Seminole
BAPTIST CHURCH

KINGDOM PASSAGE

PART 1

Forty Daily Devotions
from Exodus 1-20
(Based on the NKJV)

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Introduction

Like every other book of the Bible, Exodus is not an individual story separate from the book that precedes it or the remaining books that follow it. It is a continuation of the story set forth in Genesis and its first words pick up right where the story in Genesis ended. The title, Exodus, literally means "the way out." As we march through Exodus, we will march with the people of God as they leave their old life in Egypt behind to follow God to the place that He promised their people hundreds of years before. God does not show us only the high spots in the lives of His people. He allows us to learn from their defeats as well as from their victories. A careful, prayerful reading of this book will allow us to learn more about God and how He lovingly guides and provides for His people. It is my prayer that we will be blessed as we read this wonderful book together and that we will, after completing this devotional, be an even stronger people for our God!

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Exodus 1:1-13	07/20/26
2	Exodus 1:14-22	07/21/26
3	Exodus 2:1-10	07/22/26
4	Exodus 2:11-25	07/23/26
5	Exodus 3:1-12	07/24/26
6	Exodus 3:13-22	07/25/26
7	Exodus 4:1-17	07/26/26
8	Exodus 4:18-31	07/27/26
9	Exodus 5:1-23	07/28/26
10	Exodus 6:1-13	07/29/26
11	Exodus 6:14-30	07/30/26
12	Exodus 7:1-12	07/31/26
13	Exodus 7:13-25	08/01/26
14	Exodus 8:1-12	08/02/26
15	Exodus 8:13-19	08/03/26
16	Exodus 8:20-32	08/04/26
17	Exodus 9:1-20	08/05/26
18	Exodus 9:21-35	08/06/26
19	Exodus 10:1-20	08/07/26
20	Exodus 10:21-29	08/08/26

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Exodus 11:1-10	08/09/26
22	Exodus 12:1-20	08/10/26
23	Exodus 12:21-34	08/11/26
24	Exodus 12:35-51	08/12/26
25	Exodus 13:1-10	08/13/26
26	Exodus 13:11-22	08/14/26
27	Exodus 14:1-14	08/15/26
28	Exodus 14:15-31	08/16/26
29	Exodus 15:1-19	08/17/26
30	Exodus 15:20-27	08/18/26
31	Exodus 16:1-13	08/19/26
32	Exodus 16:14-24	08/20/26
33	Exodus 16:25-36	08/21/26
34	Exodus 17:1-16	08/22/26
35	Exodus 18:1-12	08/23/26
36	Exodus 18:13-27	08/24/26
37	Exodus 19:1-13	08/25/26
38	Exodus 19:14-25	08/26/26
39	Exodus 20:1-11	08/27/26
40	Exodus 20:12-26	08/28/26

Day 1: Exodus 1:1-13

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel." (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" wherein to dwell (Genesis 47:6). However, things changed about 30 years after Israel arrived in Egypt. We base that conclusion by comparing Exodus 12:40, where we are told the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt "four hundred and thirty years" and Acts 7:6, where we are told they were oppressed for "four hundred years." Thus, the first 30 years in Egypt went well and the last 400 years were filled with suffering. 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 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 spoke 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 46:3). And that is exactly what God did! Even though their oppressors treated them cruelly, God kept His promise! Our focus verse states, "…the more they (their oppressors) afflicted them, the more they (the Israelites) multiplied and grew."

Prayer Emphasis: Remember God always keeps His promises! **Look** for promises as you read Exodus and put a "P" in the margin of your Bible by each one that you find. **Believe** that we still serve a God in Heaven Who can bless us in even what may seem to be the worst imaginable situations on Earth!

Day 2: Exodus 1:14-22

"Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives…'When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women…if it is a son, then you shall kill him…'" (Exodus 1:15-16)

An Evil Plan Thwarted

At first blush, it may appear that verse 15 indicates that there were only two midwives to serve all the people of Israel. However, a closer look at verse 19 reveals that other "midwives" obviously worked under the supervision of Shiphrah and Puah. The names of these two special women are mentioned only this one time in the Scripture, but what a difference their actions made in the lives of every person who has lived since their days! Because the midwives "feared God" they "did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them" (v. 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 Pharaoh's evil plan to minimize the growth of the Israelites, he took the matter to the people and left the decision in their hands. He commanded that "all his people" do what the midwives had refused to do by telling them to kill every male child that was born to the Hebrews (v. 22). However, to the Israelites, Pharaoh's law ended where God's law began! The Hebrews chose to obey God while living in an environment that had no respect for God's 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 the children in our church family. **Communicate** appreciation to a dedicated children's worker today and consider becoming a volunteer in this important ministry.

Day 3: Exodus 2:1-10

"And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, 'Because I drew him out of the water.'" (Exodus 2:10)

Meet Moses!

When we think of Moses, we may think of the many wonderful things this great *man* did for God. However, God begins the story of this great leader when he was a *baby*. 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 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 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 desires them to be. **Pray** for the spiritual success of our children today!

Day 4: Exodus 2:11-25

"Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren." (Exodus 2:11)

Time Flies!

Although it may appear as only a tiny space in your Bible, the days described in Exodus 2:10 and 2:11 are 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 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 with 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 God's business. Moses remained busy in God's service until the day he died. **Express** appreciation to one of our senior members today. A thoughtful call or card might really make their day!

Day 5: Exodus 3:1-12

"Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God." (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 "now." What we choose to do for God "now" will set the tone for the remainder of our lives and, perhaps, bring about profound change in the lives of others. The Hebrew word from which we get this "now" is first found in Genesis 1:2-3, where we are told "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 times for Moses! One can only imagine how bright the 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 by 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." We will clearly see that God certainly kept that promise!

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 He is just as present with us "now" as He was with Moses then.

Day 6: Exodus 3:13-22

"'So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed.'" (Exodus 3:20-21)

Two "I Wills" from the Great "I Am"

Exodus 3:14 is the first time God ever referred to Himself as the "I Am." In this 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 is found in the Bible is 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 would support him with a supply of His supernatural power to convince the people that he had truly met with God. I am convinced that God still makes this promise to those who will obey His command to "go" today. The second "I will" promise found in our focus verses is 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 left Egypt. Many people make the mistake of waiting until they have the provision in *hand* before they ever take a step with their *feet*. God's people were to follow God's plan with the full expectation that everything 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.

Day 7: Exodus 4:1-17

"Then Moses answered and said, 'But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, "The LORD has not appeared to you."'" (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 is included in the "they." In 3:16 we see the "they" included the elders of the children of Israel and in 3:18 we see the "they" also included the king of Egypt. So, the "they say" that had Moses so concerned was something that he expected to hear 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 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 two through nine. 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."

Day 8: Exodus 4:18-31

"And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed…" (Exodus 4:30-31a)

Two Very Important Verses

The last part of today's reading finds Moses and Aaron meeting at the "mountain of God" (v. 27) and then setting out to speak to the elders of the children of Israel (v. 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" (v. 30). This reminds me 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). 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" (v. 31). Just like Moses before us, we are often guilty of thinking that people will not believe us when we try to witness to them. This verse reminded me of another story in the New Testament. After the woman at the well met Jesus, she 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 Him only after this woman went and told them what He had done for her! What was true then remains true today. If we will *teach* the things we should teach and *do* the things that we should do, we will have little trouble in convincing people that God is working with and among us!

Prayer Emphasis: Bring Jesus up in a conversation today. **Tell** someone about what He has done for you. **Remember**, when we are intentional in our *walk* and our *words*, our message will be more readily received.

Day 9: Exodus 5:1-23

"And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.'"(Exodus 5:2)

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 their meeting with Egypt's egotistical leader did not go well. However, God had already told Moses that Pharaoh would not immediately allow the people of Israel to 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 two 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 still 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 that verse is most often translated "lie" or "lying" in the Bible. Pharaoh did not know God, and he did not know God's Word. Pharaoh's two greatest 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 because God has commanded for you to pray for all that are in authority. **Refuse** to criticize anyone for whom you have not prayed.

Day 10: Exodus 6:1-13

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.'" (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 make 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 the word from which we get the idea of Pharaoh "driving" Israel out of Egypt 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, "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" or "maybes" included in God's statement about Pharaoh telling Israel to get out of Egypt!

Prayer Emphasis: Rest assured God's Word is always correct, and God is always in control of our every situation! **Believe** that God is wise enough to *know* what we need and strong enough to *do* all that we need Him to do!

Day 11: Exodus 6:14-30

"Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven." (Exodus 6:20)

Amram and Jochebed

Although we read earlier about the heroic efforts of Moses' parents to save him from the evil mandate of Pharaoh, this genealogy is the first time that their names are actually 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. The New Testament includes part of their story in Acts 7 and in Hebrews 11, but only refers to them as "his parents" in Hebrews 11:23. However, two key statements are made about these parenting partners in that verse in Hebrews that should be mentioned here. First, "they saw that he was a beautiful child." The word that is translated "beautiful" in that verse comes from the name of a city that was highly regarded for its beauty. You might say 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." Pharaoh obviously failed when it came to his efforts to scare these two people away from doing what God would have them to do!

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. **Assure** them that you will always be there for them.

Day 12: Exodus 7:1-12

"So the LORD said to Moses…'Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.'" (Exodus 7:1)

Aaron, the Prophet

In today's focus verse, Aaron is referred to as a prophet. This is the first time this word is used in Exodus and only the second time it is 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 is later 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. Exodus 7:2 clearly reveals that it was the responsibility of Moses and Aaron to "speak all" that was commanded. There is at least one more divine responsibility assigned to the prophet in this story. He was to speak *only* what God told him to say, *all* of what God told him to say, and he was to speak *plainly* what God told 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" (v. 2)!

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.

Day 13: Exodus 7:13-25

"And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said." (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. 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. An especially 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 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 God Himself hardened it! 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 (Egypt's) heart to hate His people." 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: Resist the temptation to explain away the things of God that are not easily explained or understood. **Realize** that our inability to *understand* everything that God does, or why He does it, does not mean that we cannot, by faith, *accept* it as truth.

Day 14: Exodus 8:1-12

"But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs." (Exodus 8:2)

Frogs!

The first of the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt was against the Nile River (7:17). Today's Scripture deals with the plague of 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 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 all (their) territory with frogs." The Bible says that the frogs "covered the land of Egypt" (v. 6). Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and agreed to allow the people to go if they took 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 dead frogs filled the homes of the rich and powerful as well as those of the common people. To make matters worse, the Egyptians were known for their cleanliness, sometimes bathing several times each day. Imagine what being surrounded by those dead, rotting frogs did to the morale of these people.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that God is always at work to gain the attention of all 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.

Day 15: Exodus 8:13-19

"So the LORD said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt."'" (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 lice, but about the *Lord*! 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 can 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 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 "finger of God" (v. 19).

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.

Day 16: Exodus 8:20-32

"And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land." (Exodus 8:22)

Flies!

Unlike the plague just before this one, the translators all seem to agree on the type of bug that is sent by God in this fourth plague. As it was with the first two plagues, this is a plague of which Moses forewarned Pharaoh. 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 of Egypt. 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 own people. Our focus verse reveals that the Israelites remained untouched from this horrible curse. When it seemed that Pharaoh had finally reconsidered, Moses prayed and God caused the swarms of flies to withdraw. We should note that both the *appearance* and *disappearance* of these "flies" were miracles. The appearance and disappearance of these flies provide a new perspective on Job's statement, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away" (Job 1:21).

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 your circumstances in life to witness of the blessings that we receive at the hand of our gracious God.

Day 17: Exodus 9:1-20

"So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died." (Exodus 9:6)

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. Today's Scripture covers the fifth through seventh plagues. 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 (v. 5), which is an indication that Pharaoh was given an opportunity to repent. However, he refused to do so and all the livestock of the Egyptians that were out in their fields died while "not even one" of the animals of the Israelites was killed (v. 7). The sixth plague was the first plague that came against the people regarding their personal health. This is the second plague that came unannounced. It caused such painful, festering boils and sores upon the people that the magicians could not even stand and meet with Moses (v. 11). The seventh plague was another announced plague that brought a terrible hailstorm. God had Moses warn Pharaoh to have his people gather their livestock from the fields and get them to shelter (v. 19). It is interesting to note that some of the Egyptians who now "feared the word of the LORD" brought their servants and livestock from the fields and put them under shelter (v. 20).

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.

Day 18: Exodus 9:21-35

"But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field." (Exodus 9:21)

The Danger of Disbelief

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 we are reading about in Exodus. Yesterday we saw that some of the Egyptians now "feared the word of the LORD" (9:20). Today we read about some who still refused to "regard the word of the LORD." Just as Jesus said it would be in His days, so it was in the days of Moses. Those who refused to believe suffered 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 and responded 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 had ever experienced (v. 24) and it destroyed all the plant life and trees (v. 25). Meanwhile, there was no 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. **Praise** Him for His benevolent care and loving protection.

Day 19: Exodus 10:1-20

"'"Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left…."'" (Exodus 10:4-5)

Locusts!

Moses and Aaron were 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 must sense that there is a message to us in these verses, that being, that we should never give up on people, and 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 (v. 5). 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" (v. 12). By morning, Egypt was covered with locusts! 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" (v. 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 Pharaoh's words, it might have appeared that he was ready to do business with God. But God knew his heart and refused to accept anything short of 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.

Day 20: Exodus 10:21-29

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.'" (Exodus 10:21)

Darkness!

As you read about this ninth plague, please do so from the perspective of one who lived in a land where the sun was worshipped as a symbol of one of their greatest and most powerful gods. Now imagine these people 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 thick darkness. This darkness was so black that it prevented any visibility at all and rendered these cursed people helpless (v. 23). Second, 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 the Egyptians, all the children of Israel had light in their homes! Once again Pharaoh seemed ready to do business with God. He called for Moses and all but ordered him and his people out of his land, but he demanded that all the livestock be left in Egypt. When that "deal" was unacceptable to God, Pharaoh ordered Moses to leave and never return again.

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God that, while there are so many people living in darkness, we are blessed with the Light of the World! **Share** a little of God's light with someone that you meet today.

Day 21: Exodus 11:1-10

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether.'" (Exodus 11:1)

"One More Plague"

The LORD God told Moses that He would bring one more plague against Egypt, after which, Pharaoh would not only let Israel go, but he would literally drive them out of Egypt. At midnight, God would go through the land of Egypt and all the firstborn in Egypt would die (vs. 4-5). It is important to note that God did not say all the firstborn *of* Egypt, but all the firstborn *in* Egypt would die. 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. From Pharaoh to his servants, all the firstborn would die. 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" (v. 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 (v. 7). Tomorrow's reading will help us understand exactly how God would make that difference for Israel.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that one day – perhaps sooner than we think – will be our last day of opportunity to speak to our friends and loved ones about Jesus. **Speak** up before it is too late!

Day 22: Exodus 12:1-20

"'"And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover."'" (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 understand exactly how God was going to make that difference. Each man was to select a lamb for him and his family and slay it at a specified time. This was to be such a momentous 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 your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to 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 their feet, and their walking sticks in their hands. They were to eat their Passover lamb "in haste" because Pharaoh was finally going to be 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.

Day 23: Exodus 12:21-34

"So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead." (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. We can only imagine the anxiety and fear that these nine plagues brought to their lives. For almost nine months now they had 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 firstborn, 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 in Genesis 27:34 to describe the "exceedingly great and bitter "cry of Esau after he learned that he had lost his birthright and his father's blessing. And do we dare to think that it was a mere coincidence that this darkness lasted for *three days* – the same number of days that Jesus Christ was in the tomb?

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!

Day 24: Exodus 12:35-51

"And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years — on that very same day — it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt." (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 (v. 37). We are also told there was a "mixed multitude" (v. 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 (v. 51), we know 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 well-rehearsed, organized march from *bondage* to *blessing*! You see, the Egyptians were not the only ones who had been learning things about God during the time of the plagues!

Prayer Emphasis: Enlist in 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.

Day 25: Exodus 13:1-10

"'Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.'" (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 alone. Today's focus verse is the first time God spoke that word directly to His people. In Genesis 2:3 we are told that "God blessed the seventh day and *sanctified* it." The word translated "sanctified" there is the word that is translated "*consecrated*" here. This word was first spoken by God 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. There are two things to remember about this feast: 1) It was to be *perpetual*. This feast lasted for seven days and was to be held on an annual basis. Note the words "year to year" in verse 10. Then note the word "because" in verse eight. 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!

Day 26: Exodus 13:11-22

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night." (Exodus 13:21)

The Pillar of Cloud and Fire

After the events that preceded their departure from Egypt, Israel was probably most willing 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. The Israelites had already experienced and survived many years of hardships, and a war with the Philistines was something God chose to avoid at this time. 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. Throughout the remaining chapters of Exodus, we will see that God faithfully led His people by His presence even through their most rebellious seasons.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for your spiritual leaders today but save 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.

Day 27: Exodus 14:1-14

"'The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.'" (Exodus 14:14)

"The LORD will Fight for You"

It is hard to imagine Pharaoh making this final effort to stop Israel from going out to serve and follow God. Notice that he sent "all the chariots of Egypt" (v. 7) after them when he sensed that they were trapped, or "closed…in" (v. 3) between the mountains and the sea. Pharaoh held nothing back as he launched this final, all-out assault against God's 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?" It is clear that, even after all they had seen and heard over the past 10 months of plagues and miracles, the Israelites 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 just 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 daily trials and temptations as well. **Seek** God's help in all your spiritual battles today.

Day 28: Exodus 14:15-31

"'And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.'" (Exodus 14:17)

Graduate School!

While much of Israel was bemoaning their desperate situation, Moses was holding fast to his faith in God! Look back at 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, "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 won the battle on this day, and God wanted all *His* people to know it as well. The "Angel of God" who traveled in front of Israel now moved to the rear and came between Israel and Pharaoh's pursuing army (v. 19). God's people were now going to learn that the same God that could *guide* them was the same God that could *guard* them. Note the word "darkness" in verse 20. The only other time 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, the Israelites have light on their 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 about to earn their graduate degrees!

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that God always *guards* those whom 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.

Day 29: Exodus 15:1-19

"Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD…" (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 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 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 circle the name of the "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 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.

Day 30: Exodus 15:20-27

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water." (Exodus 15:22)

Sometimes "Bitter" is "Better"

Celebrations like the one described in yesterday's verses, and the one described in verses 19 through 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 songs of praise to God, Israel met with its first test after crossing the Red Sea. For three days they travelled "in the wilderness and found no water." When they did reach water, they found that they could not drink it because it was "bitter" (v. 23). The name of the place where this first water was found was Marah. "Marah" 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 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" (v. 25). During this first trial early in Israel's trip to the Promised Land, God clearly proved that He could, and would, provide for His people. Soon the people were camped at Elim "where there were twelve wells of water" (v. 27)!

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. **Believe** that God is always acting in your best interest. **Claim** the promise of Romans 8:28 today and **recall** some situations in the past where God has used trials to make you stronger.

Day 31: Exodus 16:1-13

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you…'" (Exodus 16:4)

Bread from Heaven

Israel left Elim and headed for Sinai. Between these two blessed stations was the "Wilderness of Sin" (v. 1). 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 have them 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 bread from heaven" for His people. We can best observe how unlike God we sometimes are by taking an honest look at how unlike Him we are in the way that 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 had questions about *what* it was, but they could have had 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 we sometimes fail to notice.

Day 32: Exodus 16:14-24

"So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need." (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? Later, verse 36 will provide 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 (v. 18). They were instructed not to attempt to hoard it or save some of what was given on one day for the next. Some tried to hoard it anyway only to find the manna which they tried to save was 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's instructions, was preserved and usable. God's final instruction regarding this miracle bread was that a container of it was to be kept 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!

Day 33: Exodus 16:25-36

"Then Moses said, 'This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: "Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness…"'" (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 it was written, 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 they 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 stop at a highway intersection and seeing a stream of trucks and trailers coming your way. If you sat there long enough to count 300 tractor-trailers pass, with each one of those trucks carrying 15 tons of manna, then you would have witnessed what it would take to deliver a one-day supply of manna to God's people!

Prayer Emphasis: Imagine God sending 9,000 tons of bread to His people in one day so that they could obey His command to honor the Sabbath! **Offer** a special praise of thanksgiving to God today for all that He does to enable His children to walk in obedience to His commands.

Day 34: Exodus 17:1-16

"Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink…Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim." (Exodus 17:1 & 8)

"Water" & "Warfare"

Today's verses contain two wonderful stories. The first story is about *provision*. In verses one through seven, we see God once again making a miraculous provision for a people that are behaving very badly! Verse four clearly indicates that Moses feared for his life! Verse six states that God told Moses to go to Horeb. 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 second story in our verses is about *protection*. The Amalekites were the first people to attempt any kind of warfare against Israel as they marched toward the Promised Land. Moses told Joshua to choose some men and go out to fight the Amalekites. As Joshua fought this enemy, Moses stood on the top of a hill with the "rod of God" in his hands (v. 9). As long as Moses held his hands stretched upward toward God, the Israelites prevailed. 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 Moses was commanded to make a written record of this great victory for future reference and to build an altar, thereby reminding the people that spiritual victories are won through God's Word and prayer.

Day 35: Exodus 18:1-12

"'And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God.'" (Exodus 18:5)

Three Important Names

Although Jethro was briefly mentioned earlier (3:1 and 4:18), most of what we know about him is recorded here in chapter 18. Our focus verse also references Moses' wife and two sons. The first son was named Gershom, which 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 would be entirely different about who and where he was. 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 happened in his life.

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 daily.

Day 36: Exodus 18:13-27

"So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, 'What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?'" (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 (v. 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 (v. 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 promised His presence back in 3:12. Third, we will consider Jethro's opinion (vs. 17-18). This considerate father-in-law was concerned that Moses was trying to do all this important work by himself and did not hesitate to tell him that. He feared that the work would be too much for Moses. Fourth, we must consider Jethro's suggestion (vs. 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" (v. 23). Finally, we consider the conclusion (vs. 24-27). Moses heeded the advice of his father-in-law and delegated some of his responsibilities to others.

Prayer Emphasis: Listen carefully and prayerfully to the advice of others and allow God to speak to you through those who have more experience in life. **Allow** God to have the final say in all matters of life.

Day 37: Exodus 19:1-13

"'"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine."'" (Exodus 19:5)

A Really Big "If"

Three months after leaving Egypt, Israel stopped and camped at Mount Sinai. Moses went up the mountain alone 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 carried them, on eagle's wings, out of Egypt. 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 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.

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.

Day 38: Exodus 19:14-25

"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled." (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. 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" that we read about yesterday. 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 fully understood His earlier command and that they had "set bounds around the mountain" to "consecrate it" (v. 23).

Prayer Emphasis: Prepare yourself to be in the very presence of God when you kneel to pray! **Worship** Him knowing that He is truly there in the room with you. **Experience** and **appreciate** God for all that He is today and every day.

Day 39: Exodus 20:1-11

"And God spoke all these words, saying:" (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 ways in the Bible. 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 His people. "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 two: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land 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. 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.

Day 40: Exodus 20:12-26

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: "You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven."'" (Exodus 20:22)

The Ten Commandments (Part Two)

As I mentioned in yesterday's devotion, 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 is no coincidence that there are six of these commands since six is a number strongly 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). Jesus taught 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 your earthly relationships. Thank you for reading with us. If we can be of service to you in any way, do not hesitate to contact us at 850-562-8069 or **gary@seminolebc.com**.