

# - THE BOOK OF EXODUS -

*"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

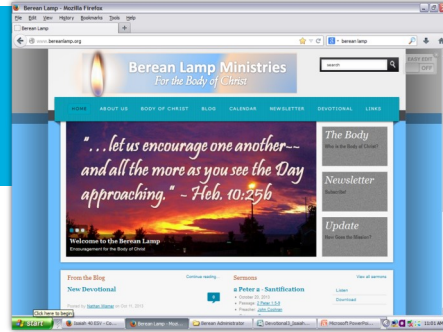
*(Exodus 3:14)*



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*For the Body of Christ*

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## The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**The Slavery That Leads To Death**  
by Nathan Warner - Page 4

**God's Purposes Will Not Fail**  
by Ginny Larsen - Page 10

**A Prayer of Exodus**  
by Jenean Kim - Page 13

**The God Who Knows**  
by Dana Dexter - Page 14

**The God of Glory, Goodness, and Grace**  
by Jane Titrud - Page 15

**Exodus – The Bread and Water of Life**  
by Lynn Warner - Page 20

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The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller





## God's Call on Moses

“The angel of the Lord appeared to him [Moses] in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, ‘I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.’ When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ He said also, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then

Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.’” (Exodus 3:2-10)



## The Slavery That Leads to Death

By Nathan Warner

*“They appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses.”*  
(Exodus 1:11 NASB)

### THE PHYSICAL SLAVERY OF ISRAEL

The story of Exodus is one of enslavement and liberty. It deals with the physical enslavement of the tribe of Jacob by the world superpower of Egypt.

That slavery led from bad to worse: *“The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously”* (Exodus 1:13). And then, *“they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them”* (Exodus 1:14). And then, speaking of Israel, *“Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, ‘Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive’”* (Exodus 1:22).

Yet, even in these awful circumstances, Israel continued to attend to their duties as slaves. Why? We see later that it was likely because of the supposed “benefits” of slavery that they continued in their estate as slaves without striving against it. After they are liberated, they complain at every sign of trouble and difficulty about how wonderful things were in their state of slavery: *“Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness”* (Exodus 14:12). *“The sons of Israel said to them, ‘Would that we had died by the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger’”* (Exodus 16:3). *“But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, ‘Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’”* (Exodus 17:3)

The hardships of personal responsibility, accountability, and liberty led many to look back fondly on the “comforts” of slavery, even



*“You SHALL have NO other gods BEFORE Me.”*

*(Exodus 20:3)*

if that slavery led to death (in this case, the death of all their boys—the death of the nation of Israel—wiping their names from history).

The fear of accountability and fear of personal responsibility kept the Israelites from shedding their blood in pursuit of freedom and in defense of their children. So, God had to act. He raised up Moses to free them, but in their freedom, they only grumbled about how better slavery is to freedom.

Part of the issue here is that there is a false sense of security in slavery. As a slave you think you aren't accountable for anything. The Israelites didn't understand that being "okay" with slavery was a decision they would be held accountable for also – one which they will be judged for in the end.

They believed they were not responsible for their actions – after all, you'd think a slave only does what he's told by his master and doesn't have to wrestle with right and wrong. This was a similar argument made by Nazi soldiers who "followed orders" to exterminate

Jews: "We were just following orders – we didn't make the decision – we aren't accountable for our actions." This is a false security as to obey an evil master is a decision you will be held accountable for.

Now, out in the wilderness, Israel learned the cost of liberty meant personal accountability. Every decision the Israelites made had personal consequences.

#### THE SPIRITUAL SLAVERY OF ALL TO SIN

Similarly, many people prefer the slavery of sin to the voluntary labor of liberty, even though that slavery leads to their death—the death of their name eternally.

*"Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin'"* (John 8:34). *"Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in*



death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?" (Romans 6:16)

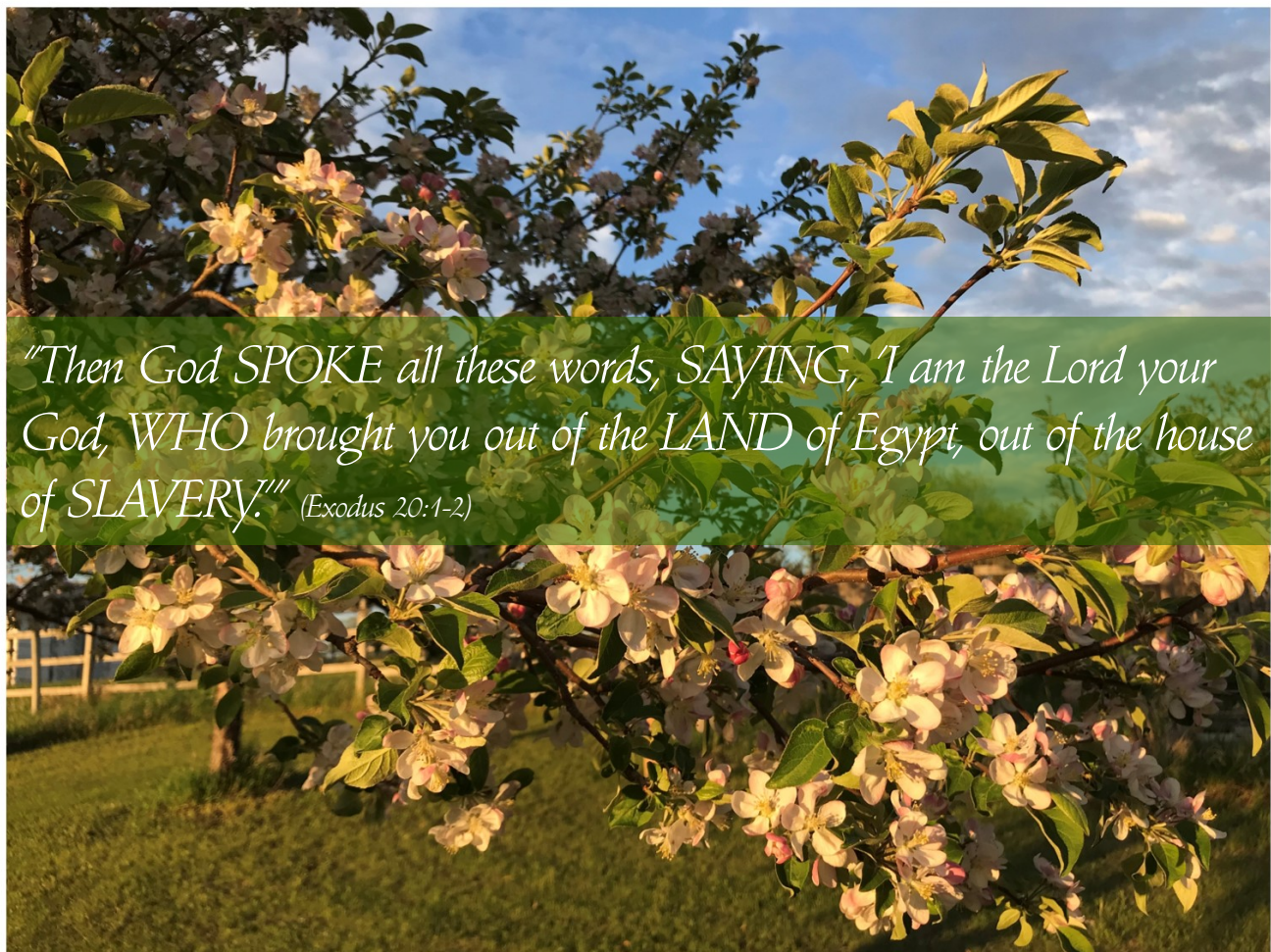
Paul speaks of death here very importantly, and it echoes how Israel's enslavement to Egypt was a gradual process that got worse and worse until it led to the eventual death of their entire nation (the murder of all their boys) - similarly, mankind's enslavement to sin brings us eventually to eternal death: *"each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death"* (James 1:14-15).

Like Egypt's genocide of Israel, Satan's slavery of mankind to sin leads to their extinction, only this time, its eternal. Strive as man might, there was no way to find freedom, but few had the will to even try, preferring the momentary pleasures of their slavery of sin in exchange for their souls.

But then something happened. Just as God

sent Moses to offer freedom to Israel from their physical slavery to a nation state, God sent His only begotten Son to offer freedom to mankind from our slavery to sin.

Just as Israel had to make a decision to obey Moses or not, no one can be a fence-sitter with regards to salvation, either. Remaining a slave does not absolve you of guilt when you reject the offer of freedom when it comes. You will be held accountable for your decision: *"He who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"* (John 3:18b). But speaking of those who obey the call to freedom, Paul says, *"Thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness"* (Romans 6:17-18).



*"Then God SPOKE all these words, SAYING, I am the Lord your God, WHO brought you out of the LAND of Egypt, out of the house of SLAVERY."* (Exodus 20:1-2)

## JESUS, THE SECOND MOSES

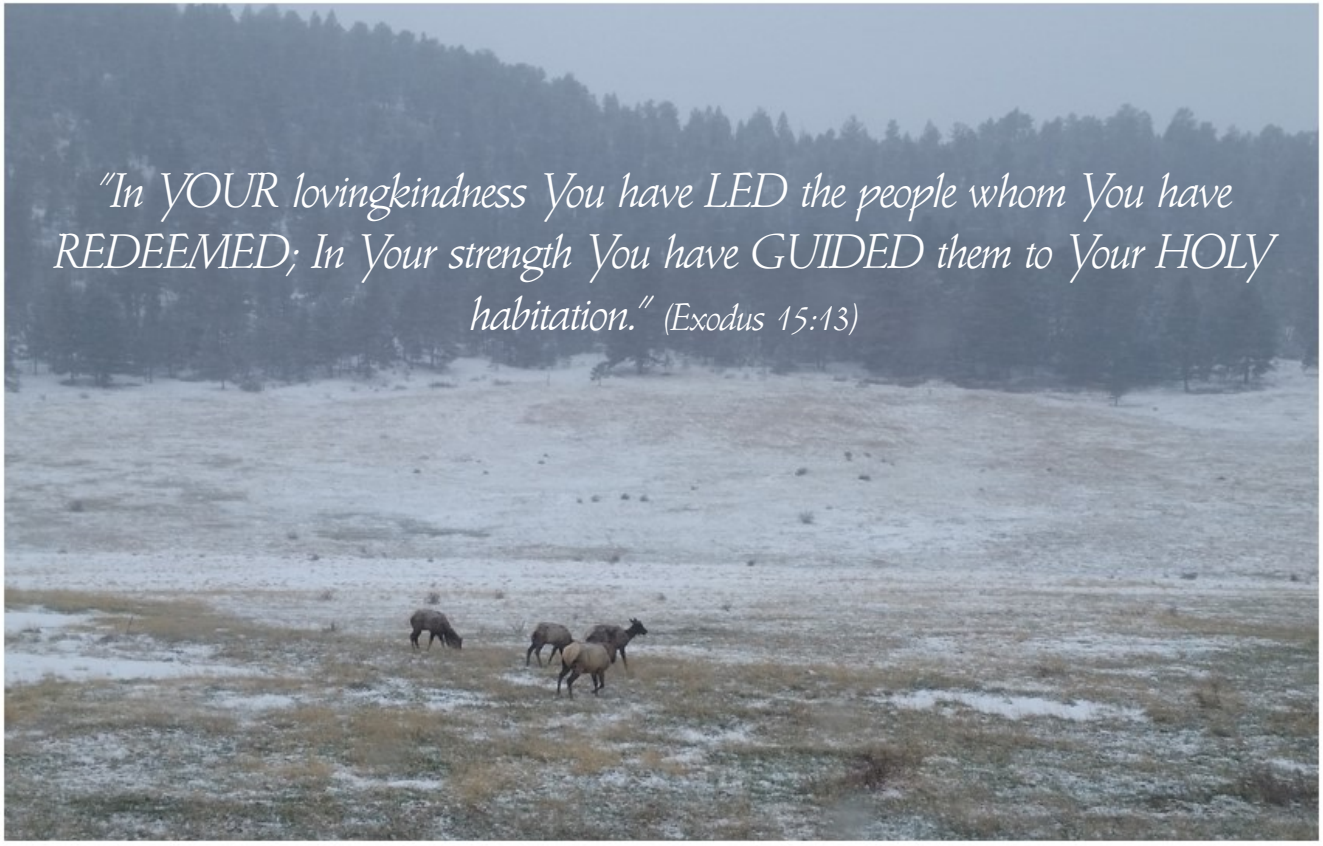
Jesus is the second Moses: *“For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). Moses himself prophesied about a coming “prophet” who would be “like” him. Speaking of Jesus, the Book of Acts quotes Moses: *“Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed to everything He says to you’* (Acts 3:22). This “prophet” would be meek, gentle or humble for *“Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth”* (Numbers 12:3), and He would be used by God for a great exodus from slavery.

Just as God commanded Moses to lay on emancipated Israel the voluntary yoke of the Law, Jesus speaks of a yoke He must supply to Believers. *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle [meek] and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light”* (Matthew 11:29).

This “yoke” is the burden of liberty and personal responsibility that will come to each Believer by way of God dealing with you through grace on the individual level. Salvation is a personal thing between you and God, *“so then each one of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:12). (This is in contrast to the contemporary Jewish belief that salvation related to the corporate nation, not individuals).

The liberty of personal accountability and responsibility before God is a burden because God expects you to *“take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak”* (1 Corinthians 8:9), *“for you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another”* (Galatians 5:13).

We can see here that the burden is “light” because it is freedom, but it is a burden because God’s expectation is that we still behave AS IF we are slaves to God, even though we do it voluntarily: *“Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God”* (1 Peter 2:16).



*“In YOUR lovingkindness You have LED the people whom You have REDEEMED; In Your strength You have GUIDED them to Your HOLY habitation.”* (Exodus 15:13)

What does this entail? *“For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life”* (Romans 6:19b-22). A voluntary slave to righteousness is a servant to all, loving others more than themselves.

#### THE PRACTICAL LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL FOR A FREE SOCIETY

It is fascinating that the Founders of the United States understood this. And this is the practical value of Christianity – namely, that the western world’s tradition of liberty and personal responsibility owes its existence to the legacy of Christianity. A free government

relies exclusively on a people that do not turn their *“freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another”* (Galatians 5:13b).

The Founders, for all their flaws, warned incessantly about free government failing if the culture abandoned the teachings of Christ. Although he did not believe in the divinity of Jesus, Thomas Jefferson set the record straight on the practical value of Christianity: *“The practice of morality being necessary for the well being of society, He [God] has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. We all agree in the obligation of the moral principles of Jesus and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in His discourses.”*

James McHenry, a ratifier of the Constitution said, *“Public utility pleads most forcibly for the general distribution of the Holy Scriptures. Without the Bible, in vain do we increase penal laws and draw entrenchments around our institutions...Bibles are strong protections. Where they abound, men cannot pur-*

*“Therefore I TELL you, do not worry about your LIFE, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will WEAR. Is not life more than FOOD, and the body more than CLOTHES? Look at the birds of the AIR; they do not sow or reap or STORE away in barns, and yet your HEAVENLY Father feeds them. Are YOU not much more VALUABLE than they?”* (Matthew 6:25-26)





sue wicked courses and at the same time enjoy quiet conscience.”

Another ratifier of the Constitution, Benjamin Rush, said, “The Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read in any subsequent period of life... [T]he Bible... should be read in our schools in preference to all other books because it contains the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public happiness.”

Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story declared, “One of the beautiful boasts of our municipal jurisprudence is that Christianity is a part of the Common Law. There never has been a period in which the Common Law did not recognize Christianity as lying at its foundations.... I verily believe that Christianity is necessary to support a civil society and shall ever attend to its institutions and acknowledge its precepts as the pure and natural sources of private and social happiness.”

Speaking to non-Americans, George Washington said, “You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are.”

U.S. Senator Daniel Webster explained that “the Christian religion – its general principles – must ever be regarded among us as the foundation of civil society.... Whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens.... [T]o the free and universal reading of the Bible... men [are] much indebted for right views of civil liberty.... The Bible is a book... which teaches man his own individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man.”

Noah Webster, a Revolutionary soldier, judge, legislator, educator, and writer of the first U.S. Dictionary, explained that “[T]he religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and His apostles... This is genuine Christianity and to this we owe our free constitutions of government.... [O]ur citizens should early understand that the genuine source of correct republican principles is the Bible, particularly the New Testament, or the Christian religion.... [T]he Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children under a free government ought to be instructed. No truth is more evident than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the

rights and privileges of a free people.... The Bible is the chief moral cause of all that is good and the best corrector of all that is evil in human society – the best book for regulating the temporal concerns of men.... [T]he Christian religion... is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government... I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of Christianity have not a controlling influence.”

These people had both an “eagle’s eye view” of human nature and had “boots on the ground” with regards to practical government. They intimately understood the practical value of the spiritual salvation of Jesus Christ and the power of God’s Word.

The Congress of 1854 reaffirmed the conviction laid down by the Founders: “The great, vital, and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and the divine truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In vain, then, do the great intellectuals of today attempt to advance our society by removing God’s Word from the public discourse and from our centers of education. By scrubbing it from our society, they are removing the single greatest protection for the innocent that the world has ever seen – the freedom that comes from salvation in Jesus Christ, which carries a burden of personal responsibility to God and a responsibility for our neighbors.

Instead, these teachers of today are advocating for the passions and lusts of the flesh. As we saw, the lusts of the flesh enslave us to sin and ultimately to eternal death, for “*when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death*” (James 1:14-15).

From a practical perspective, this leads to the breakdown of personal responsibility and accountability in our communities and as a result, the loss of the “yoke” of freedom and liberty. Modern servants of Balaam are laying the groundwork that spiritually enslaves people to sin and which is physically enslaving people to anarchy or tyranny—they are promoting the enslavement of generations of people.

## CONCLUSION

In light of this, Christ’s Bride must be all the more dedicated to the Gospel and the Word

of God in these dangerous times, testifying to our families, friends, and neighbors—living out our freedom in Christ in service to God and our neighbors—always eager for the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May we affirm and testify that this world is but a temporal reality that we shall be freed from when Jesus takes up His throne and frees the earth at last from the chains of man’s fallen estate.

*“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near”* (Hebrews 10:19-25). Even so, amen.



By Patty Buswell

## God’s Purposes Will Not Fail

By Ginny Larsen

*“And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”*

(Exodus 2:23-25 KJV)

God had a purpose. From the beginning of Abraham’s call, to Joseph’s being sold into slavery, to the children of Israel becoming slaves in Egypt – God had a purpose. Even the means the enemy uses to oppress, to conquer, or to destroy, God has already worked out according to His plans for His people. As New Testament Believers, we have the advantage of looking back and seeing how God worked to deliver the children of Israel and all His workings, how He used the hardness of Pharaoh’s heart and everything that happened to Moses – all for His plan to be carried out and His covenant to be kept with Israel.

“The farther we proceed in the sacred writings, the more the history both of the grace and providence of God opens to our view. He ever cares for His creatures, and is mindful of His promise. The very means made use of to destroy His work are, in His hands, the instruments of its accomplishment” (Adam Clarke on Exodus 2:25).

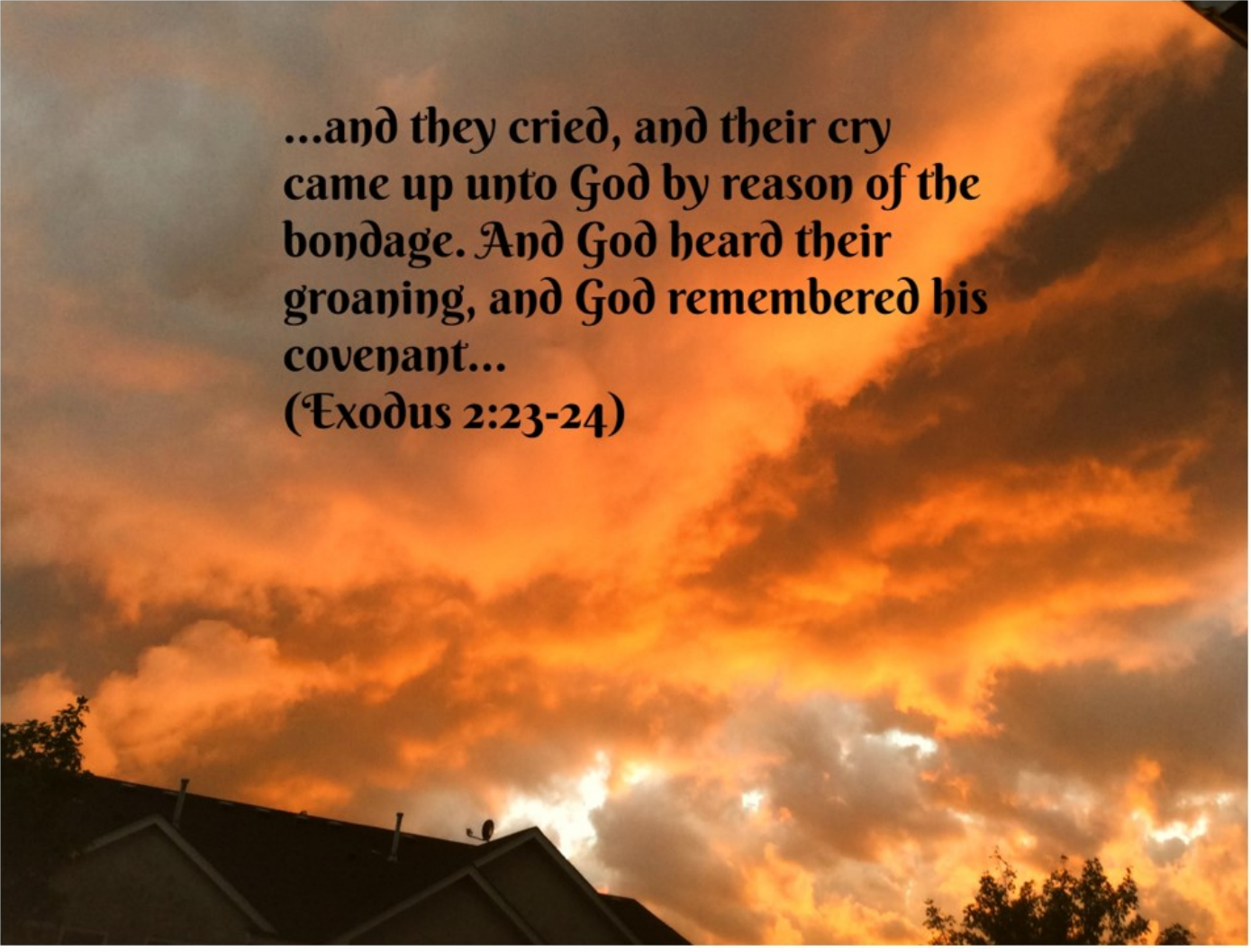
*“And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. **And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD**, when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them”* (Exodus 7:3-5).

The enemy has always had his servants that he raises up to oppress God’s children. Today we see much oppression against both Israel and the Church. Satan seeks to steal, kill, and destroy wherever he gets a foothold and is able

to do so. Yet God has His promises for both Israel and His Church. The very oppression and persecution he uses, God is also in control of and we can be sure He will use only to carry out His purpose in both. We don't need to fear or fret, as it says in Psalm 37, when we see the enemy seemingly prevail. God is not sleeping, nor does He need to be awakened. He hears our groaning and our cries. Just as He had a plan for Moses and used even the king's edict to kill all Hebrew babies to actually save Moses and all that happened after – in the same way, He has a plan today. Just as He used the hardness of Pharaoh's heart for His own purposes, He will use the hardness and plans of the "pharaohs" of today that come against Him for His own deliverance of God's people. When we are trusting in God, we should not want any other way or plan than the one He

has chosen, even though it may mean hardship before it is finally carried out. God's plan is perfect. Let us not settle for anything less.

When we are in God's plan, trusting in Him, there is nothing He will not deliver us from or through. We fret and fear over political powers that threaten to take away our freedom, but nobody can take away God's freedom to do as He wills. He will even use their evil for good in what He seeks to accomplish in His Church and ultimately to fulfill His promises to the nation of Israel. We need to walk by faith in His purposes, which will never fail, not in fear of the enemy. When we find ourselves at our own "Red Sea," with no way of escape and the enemy pressing in, we need to trust His hand and not look for our own way of escape. He is able to open up the Red Sea and make a way through. He created that sea



**...and they cried, and their cry  
came up unto God by reason of the  
bondage. And God heard their  
groaning, and God remembered his  
covenant...  
(Exodus 2:23-24)**

for His own purposes and to glorify Himself among His people and among the enemy. When we find ourselves in the wilderness, we know we can trust God is with us making all provision for us and has already planned what He will reveal of Himself to us through it and when He will bring us to the promised land awaiting us. His purposes will not fail.

However, if we do not put our trust in Him, we can make our wilderness journey all the harder and longer. But we need to remember: *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time”* (1 Peter 5:6), and *“the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”* (1 Peter 5:10).

We must go through our oppressions, our persecutions, our sufferings, our “Red Seas,” and our wildernesses in this world. But we can do so in faith, understanding God’s will and purpose, trusting His hand, and knowing He still is in control and that salvation and deliverance is always His will for His children. He will reveal His glory through it if we trust Him.

*“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the*

*adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”* (Romans 8:21-23)

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28)

*“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31)

*“He SAID to his people, ‘BEHOLD, the people of the SONS of Israel are more and MIGHTIER than we.’”*

*(Exodus 1:9)*



By Nathan Warner

By Katie Moller

## A Prayer of Exodus

by Jenean Kim

We abide as one (*many*)

We abide as one (*alone*)

Our *times*; to you, Lord Jesus,

We journey, slowly, toward our foretold home.

The Cloud surrounds our stride in earthly dust.

Holy Spirit: cloud and fire; our souls in Goodness thrust,

Who's set the way before, and follows fast. *Guide us Lord.*

We embark as one (*many*)

We embark as one (*alone*)

Toward works ordained before us.

Each story's radiance, ascends to Your throne.

Lord's eyes re-*search*, through light and dark, to find Ones

Who expect: He'll keep His word, and save *each*; and protect

Whose heart He finds completely His. *Find us.*

We decamp as one (*many*)

We decamp as one (*alone*)

Jesus, hold the water back,

Faithfully we come.

*Ref: Exodus 13:21, 14:21-22; 2 Chronicles 16:9;*

*Matthew 6:9-10, 14:1-6; Hebrews 11:10,*

## The God Who Knows

By Dana Dexter

*“During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.”*  
(Exodus. 2:23-25 ESV)

Veni, vidi, vici. Three words spoken by Julius Caesar after a swift military victory at the Battle of Zela in 47 BC. In Latin these words mean: “I came, I saw, I conquered.” Three small, yet impressive words. These words displayed the might of the Caesar and probably invited the trust of his Senate and people. In Exodus 2, we find four words that teach us about the might, care, and knowledge that our God has for His people.

Seventy people strong, Israel had entered Egypt at the end of the days of the Patriarchs to survive a severe famine. Four hundred years later, Israel had grown. This divinely promised growth made the Pharaoh nervous. So for the sake of self and national preservation, he bitterly oppressed the people of Israel (Exodus 1:8-14). Under the weight of their oppression in slavery, the children of Israel groaned. Their groans turned to cries for help from their God to rescue them. Our text tells us that God heard, God remembered, God saw, and God knew.

God heard the groaning of His people. He did not remain aloof to their suffering. Their heavy-hearted sighs, their tears, their grief, and groans were all heard by the ear of One Who never sleeps, Who never tires of the cries of His people. Next, God remembered the covenant that He had made with His people. The author of Hebrews tells us, “*For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself*” (Hebrews 6:13). God had sworn by Himself that He would fulfill His promises to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 22:16-18). God had committed Himself, and the One Who never forgets remembered His promise.

In the midst of their grief and suffering, “*God saw the people of Israel, and God knew.*” God saw His people. If hearing and remembering and seeing were not enough, God knew. Yes, God knows everything, but we must see the depth of this knowledge here. He intimately and personally knew His people, and He knew the burden they were under. He also knew what He would do on behalf of His people. In fact, His plan of redemption was already underway even before these cries for rescue had come up to Him. By now, Moses had been spared from death, nurtured in the house of Pharaoh, and was tending a flock of sheep in a wilderness in preparation for a far greater task to come. God knew.

The truth that God knew, and that He knows, takes on an even deeper reality in the New Testament. Again, the author of Hebrews tells us, “*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery*” (Hebrews 2:14-15). Jesus would come, He would see, and He would conquer. Yet, unlike Caesar, Jesus would conquer through His death. Jesus intimately knew all of the weight and temptations that we face (Hebrews 2:17-18), and He conquered on our behalf. God knew our desperate plight and made provision for our sin-enslaved souls to find true freedom and life through this conquering King, Who died for us and is risen to reign forever.

The salvation of God’s people from Egypt pictured God’s great rescue mission in the Old Testament. The cross of Christ pictures an even greater rescue mission, one that dealt with a far worse slavery than the slavery of Egypt. The slavery and dominion of sin is broken over the Christian, so that we can walk in a new and free life (Romans 6:5-11). Further, since Jesus has suffered and been tempted in every way like us, yet without sin (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15), we can be confident that our God knows. He knows all of our suffering, He knows our temptations, He knows us deeply and personally, and He knows the plans that He has for us to do us good for eternity in Christ (Ephesians 2:7).

## The God of Glory, Goodness, and Grace

By Jane Titrud

The Book of Exodus says that the glory of the LORD was displayed in a pillar of cloud that appeared after Israel complained of hunger in the wilderness of Sin on their way to Mount Sinai (Exodus 16:1, 10). It also implies that the entire nation saw a cloud resting on the top of Mount Sinai as well as the glory of God, which had the appearance of a consuming fire (Exodus 24:16-17).

Surely, Moses saw these displays like everyone else. His intimate relationship with God also afforded him a viewpoint like no other. When God called him up to the top of Mount Sinai, for example, the Bible says that he entered the midst of the cloud that covered it (Exodus 24:15-18). Thus, he must have had an extraordinarily personal experience with the glory of God. Nevertheless, sometime later after Israel rebelled against the clear instructions of God not to engage in idolatry (Exodus 20:1-6), Moses specifically asked God to show him His glory. This would seem like a curious request.

The circumstances surrounding Moses' request are as follows: When Moses first tarried on the mountain with God, the people of Israel fashioned a golden calf, built an altar to it, and worshipped it as a god. This action on their part broke the covenant they had made with God and threatened their very existence as a nation. Moses, therefore, went up on the mountain again to intercede for the rebellious nation lest God should destroy them completely. His request was graciously granted, but the people had also forfeited the favor and benefit of God's presence by their rebellion. God said in disgust that He would not go up with them to the Promised Land lest He destroy them for this as well. But Moses interceded again, and God once more granted His request (Exodus 33:12-17).

At this time, Moses asked another thing of God: *"Then Moses said, 'I pray Thee, show me Thy **glory!**' And He [God] said, 'I Myself will make all My **goodness** pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be **gracious** to whom I will be **gracious**, and will show compassion on*

*whom I will show compassion.'* But He said, *'You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!'"* (Exodus 33:18-20 NASB, bold emphasis added). Most of us know the rest of the story. God tells Moses to stand on a nearby rock, and when God's glory passes by, He will hide him in the cleft of the rock and cover him with His hand until He has passed by. When He removes His hand, Moses will be able to see His back but not His face (Exodus 33:21-23).

The Bible does not tell us why Moses asked to further see God's glory. Perhaps he wanted a fresh revelation of God since he would be leading this rebellious people into the Promised Land.

The point in relation to this article is that Moses' request would seem a bit unusual for someone who had already seen His glory on several occasions and up close and personal at that. Moreover, God's answer is somewhat unexpected in that He speaks of His goodness and sovereign right to show mercy (or to be gracious) instead of focusing on His majesty and power. This tells us that God's sovereign right to show mercy to whomever He wishes is a very important aspect of His glory in the form of goodness, and the goal of the rest of this article is to show why this is so.

We do not know how much of the following Moses and the rest of the Israelites comprehended. We know that God exercised His sovereign right to be gracious to some and hold back mercy for others, for many were slain for their rebellious actions at the time and yet others, like Aaron, were spared despite great guilt. From God's perspective, the nation of Israel and the priesthood of Aaron were thus able to carry on for the sake of His purposes. Yet, exactly how this demonstrated the awesome glory of God is not immediately apparent. At least any real appreciation for the mercy God had shown the people of Israel seems to have been lost for the most part on the nation, for they began to develop a consistent pattern of testing God's mercy in one way or another instead of showing Him reverence.

The vast majority of Israel failed to listen to Moses' instructions about the importance of obedience towards God. Instead, the nation continued to rebel repeatedly in the coming years and suffered dire consequences. They refused to believe that God would successfully

bring them into the Promised Land, so they were forced to wander in the desert for forty years. Once they were finally in the land, they made forbidden alliances with evil nations, failed to drive out all the peoples whom God had devoted to destruction, intermarried with foreign wives, and eventually came to worship pagan gods. God repeatedly sent the people prophets to warn them and lead them to repentance, but these too were rejected. Instead, evil kings led the people into more and more evil. Eventually, judgment came to the northern kingdom of Israel by means of the conquering Assyrians. These tribes were then dispersed among the Gentile nations. Moreover, the southern kingdom of Judah fared little better. After years of rebellion, despite the warnings of prophets, the glory of the LORD departed from the temple in Jerusalem, the temple was destroyed, and the people of Judah were carried away into captivity by the conquering Babylonians. The prophets foretold their return and return they did. Still, they continued

to be ruled by foreign powers and looked to the coming Messiah to deliver them as a conquering king. Again, not a clear picture of God's glory with respect to His mercy and grace.

God had intended His people Israel to be a light unto the world as well. Yet, in this too they largely failed. Most of the world continued to sit in darkness. Yet, the rebellion of man was not about to thwart God's plan of salvation nor His desire to preserve a remnant of faithful elect within Israel.

Enter the time period of the Gospel. John the Baptist did what he could to prepare the nation of Israel to see their need for inner spiritual salvation. He tried to help them recognize their coming Savior by preaching against sin, promoting repentance, and baptizing in water to symbolize cleansing. And, indeed, several Jews were baptized by John. Nevertheless, the majority were looking for a political Savior instead of spiritual deliverance from the enemy within their hearts. They had largely come to see themselves as righteous com-



*"God SAW the sons of Israel,  
and God took NOTICE of them."  
(Exodus 2:25)*



pared to the Gentiles because they had the Law, and they considered themselves the chosen people of God by natural descent. Hence, they not only failed to recognize their Messiah when He came in the flesh, but they participated in having Him killed, which was the epitome of rebellion and unbelief.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the Gospel was delivered first to the Jews according to the will of God. In other words, God still had regard for His people. And, even after the Apostles were sent out to bring the Gospel to other nations, they still addressed the Jews first wherever they went. Yet, the Jews for the most part continued to resist the will of God and failed to accept the truth. By far, the vast majority of those who were becoming Believers and getting saved were Gentiles—not Jews. Moreover, this situation was creating a dilemma among Jewish Christians, as they could not understand how or why God would choose to be more merciful to the Gentiles than to His own chosen people Israel.

To Jewish Christians, the fact that God was disproportionately saving so many Gentiles instead of the Jews seemed to negate the Word

of God and bring it to no effect. Paul deals with this subject and the question regarding the Jews in Romans, chapters 9-11. This is also where one can begin to gain a better understanding of the glory of God in connection with His distribution of mercy and grace.

Paul was in great anguish over the situation with respect to his fellow Jews, their rejection of him as well as Christ, and the fact that they were disproportionately opposed to the hope of the Gospel when compared to the Gentiles. He knew that some Jews were being saved because he and the other Apostles were all Jews. Yet, the number of Christian Jews was unquestionably in the minority. He addresses this situation in Romans 9 and carries it through to Romans 11. Moreover, it is best to take this whole section into account when interpreting the meaning of Paul's teaching here.

The general answer Paul gives with respect to the situation of the Jews is that *"they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel"* (Romans 9:6). In other words, being a natural descendant of Israel was no guarantee of salvation. He proves this by briefly reviewing the history of God's dealings with the Jews

*"So God CREATED great sea creatures and EVERY living thing that moves, with which the WATERS abounded, according to their KIND, and every WINGED bird according to its kind. And God SAW that it was GOOD."* (Genesis 1:21)



from their beginnings. In the case of Abraham, for instance, he had already shown in Romans 4 that Abraham was saved by faith and God's grace rather than the Law or works. But, how was this blessing and the promise to be heir of the world (Romans 4:13) to be passed on to His descendants? If the promises made to Abraham had been based merely upon natural descent, then Ishmael should have been the natural heir. But God made promises based upon His own sovereign choice of Isaac (Romans 9:8–9). In addition, He chose to bless Jacob instead of Esau, even though Esau was Jacob's twin – Esau was born first and neither of them had done anything either good or bad at the time of God's choosing (Romans 9:10–13). The choice was made before either of them was born and made against the order of natural descent as well. There was no injustice in this. It all goes back to what God said to Moses in Exodus: *"I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION"* (Romans 9:15). God's choice to have mercy did not depend upon anything man willed or did but upon God's sovereign right to choose mercy for whomever He pleased (Romans 9:16). And, by the same token, God could also choose to harden whomever He pleased for His own purposes: *"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP. TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.' So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires"* (Romans 9:17–18). Hardening is the flip side of sovereignty with respect to mercy. He can choose either way. Yet, we will see that His choices were not unfounded with respect to Israel. They merely depended upon broader purposes that were not yet revealed and understood at the time.

The notion that this section of Romans is talking about God choosing to save an elect remnant of both Jews and Gentiles based upon the principles of predestination and God's sovereignty alone is premature in this context. It fails to take into consideration the rest of Paul's argument for the case of the Jews, which runs through chapter 11. Furthermore, such an interpretation does not fit the present

context. It fails to provide any real answer to the dilemma with respect to the Jews because it does not tell us why a disproportionate number of Gentiles were being saved despite God's promises to the Jews. The idea that God merely chooses to save whomever He pleases is simply too shallow an answer.

Besides, the Book of Romans provides a much richer answer. It tells us that God endured with great patience the rebellious, ungrateful, and unbelieving Jews for the sake of showing glory to others: *"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles"* (Romans 9:22–24). In other words, God put up with the rebellion of the Jews for centuries and only saved a remnant for the much greater purpose of bringing future blessing to multitudes.

Now we are getting closer to understanding how the situation with respect to the Jews would eventually come to magnify the glory of God. God's dealings with His people, Israel, were anything but capricious. If He had not shown them mercy, they would have ended up like Sodom and Gomorrah (Romans 9:27–29). And, the fact that He mercifully preserved a remnant not only maintained the promises He made to the fathers, it provided the justification for extending mercy to the Gentiles as well.

The glory and goodness of God here are reflected in the fact that He loves to show mercy. We can see this in the economy of the Gospel in that *"there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for 'WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED'"* (Romans 10:12–13). In other words, salvation was never meant for just an elite few.

Moreover, the mystery revealed to the Church through Paul is that a partial hardening has presently come upon the Jews for the sake of the Gentiles (Romans 11:25). Like branches in an olive tree, the Jews have largely been cut off from the rest of the tree as a judgment

for their unbelief. The Gentiles, in turn, have been grafted in (Romans 11:19–22). Nevertheless, this is not the end of the story. There will come a time when the fullness of the Gentiles will come to faith and then the situation will change. God will then turn His attention to the Jews once more and all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25–26). *“For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all”* (Romans 11:30–32).

After revealing this mystery, Paul breaks into a doxology commemorating the wisdom and knowledge of God in all of this, for He has used the failings of mere men to benefit the world with respect to salvation! And who but God could do such a thing? Thus, Paul exclaims, *“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”* (Romans 11:33) He was never at the mercy of fallen man and obliged to save

a wicked and rebellious people, but He was willing to use this situation to bless as many as possible.

The obvious point, of course, is that man is wholly dependent upon the grace of God for salvation. But, the pattern of rebellion exercised by the Jews over the years may also be regarded as an object lesson to the Church. It shows that the Law of God, even though revealed by God and written in stone, is not capable of changing the human heart. The Church, therefore, must never fall back into unbelief by trying to modify God’s plan of salvation. No one can earn salvation by coming under the requirements of the Law or by trying to fix oneself up for the Lord via self-help schemes. Victorious Christian living only comes through salvation and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit.

By the grace of God, He has provided the one true Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we should all cry, “Blessed be the Lord of glory, goodness, and grace!”

*“Now Mount SINAI was all in SMOKE because the Lord DESCENDED upon it in fire; and its smoke ASCENDED like the smoke of a FURNACE, and the whole MOUNTAIN quaked violently.”* (Exodus 19:18)



## Exodus – The Bread and Water of Life

By Lynn Warner

Exodus foreshadows the bread and water of eternal life, Jesus Christ, by introducing the physical bread from heaven called manna and the water from the rock which Moses struck. Both bread and water are necessary for physical life in the wilderness. But the Bible shows that the true bread from heaven (Jesus) and the living water (the Holy Spirit) are necessary for our Exodus (departure) from physical life to eternal life. Eternal life is knowing *“Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”* (John 17:3b KJV).

In Exodus, the people were hungry and murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. God heard and answered in Exodus 16:4, *“Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the*

*people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.”* This was the physical bread foreshadowing the true bread of eternal life.

Jesus explained the true bread of eternal life in John 6:47-51: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

Here, Jesus was clear that the true bread is His flesh – meaning, He would die for man’s salvation.

Similar to murmuring for bread, the people murmured for water in the wilderness against Moses, who cried to the Lord in Exodus 17:5-



*“TEACH them the statutes and the LAWS, and make known to THEM the way in which they are to WALK and the WORK they are to do.” (Exodus 18:20)*

By Jenean Kim

6: *“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”*

Like the manna and the true bread of heaven, the water from the rock foreshadowed the Living Water of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, as we read in John 7:37-39: *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet*

*glorified.)”*

This foreshadowing of bread and water, being Christ, our true Exodus, is summarized in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; 16: *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ...The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? ?”*

Jesus Christ giving of His life for those who believe on Him was foreshadowed in Exodus by bread from heaven and water from the rock. He is our true bread, living water, and true Exodus to the heavenly Promised Land.

*“The Lord DESCENDED in the cloud and STOOD there with him as he CALLED upon the NAME of the Lord.”*

*(Exodus 34:5-7)*



By Lynn Warner

## **October-December Newsletter Theme THE BOOK OF MARK**

**Submission Deadline: October 27**

**Publish Date: November 5**

### **Themes to think about in the Book of Mark:**

**Why is the story of the Gospel important?**

**Why did Mark leave out the birth of Jesus from his Gospel?**

**How do you explain the so-called “discrepancies” between the different Gospels in how they record the same events?**

**Is the Book of Mark the least-read Gospel? If so, why?**

**What are some special things that the Gospel of Mark contains?**

**Why do you think God delivered four different accounts of the Gospel to mankind in His Word?**

**Why was the Gospel according to Mark written?**

**Who was Mark?**

**Why is it important that the Gospel according to Mark is in the Bible?**

**Why is the life of Jesus important?**