**Scripture Reading: Exodus 1:1-13**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 1:12**

***The Story Continues***

The first words of Exodus take us back to what we read in the closing chapters of Genesis where Jacob and his family were warmly received in Egypt and given the “best of the land” (Goshen) wherein to dwell (Genesis 47:6). However, things apparently turned sour about 30 years after they arrived in Egypt. We base that conclusion by comparing Exodus 12:40, where we are told that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt “four hundred and thirty years” and Acts 7:6, where we are told that they were oppressed for “four hundred years.” Thus, the first 30 years in Egypt went well and the last 400 were filled with suffering and anguish. After reminding us of the names of those who first entered Egypt, verse seven tells us that the Israelites “were fruitful and increased abundantly,” and that they “multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty and the land was filled with them.” During the time that God was leading Jacob and his family to go to Egypt, God had spoken to that great patriarch and said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation *there*” (Genesis 46:8). And that is exactly what God did! Even though their oppressors treated them cruelly, God kept His promise! Our focus verse states that, “…the more they (their oppressors) afflicted them (the Israelites), the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel.”

**Pray**e**r Emphasis:**

* **Remember** that God always keeps His promises! **Look** for promises as you read through Exodus and put a “P” in the margin of your Bible by each one that you find. When you read where God fulfilled a promise, put a “PK” (Promise Kept) in the margin of that verse. **Believe** that we still serve a God that can bless us in even what may seem to be the worst imaginable situations!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 1:14-22**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 1:15 & 16**

 ***An Evil Plan Thwarted***

At first blush, it may appear that there were only two midwives to serve all of the people of Israel. However, a closer look at verse 19 reveals that they referenced other “midwives” that obviously worked under the supervision of these two leaders. The names of these two “Head Midwives” are mentioned only this one time in all of Scripture, but what a difference their actions made in the lives of every person who has ever lived since their days! Because the midwives “feared God” they “did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them” (verse 17). These two brave women held to a strong conviction that has been passed down through many generations of “God Followers” when they chose to “Obey God rather than men!” (See Acts 5:29.) Because the midwives refused to participate in his evil plan to minimize the growth of the Israelites, Pharaoh took the matter to the people and left the decision in their hands. He commanded that the general population do what the midwives had refused to do by telling them to kill every male child that was born to the Hebrews. However, where God’s law began, Pharaoh’s law ended! The Hebrews chose to obey God while living in an environment that had no respect for His laws. We face this same calling today!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Learn** two things from these midwives: **Fear God** and **value life**! **Pray** for our Children’s Ministry today and for a child within our church family. **Communicate** appreciation to a dedicated nursery worker today and consider becoming a volunteer in this very important ministry.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 2:1-10**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 2:10**

***Meet Moses!***

Few of us have been spared from our baby photos! When we think of Moses, we may think of the many wonderful things that this great man did for God. However, God begins the story of this great leader by showing us his baby picture and the first mention of this great leader’s name in the Bible is associated with a most desperate situation! After saving her soon to be adopted son from the waters of the river, Pharaoh’s daughter chose to name him “Moses,” which means, “drawn out.” Every time that this Hebrew word is found in the Bible it is translated “Moses.” The Hebrew word for “Moses” comes from the Hebrew word that is translated “drew” in our focus verse. Even though Moses’ mother could not see the whole picture, she acted on what she could see and did everything within her power to save her precious child. While she worked feverishly to prepare the “ark” for her child, God worked within the heart and mind of the great Pharaoh’s daughter and placed her right where she needed to be at the precise time that she needed to be there. God would later use a fully grown Moses to “draw” His people out of Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Do** everything within your power to see that your children are saved and taught to be true servants of the Lord and then **trust** God to orchestrate the times and events in their lives so that He can lead them to become all that He has imagined for them. **Pray specifically** for the spiritual success of some child today!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 2:11-25**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 2:11**

***Time Flies!***

Although it may appear as only a tiny space in your Bible, Exodus 2:10 and 2:11 are actually separated by 40 years! Acts 7:23 clearly states that Moses was “forty years old” when he came to the “days” that are mentioned in Exodus 2:11! After trying to free God’s people from the bondage of the Egyptians by his own power, Moses found himself forced to flee from his adopted homeland and family and hide out in Midian. Verse 23 in today’s reading mentions a “process of time.” By comparing Scripture to Scripture, we learn that the amount of time that was “processed” here was another 40 years that passed from the conclusion of verse 11 to the conclusion of verse 15! Exodus 7:7 tells us that Moses was 80 years old when he returned to Egypt to stand before Pharaoh and deliver God’s message to him and Deuteronomy 31:2 clearly states that Moses was 120 years old at the conclusion of his 40 year walk through the wilderness as he led God’s people toward the Promised Land. God chose to tell us the story of Moses in 40 year segments with the greatest amount of information covering the final 40 years of his life! Altogether, Exodus covers a period of about 430 years. However, from 2:1 on, a period of only 120 years is covered with a final, 40-year period beginning at 3:1 through the end of the book. So, beginning at tomorrow’s assigned verses, we now have 36 days to cover 40 years!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Realize** that there is no mention of retirement for those who choose to be employed in the business of serving God. From this point forward, we will see that Moses remained busy in God’s service until the day he died. Make time to **thank** at least one of your Christian “seniors” today! A kind word of appreciation in a card or call could make all the difference in the world to someone.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:1-12**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 3:1**

***Living in the “Now”***

Almost every translation of the Bible begins our focus verse with the word “now.” We will find that no time is more important than the times we are in right now because it is what we choose to do “now” for God that will set the tone for the remainder of our lives and, perhaps, bring about great change in the lives of others who share our “now” with us today as well as many who will experience their personal “now” in generations to come! The Hebrew word from which we get this “now” is first found in Genesis 1:2-3 where we are told that “the earth *was* without form” and covered in “darkness” before God spoke and said, “Let there be light! And there was light!” Just as it “was” then, so it is “now” for Moses. God is about to speak some light into what must have seemed like some very dark years! One can only imagine how bright that light from the burning bush must have appeared to Moses as he saw it there in the desert land of Midian. But, just as it was in Genesis 1:2, the light that Moses is now seeing is accompanied with the spoken word of God! Of all the things that Moses must have remembered from this great “burning bush” experience, one of the greatest must have been the promise that is found in verse 12: “I will *certainly* be with you!” And God certainly made His presence known to Moses, and others, from that day forward!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Compare** God’s “promise of presence” to Moses to the one that He made in His final words to the church in Matthew 28:20! We can live in our personal “now” knowing that we serve the same God that Moses served and that He is just as present with us “now” as He was with Moses then.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:13-22**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 3:20 & 21**

***Two “I Wills” from the Great “I Am”***

Exodus 3:14 is the first time that God ever referred to Himself as the “I Am.” In this very important meeting with Moses, God made two great “I will” promises to him. The first of these promises was about *power*. God said, “I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My *wonders*.” The first time that the word translated “wonders” here was used in the Bible was in Genesis 18:14 where God asked Abraham if anything was “too hard” for Him to do. The word is not used again until we come to this verse in Exodus 3. God was telling Moses that when he obeyed the divine command to “go” in verse 16, then He supported his obedient servant with a supply of His supernatural power to convince them that he had truly met with God. I am convinced that God still makes that promise to those who will obey His command to “go” today. The second “I will” promise found in our focus verses was about *provision*. God said to Moses, “I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, *when* (not *if*) you go, that you shall not go empty handed.” We need to be careful to note that the provision was promised for “when” they actually left Egypt. Many people make the mistake of waiting until they have the provision in hand before they ever take one step with their feet. God’s people were to follow God’s plan with full expectation that everything that they needed for their journey would be provided.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Trust** God to do the impossible but make every effort to do all that is possible in the meantime. **Be obedient** to God’s commands and **watch** Him do “wonders” in your own life and ministry.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 4:1-17**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 4:1**

***The First “They Say”***

Today’s verses contain the first “they say” recorded in the Scriptures. How amazing it was to see that Moses, even after receiving the great and powerful promises of God that we read about yesterday, still worried about what “they say.” But there is something different in today’s story. In today’s story the “they” that “say” are identified. However, it takes a careful look to see who all is included in the “they.” In 3:15 we see that the “they” included the elders of the children of Israel and in 3:18 we see that the “they” also included the king of Egypt. So the “they say” that had Moses so concerned was something that he expected from Pharaoh and God’s own people! We would do well to expect the same if we are going to obey God’s commands and claim His promises. God told His doubt-filled servant that He would provide all of the evidence needed to convince everyone concerned that Moses had actually met with Him and that he was obeying the commands of God. That evidence was to be seen in the “wonders” that are described in verses 2-9. Notice that the “they say” crowd became a “they may” crowd in 4:5!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to not obey God because you are worried about what “they say.” Remind yourself of the midwives that we read about on day 2 and consider where *we* might be right now if *they* had listened to what “they say.”

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 4:18-31**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 4:30 & 31**

 ***Two Very Important Verses***

The last part of today’s reading finds Moses and Aaron meeting at the “mountain of God” (verse 27) and then setting out to speak to the elders of the children of Israel (verse 29). When they met with Israel’s leaders, “Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken” and he “did the signs in the sight of the people” (verse 30). I was reminded of Luke’s opening words in the Book of Acts when he mentioned “all that Jesus began both to *do* and *teach*” (Acts 1:1). It appears that God did not send Jesus to this world with some “new” strategy or methodology. Jesus came doing exactly what Moses and Aaron were sent to do. They were to “teach” *all* that God had spoken to Moses and “do” the signs provided them before the people. When they did God’s *work* in God’s *way,* “the people believed…when they heard” (verse 31). Just like Moses before us, we are often guilty of thinking that people will not believe us when we try to speak to them about God. The truth is that people *cannot* believe something that they *have not* heard. This verse reminded me of another story in the New Testament. Remember when the woman at the well met Jesus and then returned to her city and said, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ? *Then* they went out of the city and came to Him” (John 4:29-30). When did they come to Christ? They came to meet Him only after this woman went and told them what He had done for her! What was true for Moses and the woman at the well is still true today. If we will teach the things that we know and do the things that we should do, we will have little trouble in convincing people that God is working among us!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Bring** Jesus up in a conversation today. **Tell** someone about what He has done for you and about what you know that He desires to do for them. When we are intentional in our walk and our words, our message will be more readily received.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 5:1-21**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 5:2 & 9**

***Pharaoh’s Greatest Problems***

After meeting with the elders of Israel, Moses and Aaron went and relayed God’s message to Pharaoh. Suffice it to say that the meeting did not go well. However, God had already told Moses that Pharaoh would not immediately let the people of Israel leave Egypt. The next several chapters will describe some serious problems that came into the lives of Pharaoh and his people, but his two greatest problems already existed before Moses and Aaron ever walked through his door. His first great problem was described in the last part of verse 2 when he said, “I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.” The greatest problem that anyone could ever have would be to live without knowing the Lord. However, this problem that plagued Pharaoh is the greatest problem that plagues the people of the world today. Pharaoh’s second great problem was that he had no appreciation for God’s Word. In verse nine he referred to God’s message as “false words.” The word that is translated “false” in verse nine is translated “lie” or “lying” twice as many times as it is translated in any other way. Pharaoh did not know God and he did not know God’s Word. Those two problems led to his ultimate downfall and caused great sorrow and grief for him, his family, and his people.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Pray** for our country’s leadership whether you voted for them or not. **Pray** for them whether you like them or not. **Pray** for them because you love God and God has commanded for you to pray for all that are in authority in our land. **Refuse** to criticize anyone for whom you have not prayed.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 5:22-6:13**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 6:1**

***A Bold Statement***

Today’s reading finds Moses back before God feeling much like a failure because it seemed that his meeting with Egypt’s leader had done nothing but makes things worse for the Israelites. God reassured Moses by saying that, after He was finished with Pharaoh, he would literally “drive” Israel out of his land. When we reach chapter 12 we will see that Pharaoh was in such a hurry to get Israel out of Egypt that they did not even have time to pack the necessary provisions for their trip! The first time that the word from which we get the idea of Pharaoh “driving” Israel out is found in the Bible is when God “drove “ Adam and Eve from the garden (Genesis 3:24). God is using this word to let Moses know that there was coming a day when Moses and Israel would have no choice but to leave Egypt because Pharaoh was going to soon come to the place where he did not want them there another day! God spoke to Moses with absolute certainty because God knew that “There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the LORD” (Proverbs 21:30). Read the focus verse again and you will see that there are no “ifs,” “perhapses,” or “maybes” included in God’s statement.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Rest assured** God’s Word is always correct and that God is always in control of the situation!
**Believe** that God is wise enough to know what we need and strong enough to do all that we need Him to do!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 6:14-27**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 6:20**

***Amram and Jochebed***

Although we read earlier about the heroic efforts of Moses’ parents, especially his mother, to save him from the evil mandate of Pharaoh, this genealogy is the first time that their names are ever mentioned in the Bible. Amram will be mentioned by name another 11 times in the Old Testament. Jochebed is mentioned by name only here and once more in Numbers 26. Every mention of these highly successful parents is limited to a brief blurb included in a genealogy. The New Testament includes part of their story in Acts 7 and in the great faith chapter, Hebrews 11, but only refers to them as “his parents” in the section on Moses. However, two key statements are made about these parenting partners in Hebrews 11:23 that should be mentioned here. First, “they saw that he was a beautiful child.” The word that is translated “beautiful” in that verse is only used one other time in the New Testament (Acts 7:20) and that one other time is also in reference to the appearance of the child Moses. This Greek word comes from the name of a city that was highly regarded for its beauty. You might say that these parents had vision enough to see that their son could be a “city set on a hill” and used greatly for God’s Kingdom purposes. Second, “They were not afraid of the king’s command.” The word translated “afraid” in that verse is the word from which we get our English word phobia. It is a word that meant “to be put to flight” or “to be scared away.” It is one thing to be “scared,” but another thing to be “scared away.”

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Be brave** as a parent and fight for what is in the best spiritual interest of your children. **Pray** with them and **spend time** with them. **Share** stories of your family and faith with them at every opportunity. Let them know that you will always be there for them.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 6:28-7:12**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 7:1**

 ***Aaron the Prophet***

In today’s focus verse, Aaron is referred to as a prophet. This is the first time that this word is used in Exodus and only the second time that it used in the Bible. It was used just once in Genesis 20:7 in reference to Abraham and it is not used again until now. This word is the same word that was used to describe men like Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. By comparing today’s verse with what we read earlier in 4:15-16, we find a biblical explanation of exactly what a prophet is and what a prophet is called to do. A prophet is a “spokesman” (4:16). God was, through Moses, to “put the words in his mouth” (4:15) and he was to speak *only* what God told him to say. However, there is a second responsibility born by the prophet. Not only was he to speak only what God told him to say, he was to be sure to speak *all* of what God told him to say. Verse two clearly reveals that it was the responsibility of Moses and Aaron to “speak *all* that I command you.” There is at least one more divine responsibility assigned to the prophet in this story. He is to speak *only* what God tells him to say, *all* of what God tells him to say, and he is to speak *plainly* what God tells him to say no matter how popular or unpopular those words may be to his hearers. God told Moses that, “Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land!”

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Pray** for those who dedicate their lives to the preaching and teaching of God’s Word. **Pray** for our Sunday School teachers and small group leaders and let them know when they are a blessing to you. **Seek** personal opportunities to share God’s Word with others as often as possible.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 7:13-25**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 7:13**

 ***Pharaoh’s Hardened Heart***

There have been many theological thoughts and theories about Pharaoh and his hardened heart. Some imply that Pharaoh, of his own will, stubbornly hardened his heart against God and the messages that He sent to him through Moses and Aaron. It is hard to imagine anyone doing so after seeing the miracles mentioned in yesterday’s verses performed in his presence. Most scholars agree that it was God that hardened the heart of Egypt’s ruler. If we allow the Scripture to make the determination, then it is pretty clear that this second line of reasoning is more consistent with what the Bible states. A very important phrase is found in the last part of today’s focus verse. There it states that Pharaoh’s heart grew hard “as the LORD had said.” This phrase refers back to 4:21 and 7:3. In both of those verses God clearly said, “*I* will harden his (Pharaoh’s) heart.” So, if Pharaoh’s heart was hardened “as the LORD had said” then it was hardened by God Himself! A careful reading of God’s Word reveals that this matter of God hardening the hearts of some is not an isolated case. Psalm 105:23-25 clearly teaches that while Israel was in Egypt, “He (God) turned their heart to hate His people.” The word that is translated “turned” in that psalm is also found in verse 17 of today’s reading where we saw that the waters of the river were “turned to blood.” You can read Deuteronomy 2:30 and see that God “hardened” the spirit and heart of Sihon, king of Heshbon who refused to allow Israel to pass through his land on their way to the Promised Land.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** the temptation to explain away the things of God that are not easily explained or understood. **Realize** that our inability to understand all that God does, or why He does it, does not mean that we cannot, by faith, accept it as truth.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 8:1-12**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 8:2**

 ***Frogs!***

We briefly mentioned the first of the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt in yesterday’s devotional. As 7:17 states, the first plague against Egypt was against the Nile River. Today’s Scripture deals with the plague of the frogs. The 10 plagues that God brought against the Egyptians were messages sent to convince pharaoh and his people that the God of Israel was greater than all of their deities combined. When Moses and Aaron visited with Pharaoh after the waters of the Nile were turned to blood, they told him that “if” he still refused to let God’s people go, God would, “smite” their “whole territory with frogs.” The Bible says that the frogs “covered the land of Egypt” (verse 6). Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and agreed to allow the people to go if they would take the frogs away. Moses agreed to ask God to remove the frogs. But rather than having the frogs simply leave, God caused them to die where they were. The people were forced to gather the frogs out of their homes and other areas and pile them in heaps. The entire land smelled of death and decay. Look back at 7: 21 and notice that the first plague caused the *waters* to stink. In this plague, it is the *land* (8: 14) that now stinks. The frogs were found in the courtyards of the rich and powerful as well as in the cottages of the common people. To make matters worse, the Egyptians were known for their cleanliness, sometimes bathing several times each day. Imagine what having those rotting, dead frogs everywhere, even in their cooking utensils and ovens, did to the morale of these people.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Realize** that God is always at work to gain the attention of all of those for whom Christ died. **Be** a willing witness for Christ whenever God provides the opportunity to speak for Him. Like Moses and Aaron, **pray** for those who are suffering and seek God’s favor on their behalf.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 8:13-19**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 8:16**

***Lice!***

This third miraculous plague must have been quite disturbing to the people of Egypt. A people who believed that “cleanliness was next to godliness” were now inflicted with disease carrying lice! The Bible story indicates that God caused every particle of dust in Egypt to become bugs! Some translations identify these creatures as “lice” while others prefer to call them “gnats.” Exactly what kind of insects they were is not of importance. The story is not about the *lice*, but about the *Lord*! It is not about *gnats*, but about *God*! This plague was different than the two that had come before in the sense that Pharaoh’s magicians were not able to produce a copy of this miracle through their magic. With the frogs, God had miraculously *multiplied* something that was already in existence in Egypt. In this plague, we find that God miraculously *created* the insects that plagued the people. The inability of the magicians to copy this miracle proves that God alone has the ability to *create*. This is the first of the plagues that came without warning. Pharaoh was not offered an opportunity to comply with God’s commands prior to the unleashing of this great plague. Like the first two plagues, this curse was a blow against an Egyptian deity who represented their worship of the earth. Pharaoh’s magicians were convinced that this was no trick being played on them by Moses and Aaron, but something that was being done by the very “finger” of God! Again, we are told that Pharaoh’s heart “grew hard…just as the LORD had said.”

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Ask** God to show you something about Him on every page and in every paragraph that you read from the Bible. **Look** for something that you can take with you and meditate on all day long. **Remind** someone that you see today that they are important to God.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 8:20-32**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 8:22**

 ***Flies!***

Unlike the plague just before this one, the translators all seem to agree on the type of bug that is used by God in this fourth plague. As it was with the first two plagues, this is a plague of which Pharaoh was forewarned by Moses. When the Egyptian leader still refused to comply with God’s demands, God sent swarms of flies to fill and contaminate the homes of the people. It is possible that these “flies” could have been several different kinds of biting insects. Psalm 78:45 states that these flies “devoured them.” Obviously, these “flies” were a source of pain and distress to the Egyptian people. While this *plague* was troubling Pharaoh’s people, what might have troubled them more was the *protection* that God provided for His people. Our focus verse reveals that the Israelites remained untouched from this horrible curse. When it seemed that Pharaoh had finally had a change of heart, Moses prayed and God caused the swarms of flies to withdraw. We should note that these “flies” appeared miraculously and that their disappearance was just as much of a miracle as their appearance. Again, this was a judgment upon the false gods of Egypt. Because some kinds of flies were considered to be symbols of reproductive powers, images of them were often worshipped.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Strive** to be as patient with people as God was with the people of Egypt – and as He has been with us. **Seek** creative ways to use the circumstances in life to **witness** to the blessings that we receive at the hand of our gracious God.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 9:1-20**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 9:6, 10 & 18**

 ***Three More Plagues***

Since it has been estimated that there was probably one plague per month, we realize that it has now been about five months since the first plague was pronounced upon Egypt and it seems that each plague has been more severe than the one before it. The fifth plague was another announced plague that brought a pestilence against the livestock of the Egyptians. God even gave Pharaoh a “set time” that this plague would come (verse 5) which is an indication that Pharaoh was given an opportunity to repent. However, he refused to do so and all of the livestock of the Egyptians that were out in their fields died while not one of the animals of the Israelites was killed (verse 7). The sixth plague was the first plague that came against the people in regard to their personal health. This is the second plague that came unannounced and it caused such painful, festering boils and sores upon the people that the magicians could not even stand and meet with Moses (verse 11). The seventh plague was another announced plague that brought a terrible hail storm. God had Moses warn Pharaoh to have his people gather their livestock from the fields and get them to shelter (verse 19). It is interesting to note that some of the Egyptians that served Pharaoh now “feared the Word of the LORD,” brought their livestock from the fields, and put them under shelter.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for some of the things that He has spared you from today by thanking Him for some of the things that have *not* happened in your life! **Pray** for someone you know who is suffering or who is angry or bitter with God.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 9:21-35**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 9:21**

 ***“He That Believes Not…”***

Jesus said, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). Just as there were some who believed and some who didn’t when the Lord Jesus came personally to this earth with his message of love and forgiveness, there were some who believed and some who refused to believe God and His Word during the days that we are reading about in Exodus. Yesterday we saw that some of the Egyptians were now ready to believe or “regard the Word of the LORD” while today we are reminded that there were some, in spite of all that they had seen and experienced, who still refused to believe. Just as Jesus would later warn people, those who did not believe were condemned because of their unbelief. Every person in Egypt had been afforded the opportunity to bring their livestock to safety and only those who believed the warning enough to respond appropriately were spared from the horrible eighth plague of hail and fire mingled together. This storm was so powerful that it was worse than any that Egypt has ever experienced (verse 24) and it destroyed all of the plant life and trees (verse 25). Meanwhile, there was not hail in the land of Goshen where the children of Israel resided.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* Again, take some time to **thank God** for the many things from which you and your family have been spared in life. It is easy to thank God for all of the good that He does for us while forgetting to thank Him for all He protects and spares us from.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 10:1-20**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 10:4 & 5**

***Locusts!***

Moses and Aaron are once again sent to Pharaoh. And, even though God told them that the hearts of Pharaoh and his servants would be hardened, they went without hesitation. We have to sense that there is a message to us in these verses – that being that we should never give up on people and that we should continue to deliver God’s message no matter the previous results or responses. Like so many of the earlier plagues, this eighth plague comes with a forewarning and an opportunity for Pharaoh to come into compliance with God. The promised locusts would “eat the residue of what was left” after the hail and “every tree” that was not destroyed in that terrible storm (verse 5) After meeting with some of his officers, it seemed as if Pharaoh was ready to strike a deal, but God was not ready to barter or compromise. God said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come…and eat every herb of the land – all that the hail has left” (verse 12). By morning, Egypt was covered with locusts! Like the frogs had done earlier, the locusts were even going to invade the homes of the Egyptians. Shortly after the arrival of these locusts there was “nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt” (verse 15). One can only imagine Egypt’s air quality due to the bodies of dead animals and people and the lack of oxygen-producing plant life! From the words spoken by Pharaoh, it might have appeared to Moses and Aaron that he was ready to do business with God. But God knew his heart and refused to accept anything but genuine, heartfelt repentance.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Pray** for someone you know who lives without Christ today. **Imagine** how difficult it would be to deal with all that life brings without the hope that comes from knowing God. **Reach out** to someone today and be a friend in a time of need.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 10:21-29**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 10:21**

 ***Darkness!***

As you read about this 9th plague, please do so from the perspective of one who lived in Egypt, where the sun was worshipped as a symbol of one of their greatest and most powerful gods. Now imagine these people – people who worshipped the sun god, Ra - engulfed in total darkness by the spoken word of the LORD God of Israel. Two things are noted about this darkness. First, note its *density*. Verse 21 describes this darkness as one that could be *felt*. This plague came with no warning. Moses obediently stretched forth his hand toward heaven and there was a *thick* darkness. This darkness was so black that it prevented any visibility at all and rendered these cursed people helpless and homebound (v. 23). Second, we note its *duration*. Verse 22 reveals that this darkness over Egypt lasted for *three days*. And what made this plague even more insufferable? While this darkness engulfed them, *all* of the children of Israel had light in their homes! Once again Pharaoh seemed ready to do business with God, but the way that he wanted to do business with Moses left some questions about his sincerity. He called for Moses and all but ordered him and his people out of his land, but he demanded that all of the livestock be left in Egypt. When that “deal” was unacceptable to God, Pharaoh ordered Moses to leave and never return again.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for the blessing of light! There are so many people living in darkness, and yet, as God’s children, we are blessed with the Light of the World! **Praise** God for His goodness and blessings! **Share** a little of God’s light with someone that you meet today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 11:1-10**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 11:1**

***“One More Plague”***

The LORD God told Moses that He would bring only one more plague against Egypt, after which, Pharaoh will not only *let* Israel go, but he would literally *drive* them out of his land. God revealed His plan to Moses. At midnight, God would go through the land of Egypt and all the firstborn in Egypt would die (verses 4-5). It is important to note that God did not say that all of the firstborn *of* Egypt, but that all of the firstborn *in* Egypt would die. As it had been with the third, sixth, and ninth plagues, this tenth and final plague would come without warning. Thus far, Egypt has experienced disease, desolation, and darkness. Now death was to come to their homes and rob them of their firstborn, whether of man or beast. God was clear to say that this plague, like others before, would honor no social or economic barriers and that the son of Pharaoh would perish just as the sons of his most humble servants. This tragic loss that was to be suffered in this tenth and final plague would cause “a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again” (verse 6). The miracle of the slaying of Egypt’s firstborn is overshadowed by the miracle of the sparing of Israel’s firstborn. God stated that He was going to “make a difference” between the firstborn of Egypt and the firstborn of Israel (verse 7). Tomorrow’s reading will help us to understand exactly what would make that difference for Israel.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Mention** the name of Jesus in conversation again today – and then **strive** to do so every day. Like the pardoned man in our focus verse, acknowledge it as a “fault” (KJV) or “shortcoming” (NIV) when you fail to do so.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 12:1-20**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 12:11**

 ***The First “Fast Food”***

Exodus 11:7 stated that the LORD would “make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.” Chapter 12 helps us to understand exactly how that difference was to be established. Each man was to select a lamb for him and his family and slay it at a specified time. This was to be such an important time in the life of God’s people that it was to become the mark of a new year and life for them. Notice that verse two does not refer to the month in which these events took place as the first month of their year, but said that “it *shall* be the beginning of months for you.” After each man killed his lamb, he was to take some of the blood from that lamb and apply it on the doorpost and the lintel of his house. These bloody marks would make the form of a cross at the entrance of his home. When the death angel observed the blood applied to the door of a home, he would skip over, or pass over, that home and move on in his mission of death. If you recall, God told Moses that, after the tenth plague was sent against Egypt, Pharaoh would be so eager for Israel to get out of his country that he would literally run them out of town (11:1). Because of that, God told Moses to have the people observe their Passover meal fully dressed and ready to travel! They were to come to the table with their belts on, their shoes on the feet and their walking sticks in their hands. They were to eat their Passover lamb “in haste” because Pharaoh was going to be fully ready for them to leave!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for the difference that the blood of God’s sacrificial Lamb, Jesus, has made in your life. **Allow** God’s forgiveness to let you live every day like the first day of a brand new life in Christ.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 12:21-34**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 12:30**

***Three Days***

When we compare today’s Scripture with 10:23, we see that the Egyptians had been living in a very dense darkness for three days and nights. We can only imagine the anxiety and fear that these nine plagues brought to their lives. For almost nine months now they have experienced one great calamity after another with no relief in sight. As hard as it might have been for them to imagine, things would only get worse! The tenth plague struck their firstborns, the joy and hope of their families. The same people that had once plotted to kill the children of the Hebrew people were now seeing their own firstborn children die. Whether prince or peasant, no Egyptian was exempt from this dreadful judgment. The death angel passed through every door that was not protected by a blood barrier. Not one home of the Egyptians escaped death’s call. It is difficult to imagine the sound of Egypt’s sorrow and the sobs of agony that could be heard throughout all the land. The word translated “great cry” in today’s focus verse is the same word used to describe the earlier “cry” of Esau “exceedingly great and bitter” (Genesis 27:34). I do not think it mere coincidence that this darkness lasted for three days while God’s people experienced light in their homes at that same time (10:23). It was exactly three days after the Lord’s disciples walked in the darkness that only death can bring that *their* sorrow was turned to joy!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Praise** God for the hope and peace that comes with knowing Christ. **Learn** this important lesson from the story of Pharaoh: No one, no matter how rich or powerful, can deal with God on their own terms! **Surrender** your all to God’s will and enjoy the light!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 12:35-51**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 12:41**

 ***“The Armies of the LORD”***

It is not easy to determine how many people participated in the exodus from Egypt. There were 600,000 men alone, not counting the women and children (verse 37). We are also told that there was a “mixed multitude” (verse 38) that left Egypt with Israel. Most Bible scholars suggest that the number of people who left Egypt on this night was between two and three million. This great throng of people was accompanied by their flocks and herds of livestock. After 430 years in bondage, they were finally free to march out of Egypt to their homeland. One can only imagine the amount of baggage that they carried along with them. But, since it was the LORD that brought them out (verse 51) we know that it was done in order. Notice that our focus verse describes the divisions of the people as “armies.” The Hebrew word employed here is a word that is most often translated “hosts” in many places in the Bible and is used in reference to angels, armies, or any other organized group. There was no confusion on this wonderful day. It was a day *of* which God’s people had dreamed and *for* which they had prepared. It was a well rehearsed, organized march away from bondage and into their future. You see, the Egyptians were not the only ones who had been learning things about God during the time of the plagues!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Become** a part of God’s organized, deputized army. **Practice** your faith among your own fellowship of believers (your church) as that fellowship practices its faith in cooperation with other churches. **Get involved** in some form of ministry and march for God today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 13:1-10**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 13:2**

***Consecration***

It is no surprise to me that God spoke to Moses immediately after His people left Egypt and told them to “consecrate” (set apart) their firstborn to Him. If you are not entirely sure what it means to “consecrate” something to God, you are probably not the first to feel that way. Today’s focus verse is the first time that God ever used that word in His personal dealings with His people. In Genesis 2:3 we are told that “God blessed the seventh day and *sanctified* (same word from which we get consecrated here) it” but that was some time before man was even created. According to the number of years that are given for the lives of key individuals in Genesis, and the number of years that Israel was in bondage to Egypt, God now speaks this word “consecrate” to the people some 2,450 years since He spoke it during His creation process. To help His people understand His command to “consecrate” their children to Him, He established the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The children of Israel did not honor this feast to *be* saved, but because they had *been* saved. Note the word “because” in verse eight. There are two things to remember about this feast: 1) It was to be *perpetual*. This feast lasted for seven days (seven is the number for spiritual perfection and completion) and was to be held on an annual basis; and 2) It was to be *personal*. Find the word “me” in verse eight and circle it!

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Share** your personal testimonies of God’s greatness with your children and grandchildren. **Realize** that God desires for those who come after you to see Him in your life!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 13:11-22**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 13:21 & 22**

 ***The Pillar of Cloud and Fire***

After the events that preceded their departure from Egypt, Israel was probably most ready to accept Moses as their *leader*. However, God was careful to make sure that they realized that He alone was to be their *Guide*. If there were those among this mighty host of people who were leaving Egypt who were closely familiar with the geography of the land, they might have recognized that Israel was not travelling by the most direct route to the Red Sea. Notice the word “around” in verse 18. The unusual route that Israel was to follow was one that would avoid having to pass through the lands of the war-loving Philistines. These people had survived many years of hardships, but a war with the Philistines was something from which God decided that they should be spared. Many of the people probably had no idea of how God was providentially looking out for their best interests from the very beginning of this march. God then came to them in a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. Basically, God set Himself before them to lead them to the Promised Land. Verse 22 reveals that God never once removed this sign of His presence from them. Psalm 105:39 describes the cloud as a covering. As we read through the remaining chapters of Exodus, we will see that God faithfully led them by His presence even through their most rebellious seasons.

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Pray** for your spiritual leaders today but give your **praise** only to God! **Believe** that God desires to lead you and make His presence known to you. **Allow** Him to guide your every step today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 14:1-14**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 14:14**

***“The LORD Will Fight For You”***

It is hard to imagine Pharaoh making this last ditch effort to stop Israel from going out to serve and follow God. Notice that he sent “all the chariots” (verse 7) after them when he sensed that they were trapped, or “closed in” (verse 3) between the mountains and the sea. Pharaoh is holding nothing back as he launches this final, all out assault against God and His people. Israel was encamped by the sea when Pharaoh caught up to them. The sight of such a large army struck fear into the hearts of many. Read verses 11 and 12 carefully and circle the pronoun “you” that the people used when they spoke to Moses. The terrified Israelites and their guests began to point at Moses and repeatedly blame him for the situation in which they now found themselves. “*You*,” they repeatedly said, are the cause of this peril and danger. “*You*” have brought us out of Egypt to die! “Didn’t we tell “*you”* to leave us alone and let us stay in Egypt?” Even though Israel had gone out in “armies” they felt that they were no match for Pharaoh and his war chariots. It is clear that, even after all they had seen and heard over the past 10 months of plagues and miracles, they fully expected to die now at the hands of Pharaoh’s army. What did God have Moses say to His crying, cowering people? “The LORD will fight *for* you!” The term “fight for you” does not simply imply that God was going to be on their side. It meant that God was going to fight in their place and do their fighting “for” them!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Refuse** to accept defeat at the hands of our spiritual enemy. **Believe** that God has saved you from hell and that He desires to save you from your trials and temptations as well. **Seek** God’s help in all of your spiritual battles today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 14:15-31**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 14:17**

 ***Graduate School!***

While much of Israel was moaning their desperate situation, Moses was holding fast to his faith in God! Read again verse 13 from yesterday’s verses to be reminded of what Moses said as he urged the people to trust God and His promises. In verse 17 God clearly stated that “*I* will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.” Verse 18 indicates that all of Egypt was going to surely know Who had won the battle on this day and God wanted all of His people to know it as well. The “Angel of God” who had been travelling in front of Israel now moved to the rear and came between Israel and Pharaoh’s pursuing army. God’s people were now going to learn that the same presence of God that could *guide* them was the same presence of God that could *guard* them. Note the word “darkness” in verse 20. The only other time that this word was used in Exodus was to describe the “thick darkness” that made up the ninth plague back in chapter 10. There we learned that, while Egypt spent three days in darkness, the people of God had light in their houses. And now, while the cloud casts a heavy *darkness* on Egypt’s side in this chapter, at the same time it cast forth *light* on Israel’s side. You have to imagine that quite a few people among Egypt’s ranks were saying, “Here we go again!” Sure enough, Pharaoh and his men were all about to get their graduate degrees!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Remember** that God always *guards* those that He *guides*. **Believe** that, even in our darkest hours, we have the Light of the World within us! **Read** verse 31 again and notice that God’s people went from fear to faith as a result of paying attention to what God was doing for them.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 15:1-19**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 15:1**

***Israel’s Song***

Today’s verses contain the first song ever recorded in the Scripture. What a blessing it is to see the same people who were *sighing* in bondage and defeat (2:23) now *singing* in freedom and victory. It is appropriate that these people whose “cry came up to God because of the bondage” (2:23) would now lift their voices to God in praise. Several key points are found in our focus verse. First, we see *when* the people sang this song. Most translations state, “*Then* Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD.” The “then” was immediately after being safely ushered through the dry path that God had made in the Red Sea and immediately after watching Pharaoh’s army being drowned while trying to do the same thing. Next, we see *who* sang this song. It was “*Moses and the children of Israel*” who were lifting up their voices in praise and adoration to their most worthy God. Then we see to *whom* the song was sung. “Moses and the children of Israel sang this song *to the LORD*.” As you read this song, take special notice that it was not only sung *to* God but that it was also sung *about* God. Take the time to count the word LORD in this song and you will see that it occurs 11 times in the 18 verses that contain the words of this song. You will also find the word God two times.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Sing** songs that speak of God and testify to His glorious works. **Worship** Him by lifting up your voice in praise and appreciation for all that He has done for you. **Pray** for those who are involved in our music ministry and **thank** them for their service.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 15:20-27**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 15:22 & 23**

 ***Sometimes “Bitter” is “Better”***

Celebrations like the one described in yesterday’s verses, and the one described in verses 19–21 of today’s reading, were common after a victory in battle. (See 1 Samuel 18:6 and 2 Samuel 1: 18-27.) But just three days after lifting up songs of praise to God, Israel met with its first test after reaching the safe side of the Red Sea. For three days they travelled “in the wilderness without water*.*” When they did reach water, they found that they could not drink it because it was “bitter.” The name for the place where this first water was found was Marah. It is a word that means “bitter.” Ruth, when in the most desperate times of her life, asked to be called by this name (Ruth 1:20). When the people of Israel saw that there was no water suitable for drinking, they became angry and began to complain against Moses. In response, Moses began to cry out to the LORD! God showed Moses a “tree” that, when thrown into the bitter waters, made the water sweet. It was during this first, bitter trial early in Israel’s march to the Promised Land that God made a sweet provision *for* Israel and a sweet promise *to* them. He promised His divine protection against all of the diseases that they had earlier seen come upon the Egyptians (verse 26). Soon the people were camped at Elim “where there were 12 wells of water” and 70 trees to provide plenty of shelter and shade.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Remain** faithful to God through the tougher times of life. **Realize** that sometimes the *bitter* is actually *better* for us if it leads us to a new level of faith in God. **Know** that God is always acting in your best interest. **Claim** the promise of Romans 8:28 today and **recall** situations in the past where God has used trials to make you stronger.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 16:1-13**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 16:4**

***Bread From Heaven!***

Israel left Elim and headed for Sinai. Between these two blessed stations was the “Wilderness of Sin.” While passing through this less than desirable area, the whole congregation began to complain against Moses and Aaron, accusing them of bringing them out of Egypt only to starve and die in the desert. The Egypt that they now recalled was nothing like the Egypt that they had actually experienced. God’s response to these complaining people is quite marvelous. God told Moses that He would “rain down bread from heaven” for His people. We can best observe how unlike God we sometimes *are* by taking an honest look at how unlike God we sometimes *think* or *act*! How many of us would have been so merciful to these crying, complaining people? On the next morning, Israel awoke to an unimaginable scene. The ground around them was covered with bread. Every day God sent the bread for His people. On the sixth day, God sent enough bread for two days so that His people could observe their Sabbath rest. As Aaron was speaking to the people, God allowed them to see His glory in the cloud. That evening God miraculously provided them meat to go with their miracle bread. Unable to recognize this bread from heaven, the Israelites just called it by a Hebrew word – “Manna” – which means, “What is it?” They might have questioned *what it was* but they could have no doubt about *from whence it had come*!

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for the way that He faithfully provides for you. **Show** humble appreciation for even the simple things that sometimes go unnoticed.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 16:14-24**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 16:18**

 ***Man – The “Bread” Winner***

How many times have we met with frustration simply because we failed to read the instructions? In our verses this morning, we see some specific instructions for how the manna was to be gathered and used. Each person was allowed to take as much as needed for his family; however, a recommended amount per person for each household was clearly stated. They were to take an “omer” for each person residing with their family. How much was an omer? Verse 16 provides our answer by stating that “an omer is one tenth of an ephah.” If that doesn’t completely clear it up for you, then just realize that an omer was the equivalent to about six pints in our dry measure. With this amount, gathered daily, the Israelites always had enough to meet their needs (verse 18). They were instructed not to attempt to hoard it or save some of what was given today for tomorrow. Some tried to do it anyway only to find that which they had tried to “save” full of maggots and totally unfit for consumption. They gathered in the morning, as instructed, because what was left over melted in the heat of the day. However, when they gathered enough for two days on the day prior to the Sabbath, the extra manna that they gathered in obedience to God was preserved and usable. God’s final instruction regarding this miracle bread was that a container of it was to be in the Ark of the Covenant as a reminder to Israel of this great miracle of provision.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Notice** that our focus verse has the “man” going out to gather the daily “bread” for his family. As you labor to “bring home the bacon,” don’t forget to be a spiritual “bread” winner, too!

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 16:25-36**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 16:32**

***A Special Memorial***

It is no coincidence that an “omer” of manna was to be laid up as a memorial in the Ark of the Covenant. That amount was the daily amount that God sent for each person that followed Him out of Egypt. However, since God’s Law was in existence even before God put them in writing, He provided enough bread on the day prior to the Sabbath so that they could honor the Sabbath by not gathering bread on that day. God always provides His people with what we need to be obedient to His will and to obey His commands. Consider the commandment about honoring the Sabbath day in verse 26. Read verse 29 again to see how God provided His people with a double portion of manna on the sixth day so that they could obey His command to honor the seventh day, or Sabbath! Imagine pulling up to a four-way stop at a highway intersection and seeing a stream of trucks and trailers coming your way. If you sat there long enough to count 600 tractor-trailers passing by before you could continue on your journey, and of each one of those trucks was carrying 15 tons of manna, then you would have witnessed what it would take to deliver a six day supply of manna to God’s people!

**Prayer Emphasis**

* **Imagine** God sending 9,000 tons of bread to His people so that they could obey His command to honor the Sabbath! **Offer** a special praise of thanksgiving to God today for all that He provides you to allow you to walk in obedience to His commands.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 17:1-16**

**Focus Verses: Exodus 17:1 & 8**

 ***“Water” & “Warfare”***

Today’s verses contain two wonderful stories that pretty much speak for themselves. The first story is about *provision*. In verses 1-7 we see God once again making a miraculous provision for a people that are behaving very badly! Verse four clearly indicates that Moses actually feared for his life! Our focus verse states that God told Moses to go to Horeb where He would be waiting for Him. If it seems that God assumed that Moses would be familiar with that area, you are right. Horeb is where Moses first watered the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, and it was now to be where he would water the flock of God. Horeb had also been the sight of the burning bush experience. It would now be the sight of yet another significant sign that God was truly leading and providing for His people. The first half of today’s chapter is certainly about *provision*, but the remainder of the chapter contains a great story about God’s *power*. The Amalekites were the first people to attempt any kind of warfare against Israel as they marched toward the Promised Land. Moses gave Joshua what might have been his very first military assignment when he told him to, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites.” As Joshua fought this enemy, Moses stood on the top of a hill with the “staff of God” in his hands. As long as Moses held his hands stretched upward toward God, the Israelites would prevail. When his hands were lowered, the Amalekites prevailed. The victory was ultimately won after Aaron and Hur came to Moses’ assistance by standing on each side of Moses and supporting his uplifted hands.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Notice** that After God gave His people the victory, Moses was commanded to make a written record of this great victory for Joshua’s future reference and to build an altar thereby reminding us that spiritual victories are won in association with God’s Word and prayer. **Commit** time to daily Bible reading and prayer if you truly desire to be victorious in your spiritual life.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 18:1-12**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 18:5**

 ***Three Important Names***

Although Jethro was briefly mentioned in earlier verses (2:1 and 4:18) most of what we know about him is recorded here in chapter 18. We will have more to say about Jethro in tomorrow’s devotional. Our focus verse also references Moses’ wife and two sons. The first son’s name (Gershom) was mentioned in verse three. His name means “stranger” or “sojourner.” He was mentioned by name earlier in 2:22. The second son’s name (Eliezer) means “God is my help.” He was not mentioned until here in chapter 18. The simple answer to why Eliezer was not mentioned in chapter two is that he may not have been born at that time. In 2:21-22 we are told that Jethro gave, “Zipporah his daughter to Moses. And she bore him a son.” The word “son” is singular there. Verse 22 goes on to say that Moses named that first son “Gershom, for he said, I have been a stranger in a foreign land.” It is likely that Eliezer was not born until after Moses met God at the burning bush and received his commission to lead the children of Israel from Egypt. Because of this, it makes sense that Moses’ attitude about who and where he was would be entirely different. Therefore, his second son was given a name that means, “God is my help!” How wonderful it must have been for Moses to come to that realization after all that had happened in his life up until the time that God revealed Himself to him.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Spend** time with God and see if you do not sense a change in your attitude and perspective. **Believe** that prayer changes things! **Seek** God’s presence, counsel, and strength through His Word and you will not be disappointed.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 18:13-27**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 18:14**

 ***The Importance of Delegating***

I want to break today’s Scripture into five sections to help us better understand some of the important spiritual implications found in these important verses. First, we need to consider the *situation* (verse 13). The great task of counseling the number of people that God had assigned to Moses’ leadership was requiring his full day’s attention. Second, we consider Jethro’s *assumption* (verse 14). Jethro was concerned that Moses was not going to be able to bear the great responsibility of counseling the people “alone.” The word alone is important here because earlier Scriptures have clearly informed us that Moses was most definitely *not* alone! God had promised His presence back in 3:12. Third, we will consider Jethro’s *opinion* (verses 17-18). This considerate father-in-law did not think it “good” that Moses was trying to do all of this important work by himself and did not hesitate to tell him that. He feared Moses was going to “wear out” and that this great work would be “too much” for him. Fourth, we must consider Jethro’s *suggestion* (verses 19-23). It is important to note that this suggestion came with a qualifying caveat. Moses was to carefully select a group of God-fearing men and teach them to help him with the counseling of the people. The qualifying caveat was that Jethro advised Moses to put this plan in place if “God so commands you.” Finally, we consider the *conclusion* (verses 24-27). Moses heeded the advice of his father-in-law and delegated some of his responsibilities to them.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Listen** carefully and prayerfully to the advice of others. **Allow** God to speak to you through those who have had more experience in life. **Seek** God’s final approval on all advice and counsel that you receive. **Allow** God to have the final say in all matters of life.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 19:1-13**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 19:5**

***A Really Big “If”***

Exactly three months after leaving Egypt, Israel stopped and camped at Mount Sinai. Moses went alone up the mountain to meet with God. There God instructed Moses to return to the people and rehearse with them the wonderful things that He had done for them. He had carried them, on eagle’s wings, *out* of Egypt and *unto* Himself. The people were to understand that they were not freed from their bondage in Egypt without purpose. Moses was to explain to them that they were now expected to live out their new covenant life with God. Notice the “if” and “then” of verse five. “If” the people obeyed God and kept their covenant with Him, “then” He would treasure them above all other nations. Out of all that He possessed, they would be His dwelling place and most treasured possession. Moses went and delivered this message to the people. They responded with pledges to be faithful to God. God then told Moses that He would soon come down for a visit with His people, allowing them to hear Him speaking to Moses. Moses was to have the people wash themselves and their clothes and “put on their Sunday best” because, in just three days, God was going to come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. No one was to rush up the mountain on that day or even reach out to touch it unless an “all clear” was sounded. Failure to comply with God’s commands was punishable by death.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Live** like you know that God is watching! **Take** His commands to heart and **be** as obedient as humanly possible. **Understand** that many of God’s promises contain provisions concerning obedience on the part of His people.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 19:14-25**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 19:16**

***The Third Day!***

Moses prepared himself and the people for their special day with God. They were to consecrate themselves by cleansing and separate themselves from certain physical pleasures for a season. Then, on the morning of *the third day*, there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud appeared over Mount Sinai. But, above the rumbling of the thunder was heard the sound of a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled at these manifestations of the presence and power of God. The mountain was shrouded in smoke as the LORD descended on it in fire. The whole mountain trembled and shook violently and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder upon the arrival of Jehovah God! Then, God called Moses to come up to the top of the mountain. Moses went! God spoke! This is just another indication of the “ifs” and “thens” of which we spoke earlier. Leaders must understand and appreciate covenant life if they are ever to explain it to God’s people. God repeated His commands regarding the people not trying to approach Him in the mountain. Moses assured God that the people had fully understood His earlier command and that they had “set bounds around the mountain to consecrate it” (verse 23).

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Prepare** yourself to be in the very presence of God when you kneel to pray! **Worship** Him as if He is there in the room with you. **Experience** and **appreciate** God for all that He is today.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:1-11**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 20:1**

***The Ten Commandments (Part One)***

We are first told that God spoke “words” to Moses and the people. The Hebrew word translated “words” here is translated into no less than 85 different words in the KJV. It is found over 1,400 times in the Bible and can be used to refer to a saying, speech, command, statement, promise, or declaration. Here, the word is used to describe God’s declarations, or covenant provisions, with Israel. Here are the “ifs” of the covenant that God desired to have with them. “If” they wanted to live with God’s fullest blessings, “then” they were going to have to give heed to these “words.” God’s part of the covenant was reviewed in verse 2: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Israel’s part of the covenant followed. Note that Israel was not provided these covenant stipulations while in Egypt with the promise that, if they kept them, they would then be freed from their bondage. No! They were first freed, then commanded to keep their part of the covenant. Obedience to the Ten Commandments will not produce salvation. Salvation is by grace and not by good works. However, salvation should be accompanied by the desire to be obedient to God and fulfill the “ifs” of our covenant relationship. Note that the first four commandments deal with our relationship with God.

**Prayer Emphasis:**

* **Spend** some time reviewing your personal relationship with God and His Word. **Make** your personal relationship with God the highest priority in your life.

**Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:12-26**

**Focus Verse: Exodus 20:22**

 ***The Ten Commandments (Part Two)***

As I mentioned in yesterday’s devotional, the first four commandments address our relationship with God. Now we will see that the last six commandments address our relationships with our fellow man. I think it no coincidence that there are six of these commands since six is a number closely associated with man throughout the Scripture. The order in which God delivered these commandments to His people in this Old Testament story is consistent with the way that Jesus instructed us to live in the New Testament. He commanded us to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and then to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39). His teaching was that a right relationship with our fellow man could only be born from a right relationship with the Father. One way of looking at the two divisions of the Ten Commandments is to say that the first four are written to direct us in how to regulate our *upward* relationship with God while the second six are written to direct us in how to regulate our *outward* relationships with other human beings. Our focus verse states that God’s Word comes “from heaven.” From it, we can learn to live here like we will live when we reach our permanent home! Amen!

**Prayer** **Emphasis:**

* **Thank** God for His Word and for teaching us how we should treat our fellow man**. Strive** to be the kind of person that God would have you to be in all of your earthly relationships. **Ask** your friends and family members to pray for you and ask God to give you the strength to live for Him on a daily basis.