

## The Weekly Word

March 11-17, 2013

This is the week we read of the Israelites deliverance. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

### Monday, March 11: Exodus 10– A 3-day darkness...

The drama grows in intensity... reading a chapter at a time, leaves me hanging. I know the story and I want to get to the end. But reading slowly also give me time to ponder aspects I would ordinarily glance over.

God is in total control and God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart is one piece of God's plan. And part of God's end game is mentioned in verses 1-2: *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD."*

The Lord is orchestrating events of history so that the Hebrews once freed will tell and retell what God did, the miracles He performed and the grace He showed to His people.

God treats His people differently. The text doesn't say if the locust invasion affected Goshen and the land of God's people, but the plague of darkness did not affect Israel.

I thought about this. It was a three day darkness, so this wasn't some simply explainable metrological event like an eclipse. It was three days of total darkness. But to set off this miracle, verse 23 says the darkness did not cover Goshen! God is distinguishing between His people and other people!

When the final trumpet is sounded and God executes His final accounting of all things, then too, God will distinguish between His people and others. And in that day God's people will be all who follow Jesus as Lord!

Are you following Jesus as Lord?

*Jesus, I pledge to follow You, wherever You lead, whenever You direct. In Your name, Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### Tuesday, March 12: Exodus 11– God makes a distinction...

As chapter 10 ends, Pharaoh is ordering Moses from his presence never to return. Before Moses leaves God speaks with him and through him to Pharaoh one last time. Chapter 11 is God's final word to Pharaoh... Death of all first born throughout Egypt...human and cattle!

What struck me as I read chapter 11 was the contrast in sounds between the Egyptian and Hebrew homes that night. *There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt--worse than there has ever been or ever will be again* (6). I tried to hear in my mind's ear what that sounded like... every family struck with death at the same time. Mothers and fathers wailing. Brothers and sisters weeping... all at the same time. My heart ached at the pain.

The Hebrews experienced something very different... the silence of contentment, the silence of everyone enjoying restful sleep, a contented deep sleep. Even the Hebrew animals slept soundly. *But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal!* (7a).

God even tells Pharaoh why things will be this way; the 'you' in 7b refers to Pharaoh. *Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel (7b)*. God is putting an exclamation mark on His words to Pharaoh.

I am the Lord! I do as I will and you who think you are a man-god have defied me and you will pay! I alone am Lord and God and Almighty. You will never forget this and even more through your insolence the world will know that I am the Lord!

And so Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh's presence to await the deliverance the Lord promised!

I thought... the Lord God remains on the throne. He alone is the only Lord God Almighty and we disciples of Jesus Christ still await the final deliverance the Lord has promised.

*Thank You, Lord... thank You! Amen.*

### **Wednesday, March 13: Exodus 12– Deliverance, set free...**

Reading the account of the Passover was stirring and powerful for me. To think this was God's answer to the misery His people were facing. They were free... free to follow Him where He led and to live how He designed.

Last year we celebrated a mock Seder with a Messianic Jewish congregation. Reading this account of the original Passover brought renewed understanding of this event in the life of every Jew.

And it was during this feast, and in ultimate fulfillment of it, that Jesus broke bread and shared the cup with His disciples the night before He offered His life as the perfect lamb of God on the cross, once and for all paying for the sins we humans have committed.

Have you "painted the blood of the Lamb" over your life by believing and receiving Jesus? By bowing your knee to Him as Lord, Savior and God?

I pray you have.

And if you have, you are now free... free to follow Him where He leads and to live for Him with all your heart and mind and soul and strength! Alleluia!!!

*Jesus Lord of Glory and Perfect Lamb of God, I bow and surrender to You. Lead me... show me the way to live that my life might give maximum glory to You, the Father and the Spirit. In Your name, Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

### **Thursday, March 14: Exodus 13– Passing along the legacy...**

As I read, verses 8 and 14 connected with me... the passing along of faith traditions and reasons to the next generation.

The Israelites were to observe the Passover in such an obvious manner that children asked, "Why do we do this?" With the door open wide, parents can explain the tradition of the Passover and all that the Lord did in bringing Israel out of Egypt.

What a wonderful plan! Create a living remembrance that ties families to the core of the faith and do it in such a way that children's natural inquisitiveness is sparked, so passing along the faith is natural and pertinent. Brilliant!

I find myself thinking through some of the important Christian faith events and asking myself if my family and faith-community traditions do the same things.

I'm concerned that I have allowed the secular aspects of my society to infect my celebrations of Christmas and Easter more than I ever realized.

This stings some...

*Lord, where I have fallen short, forgive me and correct me. Give me and give Your Church wisdom in passing along the faith to the next generations. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Friday, March 15: Exodus 14–How do I react in a crisis...**

You are marching to freedom with all your belongings plus the silver, gold and other objects given to you by the Egyptians. Your spirits are soaring, God has just orchestrated your deliverance! All of a sudden you hear the pounding of hooves, you look up and you realize you are in trouble. A sea stands in front of you and the Egyptian army is gaining on you from the rear. What do you do?

The Israelites spiral into whining and self pity. Verse 11 astonishes me, the Israelites *said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?"*

When I read those words I wondered, why do we go there? The Israelites did what we humans so often do... they whine and pass blame. They could have spent time crying out to God for help and then waited to see what God would do. But no, at the first moment of pain, hardship, and trial, they dissolve into a pity party.

People who never think or speak about God, cry out, 'Why did God do this to me?', the moment a crisis arises.

Did the Israelites think the road to freedom would be smooth sailing with no hardship or faith required?

Do we think that following Jesus will be smooth sailing and all sunshine with no hardship or faith required?

When the situation isn't what I hope or expect, what do I do? Do I whine against God? Do I take matters in my own hands and 'figure something out?' Do I pray to the Lord and ask God for direction, guidance or deliverance? Does my response show faith in God or in myself? Do I whine like a spoiled child or put my trust in the Lord Almighty?

These are the faith questions tumbling through my devotions this morning...

*Lord, following You means just that... following, trusting, seeking, loving, serving, You. I pray for strength to follow You obediently and closely. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.*

### **Saturday, March 16: Exodus 15– Songs of praise...**

Back in the 1970's my campus Christian fellowship sang a, then modern, song that was based on the opening of Moses' song. As I read the text this morning, I could hear guitars strumming as we sang...

*I will sing unto the Lord  
For he has triumphed gloriously  
The horse and rider thrown into the sea.  
The Lord my God my strength my song  
Has now become my victory!*

It is almost word for word the King James Version. After going through it once or twice, the leader would guide us into singing it as a 'round.' Funny how clearly I can remember those times and this song.

Songs have incredible power to plant themselves deep into the human memory.

Just this week a group of us were meeting and one person asked, "Can you recite all the books of the Bible?"

Another answered, "Not really."

Then a third chimed in, "I can and began singing the books of the Bible from one of those children's CD's."

The power of song.

It is no wonder that Moses put this event to song... helping it live in the memory of the Israelites.

The church is blessed with song. Every era has its songs. Song helps us take our experiences with God and plant them deep within us.

It is no surprise then that Moses begins, *I will sing to the Lord...*

I did a quick search, singing to the Lord is also mentioned in Judges, 2Samuel, 1&2Chronicles and 25+times in Psalms. May we never stop singing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously and He will be our victory!

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation...*

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder...*

*He is Lord, He is Lord. He is risen from the dead and He is Lord...*

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing...*

### **Sunday, March 17, 2013, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.