

Exod 03-05-04b

Let's resume our study now in Exodus chapter 7 and chapter 8. This is where the sequence of plagues begins. We saw the first plague in chapter 7, the water turning to blood, the river stinking, the fish dying. Pharaoh did not relent, he did not let the people go.

The second plague in chapter 8 of frogs, we notice the relationship of the Nile and its water to life in Egypt. The plague sequence, the sequence of 10 afflictions or 10 pestilences, depending on how we look at them, we know that there are three cycles of three and then the final one, but the first and the last do have to do with blood, they do have to do with life and death in the grandest sense. The Nile figures so prominently in the first because it was considered by the Egyptians to be the source of life and in a practical sense it was.

And yet God demonstrates or will demonstrate in the final slaying of the firstborn, which is associated with the blood of the Passover lamb, that it is in fact he and he alone who holds the keys of life and death. And it is a powerful reminder to us that whether we live, we live to the Lord, if we die, we die to the Lord, whether we live or die, as Paul says, we are the Lord's. And a great deal of what takes place in our life depends on our attitude toward God and toward those things we saw in our first lesson this morning, which has everything to do with remembering God, remembering his mighty works, remembering his name, remembering his promises.

We saw that of course in our scripture reading in Psalm 105. But we pick up now, having looked at the first cycle of three plagues, the plague of the striking of the river, so that the only place they could get clear water was to dig around the river and let the soil filter a little pool of water from which they could dip and drink. But if they tried to store it in a container, sort of the reverse of what God did with manna.

Manna would fall from heaven and was a blessing. But if one tried to store it on any day other than the Sabbath, it would go bad overnight. And in the same way, although that was a benefit and was a source of nourishment, this is an affliction of the water.

And the only water they could find to drink for that first week was the water that was filtered by the soil when they would dig near the Nile. But if they tried to store that water or do anything with it, it would turn to blood. Then we saw the plague of frogs.

You remember the frog goddess? The Nile of course was the lifeblood of one God and the frog goddess, Heh, was the target of the second. When the plague was removed, it left this awful aftermath of all these dead frogs that had to be shoveled up. You may remember from your high school biology class if you dissected a frog that there's nothing good about a dead frog, in my opinion.

Then we saw the third plague last time, which is called lice. It's some sort of infestation. Some people think it was gnats.

The words here are so old in Hebrew, and the flora and fauna are so hard to identify in some cases in the Bible. We don't know if this was a flying or a crawling insect. We do know that it was a biting insect.

The word itself has the idea of something that fixes itself into skin. It either stings or it might be like a tick type of thing that afflicts both man and beast. I personally think this was a crawling insect like lice or ticks or fleas or something of that ilk, because animals are not too terribly afflicted by flying insects unless they're very strong, like a horsefly.

But these are very small and seem to come from the dust of the earth, which makes you think that they are no-see-ums of some sort. Now we have the fourth plague of flies beginning in verse 20. The Lord said to Moses, Rise early in the morning.

Stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. We saw this last time once again in the beginning of the cycle. Moses meets Pharaoh at the river as he comes to the water to worship the gods of Egypt to give at least formal obeisance to them.

He says, If you will not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you. But you'll notice, of flies is in italics. He says, I will send swarms on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses.

The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms and also the ground on which they stand. On that day I will set apart the land of Goshen. I will make a difference between my people and your people.

The Lord did so. The swarms came to the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, Go! Sacrifice to your God in the land. Moses said, It's not right to do so. We would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God.

If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? This is because there were many animals in Egypt that were considered sacred because they were supposedly the embodiment of gods and were the incarnation of gods. And they thought that by slaying these animals, this was an attack against these gods. So, Jupiter was thought to have been incarnated as one animal and Isis was thought to have been incarnated as another animal.

And so, some of the sacrificial animals of the Israelites were considered sacred, just as they are today. Beef in India, among the Hindus, is an example. Cattle.

And so, Moses says, these plagues are designed to show that God is the God of Israel. And you can't let your good be spoken of as evil in this sense. If we do this right before their eyes, they're going to just be shocked and offended.

It isn't going to accomplish the purpose of glorifying God. But, the key phrase there in verse 25 is, sacrifice to your God in the land. You can have a little festival here, just don't leave.

And that, of course, is not the idea. We'll be stoned. He says, we will go how many days journey into the wilderness? Three days.

So, if you know the length of a day's journey, you should be able to take a compass on the map from Goshen and it should intersect Mount Sinai because that is where they're going to go worship. That was the sign that God had given Moses so there should be a three days journey for a group of people of this size to travel to reach the place of worship. Three days journey.

And I find it interesting that from the time of David through the end of the church age is 3,000 years. Three days out of the seven that constitute human history from a biblical point of view, you have the kingdom of Israel and you have the kingdom of Christ. We are being formed into a kingdom of priests.

Now, of course, Abraham lived some 800 years before David and you have the formation of God's holy people going all the way back to Adam and Eve and Seth and Abel and all of those who are found in the pages of the Old Testament scriptures. But looking at it in terms of kingdom, in terms of nationhood, we are a holy nation to God. We are a peculiar people.

Peculiar in a good sense, hopefully. But those three days of human history are occupied with that and this three days is what will separate Israel from Egypt so that they can become a nation. And it's a reminder that we are to become a holy people.

Paul talks about the fact that Christ died to separate to himself a bride who is without spot and without blemish, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. And that is the church. We are to be that nation, separate and distinct from Israel.

We're not the new Israel. We're not the continuation of Israel. We are separate and distinct as a people.

It is another kingdom. So there are three kingdom days so far in human history. The thousand years David and Solomon were right around 1000 BC and we ourselves have a 2,000 year span in human history.

Three days journey into the wilderness. Sacrifice to the Lord our God as he will command us. Notice Moses is not sure exactly what the sacrifice will entail because he already has an inkling that there is going to be a change from the family priesthood and rather than having the elders of each clan and family and tribe perform these sacrifices, there is going to be a new priesthood instituted.

So he says God will command us on the details of the sacrifice. We don't know what they're going to be yet. So Pharaoh said I will let you go that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in

the wilderness only you shall not go very far away.

Just intercede for me. Make intercession on my behalf. His response stands in contrast to Nebuchadnezzar.

Once Nebuchadnezzar, much later in history, sees the manifestation of the God of Daniel, the God of the three friends, he has a positive response. Nebuchadnezzar actually becomes a believer in God as a result of seeing the manifestation of God's power. Pharaoh had that opportunity and chose against it.

It doesn't say anything about God hardening Pharaoh's heart with regard to acknowledgement of God himself. It says I will harden his heart that he will not let the people go. But that is a result of his rejection of God and he had a freewill opportunity to accept God after seeing this manifestation of power and he chooses against.

But keep in mind God raised up Pharaoh for this very purpose. He is a reflection. Kings and nations are often a reflection, aren't they? When we were studying the Gospel of Mark and we came to the chapter that is devoted, the last half of the chapter is devoted to the story of John the Baptist in prison with Herod.

And Herod had the opportunity. He was fascinated by John and he wanted to see him do a miracle. He liked to hear what he had to say but he wouldn't let him go and he kind of sat the fence until he was forced by the dance of the seven veils there to behead him.

And when it came to a choice and he was forced to a choice, he chose to kill the prophet. And Herod as a king in Israel is a metaphor. He's a symbol.

He's a reflection of what the nation is going to do to the Lord Jesus. They're going to be fascinated. They're going to want to hear the wonderful words.

They're going to look for a miracle. But when pushed and when forced to choose, they're going to put Christ on the cross. Well, in the same way, Pharaoh as the king of Egypt is symbolically in Scripture represents Satan.

Pharaoh is the king of Egypt, the king of this kingdom of darkness, this kingdom that represents the enslavement to sin. And in the same way that even with opportunity he rejects, this is what Satan has done. And the analogy tells us something that we don't find explicitly stated in Scripture.

There's often been speculation, well, in human history man falls, man sins against God and there is an offer of salvation that we either accept or reject. Was there in the original fall of Satan and his third of the angels that went with him, was there some offer of grace before judgment? And my conclusion from the pattern of Pharaoh is yes, there was. God is immutable.

God does not change. Every place you find judgment in Scripture, you find the opportunity of

grace before judgment. And I find it hard to believe that in the heavenly realms there would not have been some opportunity of forgiveness, some opportunity of restoration.

I don't know what it would have entailed. I do know one thing, the death of Christ on the cross does not cover the angels because to mediate, one has to partake of the same nature. And there would have had to been a different cross, a different sacrifice to atone for angelic failure, angelic fall, angelic sin, angelic corruption.

The work of Christ on the cross is a work for the human race. He partook of our flesh. He walked among us.

And that is a part of God's great operation in eternal history that we are not yet privy to. It's one of the things we will find out more about and be able to study in the millennial kingdom and beyond. We say, well, what will I do for all of those days and all of those years and all of those millennia? There is a huge amount that we do not know that has taken place outside of human history.

It's not revealed in the pages of Scripture. It is only hinted at. And that's one of the things.

But we can work backward in the same way we work backward from the woe song to the King of Tyre and we learn things about Satan's fall. You can look at the woes that befall Pharaoh and the hardness and the impenitence of his heart and read back a picture of Satan because the Word of God clearly pictures Egypt and Pharaoh in terms of the kingdom that enslaves mankind until God delivers us under the blood. And so reading that back and especially passages like this where there is this temporizing and this seeming willingness to change, but it is superficial, it is temporary, it is devious, it is falsely motivated, it's not a genuine repentance, it isn't a genuine turning, it is an expedient.

It is something to stop the pain, something to stop the pressure. And as soon as the pain stops, as soon as the plague is mediated away, the old attitude returns. And this is important by way of application because we learn to be efficient with our time in the area of our ambassadorship.

And there are people who will work and labor and argue and cajole and plead and witness time after time, hour after hour, year after year with individuals who follow this pattern. And it is not worthwhile. Look at the Lord Jesus.

He would go to a town or a village. He sent his disciples to towns and villages and he said, if they receive your word, well and good. If they do not, go outside, shake the dust off of your sandals as a testimony against them and move on.

Jesus did not linger in towns and villages. He came, he taught, people either responded or they didn't and he moved on. If you find someone with whom you are pleading, with whom you are connected or associated and you bear witness to the Word of God and you see sort of a temporary interest and then it fades and then some later time when they're under pressure they turn desperately to God looking for some sort of easing of the pain and as soon as the

pain goes away their interest immediately flags and fails and goes away.

Do not continue to waste your time. Don't make an emotional investment in the possibility that this person will turn. They are following the pattern of Pharaoh and it's in the Word of God for a reason.

We cannot let that distract us and deflect us and drag us down because we will worry and we will agonize and we will waste hours and days and years of our lives worrying over something that cannot and will not change. God alone will deal with them in the heart and once we have done our job of speaking the truth in love and giving a reason for the hope that is in us, if there is not some sort of glimmer of light and sustainable pattern of positive decision-making, we have to pull up stakes and move on. We've got to shake the dust off our sandals and be available in a place of service that will make a difference, in a place of ministry or ambassadorship that will make a difference.

Do not allow yourself, we have to get in a destructive orbit around a center of gravity that just spirals us away from productivity and fruitfulness and this is what happens. God does not deal even here with Pharaoh for long. He does the three cycles and he gets his people out of there.

We need to do the same. Moses says in verse 29, Indeed I am going out from you and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.

So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. The Lord did according to the word of Moses. Now notice we are beginning to see a pattern as well that God is not responding directly to Pharaoh.

God waits for the word from Moses. We saw this in the previous plague where God in verse 13 did according to the word of Moses, cried out and the frogs were removed. Remember that? Time and again there is a statement in theology, in Calvinist and Reformed theology that says you're blaspheming, you're arrogant and you're proud when you say that you have to claim by faith and a free will decision salvation from God because you're making God respond to your choice and your will and your timing instead of acknowledging that God decreed all of this in eternity past.

You're putting God at the behest of man. Well I'm here to tell you from the word of God, God puts himself at the behest of man and that's a sovereign decision on his part to do so. And look at the pattern of scripture.

Time and again God will wait for the word from a prophet. It is when Elijah prays that the top of Mount Carmel is removed by a bolt of lightning from heaven. It is that the word of Moses and the stretching forth of the rod that the Red Sea is going to part.

Time and again God operates on the timing and at the word of a prophet or representative on

earth. That's the way he has chosen to interact with us and it is not blasphemy and it is not unbiblical to say that God calls us and waits for us to respond and when we respond then he effectually works the work of salvation for us. So if you ever have someone come and start giving you grief about oh you're Arminian and you're cooperating and you're telling God what to do when you say you're going to place your faith in Christ, just take them back to Exodus chapter 8 and show them these verses 13 and 31 where God did according to the word of Moses.

He removed the swarms from Pharaoh from his servants and from his people not one remained. Now notice God is showing a lot of ability and flexibility and and diversity here because when the plague of frogs was stayed the frogs didn't disappear completely and not one remained. All the frogs remained and rotted.

Here the swarms disappear completely and not one remains. Verse 32 Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also neither would he let the people go. So now we enter chapter 9 of Exodus.

The Lord said to Moses go into Pharaoh tell him thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews let my people go that they may serve me for if you refuse to let them go and still hold them behold the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field on the horses on the donkeys on the camels on the oxen and on the sheep a very severe pestilence. The Lord will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt so nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel. Then the Lord appointed a set time saying tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.

Remember one plague back Moses said Pharaoh you set the time and Pharaoh said tomorrow this time God sets the time. So the Lord did this thing on the next day all the livestock of Egypt died but at the livestock of the children of Israel not one died. And when you go back to the old King James it uses the word murrain and if you trace the etymology of that word it is a word that means a sudden death.

It is used of an affliction that comes on livestock where they go through all kinds of grotesque suffering before they die but this word in Hebrew literally has the idea of a death. It's a pestilence of death that comes on the cattle. So this New King James translation is actually closer to the Hebrew.

This pestilence that comes on them is a deadly pestilence. So in verse 7 Pharaoh sent and indeed not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead but the heart of Pharaoh became hard and he did not let the people go. So now we come to the third in the second cycle of plagues.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh and it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt. So they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh and Moses

scattered them toward heaven. They caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.

And this is kind of funny. Verse 11. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians.

It's real embarrassing because the God of the Hebrews had brought out these boils and they are supposed to be the all-powerful representatives of the gods of Egypt but they had these great big boils all over their face and arms and they couldn't come out and face Moses. It was too embarrassing because it's like a mute witness to their powerlessness before God. The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh he did not heed them just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

Now when you look at this cycle of three plagues, the second cycle, what do you notice about the the plagues? The swarms that come on all of the land, there is a difference between the land of Goshen and the land of Egypt. In the fifth plague against the livestock there is a profound difference. All of the beasts, and this doesn't mean every single animal, this is not the pets or the cats and dogs and when it talks about the livestock, these were the food animals, the ones that they raised for food.

Because obviously when it says the boils came and struck man and beast, if all of the beasts in Egypt had already died there wouldn't be anything for boils to come up on. But these were their cats. Remember how holy and highly considered cats were in Egypt? They were associated with a goddess and were highly touted and were a sacred animal.

So the cats broke out in these boils and their hair started falling out and all of these other animals that they considered sacred and would not kill and did not eat for food broke out in these in these boils. So the animal life is afflicted in all three of these and having already attacked the water, having shown the mud dwelling, the mixture of water and earth, and then the earth itself, the dust of the ground turning into lice or ticks or fleas or whatever these were, you start out with the the ground and the water. You have the water and then the mixture of water and earth where the frogs dwell and then you have the lice.

That's all the environment. The environment turns against them and God shows his master of the environment. In this second set of three plagues you have animal life and the Israelites share the environment and so it doesn't necessarily make a distinction, but beginning in the second cycle you have the distinction that is made and God does not let any of these animal afflictions go toward the Israelites.

Now when we get to the the seventh plague in verse 13 of chapter 9, the Lord said to Moses, rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go that they may serve me. This is starting to be an old refrain isn't it? For at this time I will send all my plagues to your very heart and on your servants and on your people that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. Remember the first ones were environmental, the second ones were animal and even though people broke out in boils and so on, he says these are going to be directed to your very heart, your servants and on

your people that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

Now if I had stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence then you would have been cut off from the earth. He's harking back to the animals who died from pestilence, it's the very same word. But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up that I may show my power in you and that my name may be declared in all the earth.

This is a very famous quote in Romans chapter 9. A lot of people think that Paul said that in Romans but God says it back here in Exodus chapter 9. For this very reason I have raised you up in order that I may show my power in you and that my name may be declared in all the earth. People ask questions about things like the Holocaust, about the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia or the awful regime in Iraq or Afghanistan or other places where there have been vicious dictators. Stalin in Russia, Mussolini in Italy.

You can point back in history to many oppressive despotic regimes and people say how can there be a God and these awful things happen. Trainloads of people being executed in the gas chambers and so on. Napoleon and the thousands that died under his era of conquest and on and on.

There's so many that you can point to. Well this is the answer. Pharaoh is the archetype of the human power that God allows to rise up to oppress and to afflict.

It is in order that he can show his power and that his name will be declared in all the earth. God turns cursing to blessing. He works all things together for good to those who love him, to those who are the called.

He says, as yet you exalt yourself against my people and you will not let them go. Behold tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down. Such has not been in Egypt since its founding until now.

This is already quite a long time. Egypt is one of the oldest empires and remains so down to this day. Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home and they shall die.

Now I ask myself this question. Didn't the livestock all perish two plagues back with the grievous moraine of the King James, the disease of the livestock? It says in verse 6, all the livestock of Egypt died but not one died in the land of Goshen. So now he's saying in this hail storm that you need to gather your livestock and if you don't get them out they're going to die.

Where did these livestock come from? I'll give you one guess. If you look at your field and all your cattle are dead and a couple of months have gone by, what do you do? Have to go buy more. Where do you get them? Goshen.

They had to go and so the Israelites are already, the tide of the Israelites is already beginning to

turn because now who is at whose mercy? They can charge almost any price they want for these livestock, right? Because their law of supply and demand, there is no supply in Egypt and there's an abundance of livestock in Goshen which was already the most prosperous region in Egypt. So the Egyptians, enough time has gone by that they have been able to go and purchase more livestock and bring them into Egypt and now they are about to die. And God says if you want to protect these animals you better get them out of the way because I'm sending hail.

God has not told them in advance in any other plague, here is the way to avoid it, has he? But here he's telling them, send now, gather your livestock and what you have in the field. You've got one day, you've got 24 hours because tomorrow the hail is coming. Look at verse 20.

He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses, get them in the barns, get them under shelter. And what is this? This is salvation in Egypt. Yes, the Pharaoh's heart is hard but there are those in Egypt who have learned from the first six plagues and are going to respond.

If you've got a total of ten afflictions, which one's in the middle? It's number five and number six, right? There's a dividing line halfway through and so halfway through the plague some of these people are starting to wake up and say, I don't think these are natural occurrences. I don't think this is just the flooding of the Nile that made it turn red and a fluke of nature that made the frogs come out and the flies came from the frogs and the lice came as a result of that. And by the time they get to the plagues that afflict only Egypt and not Goshen, people say, look, we've seen these three plagues where there is a difference made between the people of God and the people of Egypt.

I'm going to start paying attention to what this God of Israel says. And so you begin to see here that people in Egypt are given a chance. There is grace before judgment.

And even though Pharaoh's heart is hard, it doesn't mean that all the rest of the people in Egypt cannot make a choice to preserve themselves and begin to throw in their lot with the Israelites. So he who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of the Lord, among the servants of Pharaoh rather, made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. He who did not regard the word of the Lord left his servants and his livestock in the field.

Even the Egyptians begin to see, some of them do. Then the Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man, on beast, and on every herb in the field throughout the land of Egypt. Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven.

The Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted on the ground, and the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. And people have speculated about the nature of this fire that's on the ground. Was this ball lightning or lightning of some other sort? But you know that the most severe thunderstorms that come with great large hail, such as we just had a week or two ago, are often these great thunderstorms.

How is hail formed? You have moisture that is carried very high into the upper regions of the atmosphere and frozen, and then drops very rapidly. You have great turbulence, and anytime you have that great turbulence, you have these thunderheads and great lightning. And so this is striking, there's just lightning striking every which way, and when lightning strikes a structure or a dwelling or anything combustible, you have fires.

And so it is fire coming from heaven and remaining on the ground burning something that's probably a man-made construction of some sort. So the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

And this is one of the most severe thunderstorms that has ever struck the earth in any region. The hail struck through the whole land of Egypt. All that was in the field, both man and beast, and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field.

Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail. Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said to them, I have sinned this time. The Lord is righteous.

My people and I are wicked. Entreat the Lord that there may be no more mighty thundering and hail, for it is enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.

Moses said to him, as soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the Lord God.

Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head, and the flax was in the bud. Now this gives us a time reference, because we know what time of year the crops are in this condition, and this is February-ish in Egypt. The wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are late crops.

These are the earlier things that are planted in that region, and they were not yet there. So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh. Now this is another thing I would like to see.

You think about it, this grievous hail that kills people. It's baseball, grapefruit sized hail perhaps, lightning striking all over the place, and I wonder if it was sort of a reverse. You remember Joe Budishplik, or whatever his name was, that was in Little Abner, and everywhere he went he had the cloud over his head, and it rained all over him.

Well for Moses it must have been the reverse, because he walks through the hail, and it does not affect him. You know, what are they going to do, put up an umbrella? This is big enough hail that it kills people and animals, and breaks trees, but Moses seems to be able to navigate through it, and so there's a little mini Goshen wherever Moses walks, and whoever's with Moses just huddles close, because there's a hole in the storm for Moses to get to Pharaoh, and to walk back outside the city, right? It's not like there's a covered walkway to the gate, but this doesn't affect Moses at all, and so another often overlooked feature of this particular thing is

that there's a hole in the storm everywhere Moses goes. So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, spread out his hands to the Lord, the thunder and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth.

When Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard, neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the Lord had spoken by Moses. Well, what do we learn from this? God is putting the people of Egypt through the grinder of these plagues.

What do you think the people in Goshen are thinking? Goshen's a good place to be, isn't it? God does not afflict. God lets all of these plagues rain on Egypt and not on Goshen. This is national discipline on a nation in which believers dwell.

We often get worried when we look around in our nation, don't we? We see homosexuality not only tolerated, but accepted and glorified. We see the inanity and the shallowness and the godlessness spread and grow in our culture and in our national life. We see God removed from the classroom, removed from the courtroom.

I am surprised. I suspect the next thing will be, you know, they keep saying over and over again, you can't put the Ten Commandments in your courthouse. You can't put the Ten Commandments on the sign on the lawn of your state house.

This is federal law telling the states that they can't post the Ten Commandments. This has happened in two states now where they wanted to post the Ten Commandments somewhere near their state capital and federal law prohibited it. The next thing to go will be, in God we trust, off our money.

Why have they not attacked that? It will come. Well, we are lining ourselves up for national discipline and it can worry us and concern us. We say, what's going to become of us if God begins to discipline the United States? Well, when we meditate on the works of the Lord, when we meditate on His mighty name and His great and precious promises, we may suffer in the early stages of divine discipline, which our country may already be in.

But when the severe discipline comes, God will preserve and protect the remnant. And if we are doing what we're supposed to and we are faithful, we have nothing to fear from national discipline. I'll say that again.

We have nothing to fear from national discipline. Don't worry about it. We pray for our nation.

We pray for our leaders. We live our lives as unto the Lord. We have nothing to fear from national discipline.

Then you wonder, well, why am I making such a big point of that? Ever since 9-11, people have had a new phobia of terrorism.