

Journey Through the Bible

Exodus

Message 3: Exposing the World

Outline:

- I. **God's Desire - For His People to be Separated to Him and Hold a Feast to Him**
 - A. **Exodus 5:1** A And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.
 - B. **Exodus 5:3** And they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God...
- II. **Satan's World System - Usurpation and Slavery Under Pharaoh**
 - A. **Exodus 5:2** But Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah that I should listen to His voice to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, and I also will not let Israel go.
 - B. **John 12:31** Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.
 - C. **2 Cor. 4:4a** In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers...
 - D. **1 John 5:19** We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one.
- III. **God's Mercy in Judgement - Exposing the True Nature, Meaning and Result of Life in the World**
 - A. **1 John 2:17** And the world is passing away, and its lust, but he who does the will of God abides forever.
 - B. **Exodus 7:10-12** And Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and they did just as Jehovah had commanded; and Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent. (11) Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers. And they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret spells; (12) That is, each one threw down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.
 - C. **Exodus 7:17** Thus says Jehovah, By this you will know that I am Jehovah. I am now going to strike the water which is in the River with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.
 - D. **Exodus 8:2-3** But if you refuse to let them go, I will now smite all your territory with frogs. (3) And the River shall swarm with frogs, and they will go up from the River and come into your house and into your bedchamber and upon your bed, and into the houses of your servants and upon your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls.
- IV. **Our Cooperation**
 - A. **Exodus 6:9** And Moses spoke this to the children of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of anguish of spirit and harsh bondage.
 - B. **Exodus 6:26** It was this same Aaron and Moses to whom Jehovah said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.
 - C. **1 John 2:15** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;
 - D. **2 Cor. 3:16** But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
 - E. **Rom. 6:4** We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

READING EXCERPT

GOD'S DEMAND AND PHARAOH'S RESISTANCE

The book of Exodus is a book of pictures, not a book of philosophy. The pictures in the first part of Exodus present a portrait of life in the world under Satan's usurpation. By means of these pictures the nature of such a life is exposed. The pictures in this book also unveil the desire of God's heart with respect to His chosen people. God said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (5:1). God's people had fallen into a worldly life under Satan's usurpation. As the book of Exodus reveals, God delivered them from this and brought them into the wilderness and to the mountain, where they received a heavenly vision of the pattern of God's dwelling place on earth. God wanted the tabernacle to be His dwelling place. This was the desire of His heart.

After the first two conflicts, the plagues began to come upon Pharaoh and his people. In Exodus there are two groups of ten items: the ten plagues that came upon the Egyptians and the Ten Commandments that were given to God's people. The ten plagues can be grouped into four categories. The first group includes the plagues of blood, frogs, and lice; the second group, the plagues of flies, murrain, and boils; the third group, the plagues of hail, locusts, and darkness; and finally, the plague of the killing of the firstborn. Each plague was more severe than the one before. The plagues in the first group were troublesome, but they were not injurious. The plagues in the second group caused harm both to beasts and to men. The plagues in the third group destroyed the environment, and the last plague terminated the worldly life. In the last plague, all the firstborn in the land of Egypt died, from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the maidservants (11:5).

THE SECOND CONFLICT

On God's Side

Let us now consider the second conflict between Jehovah and Pharaoh (7:8-14). Exodus 7:10 says, "And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as Jehovah had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent" (Heb.). I doubt that Pharaoh and his servants realized that the significance of this miracle was to expose the fact that their life was a life under Satan's usurping hand, that their living in Egypt was under the Devil's usurpation and possession. Pharaoh and his people relied on the natural resources of Egypt, especially on the rich supply of the Nile. This supply was their "rod," a rod which was actually a serpent, the Devil. In God's eyes Pharaoh and the Egyptians were relying on Satan and were living under Satan's usurping hand.

This exposure was not a punishment, but an expression of God's mercy. In His mercy God exposed the true nature of Egyptian living. He wanted the Egyptians to know that everything they relied on was of the Devil. God's intention in this exposure was to cause them to forsake that kind of living. The principle is the same today. When God comes to us, He does not firstly punish the self, the flesh, or the old man. In His mercy He firstly exposes the satanic nature of our fallen life.

Smiting the Waters

According to verse 19, Aaron was to take the rod and stretch out his hand "upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt." Aaron did so, and throughout the whole land of Egypt the water was turned into blood, even the water in vessels of wood and of stone. Because the waters of the Nile were turned to blood, the fish in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water

of the river (v. 21). The Egyptians dugged round about the river for water to drink. It may have been that the water became blood as soon as they found it.

The first plague gives a thorough indication that the life of Egypt, that is, the life of the world, issues in nothing but death. It does not matter where the water of the world is, in a river, pond, or vessel, the issue is death. This plague was the beginning of the punishment and destruction of Egyptian life. In this way God began to destroy the life of worldly enjoyment. If we realize the significance of this plague, we shall know that under the wrath of God's judgment the life of the world issues in death.

Many of us have experienced this. While we were indulging in some form of worldly pleasure, the water suddenly became blood. This was both a punishment and an exposure. Through that exposure we saw that worldly entertainments and amusements are not the real pleasures, but are pleasures that issue in death. In the eyes of God, the waters of Egypt are not waters at all; they are blood. By causing the water of the world to turn into blood, God exposes the true nature of worldly pleasure. He unveils the fact that the people in the world are drinking blood. According to Revelation 16, near the end of the great tribulation God will once again change the water of the world into blood. This blood represents death, the issue of a life of sin.

We have pointed out that the first plague, which lasted seven days (7:25), exposed Egyptian life. If the Egyptians had repented, this exposure would not have been a punishment to them. But because they did not repent, it became a form of punishment. The principle is the same in the preaching of the gospel today. If sinners receive the word of the gospel, this word will simply expose them. But if they will not receive it, it will be to them a word of judgment. The Lord Jesus Himself indicated that those who do not receive His word will be judged by the very word they reject (John 12:48).

The first plague reveals that God is merciful and wise. In this plague He did not kill the Egyptians. He simply turned the water into blood in order to warn them and expose them. He did nothing here to hurt them directly. If Pharaoh had accepted this exposure, it would have been a mercy to him. But because he rejected it, it became judgment instead. God is not unkind in His dealings with people. On the contrary, He is wise and very merciful. Therefore, in the punishment of the first plague there was a merciful warning.

Not only were the ten plagues a warning and a punishment to the Egyptians, but they were also a revelation, an unveiling, to God's people. By means of these plagues, the children of Israel must have come to see the actual situation of Egyptian living. As a result of these plagues, they must have come to loathe their living in Egypt. God wanted the life in Egypt to be exposed so that His people would hate it and want to flee from it. Therefore, God's purpose in sending the ten plagues was not only to warn the Egyptians and to punish them. It was also to show His own people what the world was.

The world also needs to be unveiled to God's people today. God wants His people to be His dwelling place on earth. However, this desire can be fulfilled only if we have been delivered from the world and have nothing besides God Himself. In these days we have been emphasizing the need for the building up of the churches. But if we want to see the churches built up in a practical way, we must come fully out of the world.

On the negative side, the book of Exodus unveils the world. On the positive side, it reveals God's dwelling place. Firstly, the true nature, meaning, and issue of life in Egypt are exposed to God's people. God's intention in giving this revelation is to cause His people to become disgusted with

Egypt, to leave Egypt behind, and to be separated to God for His dwelling place. The principle is the same today. If we have not been separated from the world, we cannot become God's dwelling place. For the building up of His dwelling place, we must see the world as it really is. Furthermore, we must loathe the world's way of living and be willing to forsake it.

If we see God's purpose as it is disclosed in the book of Exodus, it will be easier for us to understand the significance of the plagues. God's intention in sending the plagues was not only to punish the Egyptians; it was also to expose the Egyptian living. Like the Egyptians in the book of Exodus, the people in the world today have no understanding of the actual situation of life in the world. The worldly people have all been drugged. Under the influence of Satan's drugging, they are happy with their life in the world. They have no realization of what it is to live without God in the world. In their experience, the water of the world needs to be turned into blood. Then they will know the nature of life in the world and the result of living in the world. The nature of life in the world is death, and the result of living in the world is also death.

Question:

1. According to this message, how would one describe the Christian life? Use Exo. 5:1 to support your answer.
2. According to the message, how would you describe the world? How would you describe the word usurped?
3. From the reading, what were the two reasons God sent the 10 plagues? Use the first plague as an example to reveal these two reasons.
4. What are four ways for us to cooperate with the Lord to not love the world?