we are going to our destruction in the sea. There are no obstacles too great for God. Just move ahead, it's all under God's control (v. 17-20). There are no traps with God on your side!

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## 19. THROUGH THE RED SEA (Ex. 14:21 - 15:21)

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An article in the "Humor in Uniform" section of Readers Digest many years ago tells of an Air Force pilot on his last leave before going overseas. His wife reminded him to keep his trust in the Lord no matter how bad the situation became. Upon his safe return a year later his wife told him, "I told you that God wouldn't let you down." He grinned at her and said, "I know, but he sure left me dangling there a couple of times!"



I'm sure that could be your testimony, too. God has never let you down but you sure felt like He left you dangling a few times!

God does that to us. It increases our faith and trust in Him. He did that to the Jews when they left Egypt. Remember it was He Who led them out, and right into a trap. They were bait for the Egyptian army. What a situation to be in!

**THE TRAP OPENS** There they were at the Red (Reed) Sea with large mountains on either side and the Egyptian army blocking the way in. God told Moses to tell the Jews to go ahead, to keep moving in the direction He was taking them. (Exodus 14:15). Any other time they wouldn't even consider that. Sometimes the best reason for doing something is lack of an alternative! God removes our other options to force us to go in the direction He wants us to go. Would Peter have gotten out of the boat to walk on the water if it was a peaceful day and the boat was in no danger of sinking at any second?

Everyone's first thought when God said to go ahead was of the obstacle before them – as if God had forgotten about it and they had to point it out to Him! He has that all planned: the sea will open (v. 16) and the Egyptian army will be destroyed (v. 17-20). Moses obeyed God and, sure enough, the water opened for them to walk through (v. 21-22, 29).

We don't know how deep the water was, but ships sailed on it and all the Egyptians drowned in it so it was no shallow marsh, as some would have us believe! The opening must have been a few miles wide so that 3 million could cross, with their animals and possessions, in just one night.

The Red Sea had been the problem. Now it becomes the solution. God delights in turning our problems into our very means of deliverance. He loves splitting our difficulties and getting us through without even getting our feet wet. It must have been very impressive to those watching to see the sea part for them, like they could hardly believe it. But God did it. He was in control of everything.

His sovereignty created the sea and mountains, setting up the place to be trapped. His love brought them there and protected them. His justice brought judgment on the Egyptians. His redemption brought them through safely.

Note, too, that they went through on dry ground. What do you think the bottom of a freshly-drained sea would be like to walk on? With millions of people, animals, children and wagons crossing it had to be dry. God knew that and took care of it before they could even ask Him to. This is what lured the Egyptian chariots in, too, or they would have stayed back. God's little touches sometimes go unnoticed and unappreciated. Look for them in your life.

**"A WAY OUT"** God always provides a way out when we are trapped in temptation or testing. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way



out so that you can stand up under it (I Corinthians 10:13).” What makes this passage especially meaningful in our present context is that Paul draws it from the example of the Jews being trapped at the Red Sea (I Corinthians 10:1-12). Just like God provided them a way out of their impossible situation, so He provides a way out of ours as well. Traps become open doors. That which we dread most becomes a blessing when God touches it.

God truly cares for His own. But what about His enemies?

**THE TRAP CLOSES** God’s presence in the cloud had blocked the Egyptians from attacking the Jews while they crossed the Red Sea. Then the cloud lifted so they could see what was happening. When they saw the opening through the Red Sea they forgot all the plagues and judgments on Egypt and, in anger and bitterness, chased right after the Jews. How many times people rush to their own destruction when trying to destroy someone else? They charged through the opening after the Jews (Exodus 14:23).

Then the trappers became the trapped. God’s master plan unfolded at the last minute. After all, what good was it to have the Jews escape through the Red Sea if the Egyptians could follow them? That would be no deliverance. Immediately circumstances flip and reverse themselves. The Jews are now free and the Egyptians are trapped.

What seems to have happened was that a very, very rare occurrence in a dry climate happened at that moment. A thunderstorm struck (Psalm 77:16-20). The thunder and lightning panicked the horses and the water pouring down made the ground muddy. That bogged down the wheels of the chariots. God had this planned all along – but He didn’t tell the Jews ahead of time about it. Why not? They had to trust Him, that was all. It didn’t matter HOW He would deliver, the fact was that He said He WOULD do it. If He told them the enemy (Satan) would find out and fight it, the Jews wouldn’t believe and would try to ‘improve’ on God’s plan, as we so often do as well. God had promised to deliver them, not to tell them everything ahead of time. These are important lessons for us to learn and apply as well!

Anyway, while the Egyptian army was panicky and bogged down the waters came back upon them and drowned them all (v. 26-28). Just like the cross, the worst thing becomes the best thing when God uses it for His purpose (Romans 8:28).

An interesting touch of God’s is that the Egyptians washed up on the shore where the Jews were, not the other shore or sank to the bottom (Exodus 14:30). This showed them what could have happened to them. It also provided them with an army’s worth of armor and equipment. They’ll soon need this, and God again is providing ahead of time, before they even know to ask.

**RESPONSES** When the Jews realized all that happened they trusted in God (v. 31) and praised Him in song (Exodus 15). This war ballad, like the song of Deborah in Judges 5, became their emancipation song, their national anthem, their redemption song. How could they not praise God for such wonderful deliverance?

Do you stop and praise God for His deliverances in your life? When you feel like you’re hanging, just dangling on the edge of disaster, do you remember all the times He’s come through in the past and continue to trust Him now? And when the danger or tough time is past and He brings you safely through to the other side, do you, too, stop and praise Him? Why not sit down with Exodus 15 right now and read it as your prayer of praise to God, thinking of all the times and ways He has delivered you.

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## 20. AMALEK (Ex. 17:8-16)

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Often we think that becoming a Christian will mean the end to our problems and troubles. Actually it is often just the start, for when we put Christ first and serve in His army we are declaring war against Satan, the world and the flesh. These do not give up easily and push back very hard. Don't be surprised at the battles that come AFTER salvation, for that is when the warfare starts. That's what God had to teach His people, the Jews, after their deliverance through the Red Sea.

**MARAH, MANNA & MERRIBAH** After leaving the Red Sea area the Jews needed to apply what they learned about trusting God. When they ran out of water God sweetened the waters at Marah so they could drink. He fed them with manna from heaven. He provided water from the rock at Merribah. He was showing in little, daily ways that He could and would care for them.

**THE ATTACK OF AMALEK** The Amalekites were descendants of Esau, the man of the flesh with no spiritual concern (Heb. 12:16-17). The nation he started was like him: not fearing God (Deut 27:17-18). It was the most evil nation of its day (Num 24:24). They followed the Jews. Moses probably thought that as they followed God they would lose the Amalekites, but you can't run from the flesh! We can't escape its attacks.

Amalek hits when least expected (Exodus 17:8). The Jews have been victorious over the Egypt (a picture of the world) and Pharaoh (a picture of Satan). God was feeding and protecting them. They thought their difficulties were over. Often, though, it's not until we get some victory over the influence of the world on us and Satan's attacks against us that we are able to start struggling with our flesh.

Notice, too, that Amalek attacks at the weakest point. They attacked the Jews at the rear (Deut. 25:17-18) where the weak stragglers are. The flesh hits us at our weak spot, not at our strength. We are all strong in some areas and weak in others. Guess where we get tempted most?

**THE ATTACK OF THE FLESH** Just what are we talking about when we refer to the 'flesh'? It is also referred to in the Bible as the 'old man,' 'carnal believer,' sin which indwells me,' 'evil present in me' and 'law of sin in the members of my body.' Romans 7:15 - 8:4 clearly show the conflict of the new nature with our 'flesh.' Thus the 'flesh' is that in us which makes sin come more naturally than holiness, it is our natural tendency to sin. Fear comes easier than faith, revenge than forgiveness, greed than contentment and pride than humility. 'Flesh' is our sin nature, which entered when Adam and Eve sinned and which has passed on to ALL of us (I John 1:8-10).

Sometimes the word 'flesh' is translated 'carnal' (I Corinthians 3:1-4). Both literally mean 'meat.' Chili con carni is chili and meat. While there is nothing innately sinful with our flesh, our 'meat,' it is where our sin nature dwells. The thing within is called by the name of its container (see also Galatians 5:16-17).

**VICTORY OVER AMALEK/THE FLESH** The only way to have victory is by warfare. The Jews had to stop and fight (Exodus 17:9). Before salvation/deliverance God did their fighting for them.

They weren't able to fight. But now, with the new nature (Holy Spirit), being fed by God's water and manna, and covered with the armor God provided them from the dead Egyptians (Ephesians 5 lists the armor God provides for us) they are able and even required to fight. They can't sit back and expect God to make life perfect. God the Father is guiding them, God the Son is present with them (bones of Joseph) and God the Spirit (cloud) is leading and protecting them. Still, they must stand and fight against Amalek/the flesh. They can't run from it and they can't compromise and give in to it. "Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war."

The solution to the Amalek attack was two-fold. First, the **fought behind Joshua**, who is a picture/type of Jesus. This is the first mention of Joshua in the bible. He is about 45 years of age, capable, dependable and the tribal chieftain of Ephraim. "Joshua" in Hebrew means the same thing as "Jesus" in Greek - "YHWH is Savior." "Onward Christian Soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before." The Jews had to fight. They couldn't just sit around and wait for God to change it all. But fighting alone wouldn't bring victory.

At the same time as the fighting was going on **Moses was praying** (Exodus 17:9). He had to stand with his arms raised, holding over his head the staff which God has used to perform many miracles. One of the main ways Jews prayed was with their hands lifted to heaven. And by holding the staff Moses was showing faith in God's provision. Salvation is free, we just receive it. However victory in our Christian walk takes warfare: fighting and praying together.

In fact, when Moses' hands were raised the Jews were winning but when he put them down as they got tired and heavy, the Jews started losing (Exodus 17:10-11). This pictured him not praying, and when prayers ceased so did victory. To have victory over the flesh one must fight and pray. We fight behind Jesus, following His leadership and depending on His strength. We don't give in but fight. At the same time we must pray in faith. Prayer is not preliminary to the battle, prayer IS the battle. To win the battle over the flesh we must win the battle over the flesh. Victory means both fighting and praying. We usually are good at one and poor at the other. We strive to the best of our ability but fail because we don't have the prayer cover we need. Or we pray hard and long, but don't fight with all our might and so we also lose.

**HELP!** "But its impossible to keep praying that hard all the time we are fighting," you might think. True. Moses, too, grew weary. He needed the help of his friends, Hur and Aaron, one on either side, to help hold his arms up (Exodus 17:12). We need others to hold us up in prayer as well when we are having battles. Unfortunately our fear or pride or something keep us from asking for that much-needed help. We **MUST** have those we can turn to for help. Also, we must be alert to those around us, especially in our own family, who are going through similar battles. We must intercede for them, holding them up in prayer before the Lord. Then victory will come.

**VICTORY!** With this winning combination the Jews defeated Amalek (Exodus 17:13). It was a clear, total victory. Moses was told to make a record of it for all to remember (Exodus 17:14-15) because that would help their faith the next time they battled Amalek. Battling the flesh isn't a one time thing. It is a continual warfare, a lifelong battle.

It was the Amalekite giants that kept the Jews from the Promised Land (Numbers 14). It was the Amalekites who attacked the Jews at Kadesh (Numbers 31) and who oppressed the Jews until God used Gideon to defeat them. Saul fought them but compromised instead of destroying them all. Later he was defeated by them and killed by an Amalekite. Hamaan, in Esther, almost succeed in having all the Jews killed. He was an Amalekite. Gradually the Amalekites became part of the Arab nations around them, and as such still oppose the Jews to this very day. When Jesus returns they will be completely destroyed. It won't be until we die or Jesus returns that we will have final victory, but until then we must fight and pray.

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## 21. MANNA (Ex. 16:1-13)

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There is hardly a more exciting man in the whole Old Testament. Man of God and man of sin. God used him to perform some of the most outstanding miracles in the Bible. God also used him to organize and establish the nation of Israel.

