

Exod 03-08-10b

We're ready now to resume our study in Exodus chapter 14. We have seen some of the details here of the miraculous transportation of something on the order of 2 million people with all of their gear and all of their flocks from one side of Yom Suf to the other, which took an entire night, as you can imagine, to even with 6, 7, 8 hours of time with that many people and that much stuff to move at, let's say, 1 to 2 or maybe 3 miles an hour, you have to have a very wide passage. I would guess that it was at least a mile wide, if not more.

And the people who had been backed up against the Red Sea, you can imagine they already had a pretty wide front because otherwise they would have extended 2 or 3 miles toward the Egyptians. But when they saw the Egyptians coming, everyone fled to the shore of the sea. So they were already many, many, many abreast.

And when God parts the waters, they can launch out with a very wide column that's not terribly long. As we estimated, just the people, not counting gear and so on, you have them 1,000 wide. This would take between a half mile and a mile, something closer to half mile with a normal spacing.

And then you would have something a few miles long and you could get them all across in a few hours across the starting line, depending on how wide the sea is and so on. But all of those are details that the Lord did not give us a lot of spatial and chronological detail on this because the emphasis is on God's power, God's will, God's timing. And yet we also saw that God did not speak from heaven and say, Behold, and then here the water parts and God says, Forward march! And they all go across and He says, Now that you're across, water come back together or any such thing.

How is this authority and how is this power mediated? It is mediated through Moses. Now this in one sense is window dressing. Does God need Moses to stand there with his hand in the air, with the staff in his hand? Is this some essential requirement? It's not.

In fact, God did not have to use a wind to part the water. Jesus merely spoke at the Sea of Galilee and the storm just stopped. You know, if you induce turbulence in a large body of water and then the inducing agent goes away, whether it's high wind or whatever, it still takes some time for all of the laws of physics and the kinetic energy that is a part of the surface level of the water to dissipate so that you have calm seas.

When Jesus spoke, He said three words, at least as it comes across in English. He said, Peace, be still. And when He said that, the wind stopped.

Not just the wind over the sea, but all of the wind behind it that had been impelling it and pushing it along. Whatever temperature inversions and high and low pressures that were causing that suction and that movement of air, the entire thing, the whole weather system was halted in mid-flow and all of the energy that was a part of those waves that were so severe that

professional sailors thought they were about to perish, instantly stopped. And He needed no agency for that.

He simply spoke and it instantaneously happened. Here, God puts dressing, puts artifice, if you will. He has symbolic things going on.

He uses this east wind. Why didn't He use a west wind? Why didn't He use a wind from the north or the south that would be pushing the water in the direction that it needs to go? Well, you remember our study of the twelve tribes of Israel, which we will revisit here shortly and I don't want to steal my own thunder, but if you were here for the end of Genesis, when Jacob pronounced his blessings on the tribes and we went into the significance of the tribes and their positions in the camp and the inherent value, the implicit or the inferred ideas behind the compass directions, there is meaning in the sides of the north. There is meaning in the east.

The glory of God, when it leaves the temple, is going to turn to the east. It is going to depart eastward. It leaves the temple and goes through the threshold of the door of the holy place.

It goes across the courtyard and out the east gate. It goes across and pauses at the top of the Mount of Olives, heading east. The deliverance for Israel, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns at the second coming to start His millennial kingdom and deliver Israel from the forces that assemble against them at the battle of Armageddon, from what geographical direction is deliverance for Jerusalem going to come? It is from the east.

The east is the direction of the rising sun. It is the direction of hope. It is the direction of renewal.

It is the direction of the mercies of God that are renewed when? Every morning. The east is the symbolic place of salvation and deliverance. It is the source of God's mercy.

The dwelling of God, of course, is symbolized by the north. We went through those and we will review them again. Do not panic that I am not going to cover it now, but I will never get through what we want to cover if I delve into that.

Suffice it to say, there is a reason why the wind is here. There is a reason why it comes from the east. There is a reason why the Israelites have to proceed against it.

There is an effort required to advance into their salvation. The New Testament says, Work out your own deliverance with fear and trembling. That is what the Israelites are doing here.

This is all of grace and it is all of God, but it requires willing participation. It requires obedience. It requires some effort to advance in the face of this delivering wind from God.

That is a teaching point. It has value. God did not need a wind.

Many other times God does things. He did not use a wind at Jericho. He did not use a wind at Mount Carmel.

He uses it here because it is something for them to advance against. It represents and foreshadows what they are going to be doing for the entire next generation. They are going to be advancing, even though they do not seem to be.

But the younger generation who will enter the land is learning to live through resistance. Learning to persevere in friction where there is opposition. Something to push against is what we need to build our faith, just like we build our muscles.

Another symbolic or teaching facet of this deliverance is Moses. God did not tell Joshua or Ahitab or somebody else who is down there in the midst of the Israelite congregation to stand up. He did not have the angel of the Lord stand and stretch forth his hand.

Moses is commanded in the beginning and in the end to stretch forth his hand. You remember in verse 15, it says, Why do you cry to me? Literally, this says, What do you cry to me? Ma is what? And that is the word we have here. Ma tsa'ak.

Tsa'ak is the word to cry out. He says, What are you crying to me? What? If you want a good way to remember that, there are a lot of little things for remembering Hebrew pronouns and so on. Who is he and he is she is true.

Who is the pronoun that means he in Hebrew. And he, H-I, is the pronoun in Hebrew that means she. Who is he and he is she.

And ma is what? And you can remember this by the name of the stuff that they are going to be eating for the next 40 years that falls at night and they gather in the morning. What is it called? Ma-na. And that literally means, What is it? Their diet is going to be, What is it? They don't know what it is.

People have been trying to figure it out ever since. Some people have speculated that it was bug secretions or some other strange thing that was a feature of that particular region. But the Israelites had been out as agrarians and agricultural raisers of crops and animals.

And Moses had been out in this same region and he had never seen it before. He didn't say, Oh, that's what the bugs leave behind. He said, Ma-na.

What is it? We don't know what it is. God put it there. It started when they first entered the wilderness and it's going to stop right before they go into the land.

And it was a supernatural provision of God. Ma-na. What is it? Well, here God says, What are you crying to me? What are you saying? That's our vernacular now.

So what are you telling me? God says, I've delivered you with a mighty hand. You just saw the ten plagues. You just saw the slaying of the firstborn.

I've brought you out. The Egyptians have showered you with presents and wealth. You come up against the sea.

Here come the Egyptians. And you're in a panic. You're sweating and saying, Oh, we're all going to die.

What are you telling me? Are you saying I don't know what I'm doing? Are you saying I didn't have a plan? I didn't foresee this? What are you saying? What are you crying out to me? What does your fear and your panic imply about your faith and your confidence in the God that has demonstrated over a period of months his complete domination and supernatural ability to deliver? Those plagues hit Egypt and not Goshen. Egyptians lost their cattle and not Israelites. Egyptians had their crops destroyed and not Israelites.

Egyptians lost the firstborn in every household and not Israelites. Egyptians showered the Israelites willingly with presents and said, Please go. Please leave.

Now you're here. And at the first whisper of trouble, at the first sign that there might be a threat, what are you crying? What are you saying? Well, we need to ask ourselves that question as well, don't we? We need to remind ourselves. Think about the Israelites.

Let's advance over the primitive people who lived 3,500 years ago and not make the same mistake they made. Yes, we will encounter threat. Yes, we will encounter opposition.

Yes, the wind may blow in our face. Yes, the Egyptians may pile over the horizon and threaten death, doom, and destruction. But if you go to God and say, It's all coming unraveled.

It's all falling apart. My life is over. There is no hope.

There's no help. I'm in a panic. I'm in distress.

I'm in fear. What are you crying out? What are you saying here? God is not in control? God did not foresee? God did not make provision? God brought you to a certain point and then kind of dropped you? Oops, oh, I had you in my hands, but I just little fumbled finger today and didn't see that coming. Gee, sorry.

Maybe you need to find a better God that doesn't have this fumble finger problem. What are you saying? That's what the Lord says to Moses here. Why? What? Literally, do you cry to me? And when your new King James says, Why? You need to cross it out.

He doesn't say, Why are you crying? He says, What are you crying? What are you saying? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. Notice the sequence. Tell the children of Israel to go forward.

Then lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. The sequence of events is, You start marching toward the undivided sea. Like lemmings headed for the edge of the cliff.

You start the people moving. Now this is an exhibition of faith, isn't it? And it makes no sense. Why are you telling us to march? Are we just going to march into the water and drown ourselves? Is this mass suicide? God says, He doesn't say stretch out your hand, part the water,

and then tell the people to go forward.

He says, You get the people mounted up, get their gear on the donkeys, and tell them to start marching. Head for the seashore. As they are marching, you stretch out your hand and the way of deliverance will appear.

Once they have started moving. The people are marching toward the sea before the sea divides. They have to have faith.

Not only in God, but they have to trust the delegated authority that God has given to Moses. Because that communication comes from Moses. Moses is the guy that says, All of you people, let's move.

Tell the children of Israel to go forward. Then lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand. Now that you see in verse 16 where it says, But lift up your rod.

I told you about wow, the little shepherd's crook letter. It just looks like a little walking stick with a bent part at the top. There's a little bit of a hook, and then it comes down.

It's wow. And that word is very versatile. It's a conjunction.

All through the scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures, it's translated and, but, now, then, when, after. Very versatile. Your safest bet is to say and.

And it normally implies sequence. This is the big issue in Genesis 1, 1 and 2. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. Wow.

And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And that and has been dissected more than any other single letter of the Hebrew alphabet for all time because was there a gap between an initial creation and a destruction? And is this a restorative account in the six days or what? That's what we have here. And you're most often in narrative given a sequence with wow.

It's called a wow consecutive. This happened, and then consecutively, this happened, and then consecutively, this happened. And what you get here, I really think but is unfortunate.

Here, the best English translation is then. Tell the children of Israel to go forward and lift up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea. And the implication here is tell them to go forward, then lift up your rod.

Then the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. See the sequence? It's just, it follows one after the other. And indeed, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and they shall follow them.

And I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army and his chariots and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. All of these are just a wow, just a little

shepherd's crook at the beginning of each new clause.

It's sequential. So, we saw the angel of the Lord go before them and Moses obeys. In verse 21, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea Who's going to see this? If you're stretching out your hand over the sea, it's just like in the Ten Commandments.

He had to find a little bit of a rise so that he's not standing down there, you know, stretching it out and he's just like three feet over the water. He's on some sort of a prominence. There must have been a rise where they could look back, look forward, see what's going on.

So Moses gets up on a little bit of a proclivity there and stretches out his hand with the rod in it. What does this do? If Moses was all by himself, if it was just Moses departing, would God have said, go up there and stretch out your hand and then go down and walk through? Whose benefit is this for, in other words? The Egyptians can't see them yet. There's still a pillar of cloud.

Who sees Moses stretch out his hand? Nation of Israel. Why does God tell Moses to go up there and why does the Bible tell us that Moses did that? This is what the Israelites see. God has communicated to Moses.

Moses has told us what God said. Now Moses, who is God's designated leader, designated deliverer, he's in charge of the operation deliverance here, it is at the timing of his stretching out of the hand that God acts. Moses possesses and exercises delegated authority from God.

And God makes a point of demonstrating that and impressing that on the Israelites. He says, you stand up, you speak, you stretch out your hand, and I will act. Now Calvinist and Reformed theology types get all upset when you say, well, you can't say that God is waiting to deliver until you exercise totally free will because now you have God responding to the behest of man.

You have God waiting and timing his actions based on when a man will decide something. And God is sort of conditioning himself on a man and you're elevating man too high. Man is hopeless, helpless, useless, and depraved.

And God would never do that. Well, excuse me, God says, I'm going to wait, Moses, until you climb up there and stretch out your hand with the rod and then I will divide the water. If Moses had not gone up there and stretched out his hand, the Israelites would have marched into the depths.

God says, you stretch out your hand, I will part the water. So he emphasizes and impresses on the minds of the Israelites that Moses is the designated authority, the designated agent, human agent, for the exercise of God's leadership in Israel. The same thing is going to happen down in verse 26 when the Lord says to Moses, stretch out your hand over the sea that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians on their chariots and on their horsemen.

And in verse 27, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. And when morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth. All of these pursuing pagans drowned.

Now, there are two kinds of stretching out of the hand. I can go down to Lake Ray Hubbard here, stand on the shore and stretch out my hand. There is no water going to part.

There is no deliverance to be effected by me deciding that it's time for me to raise my hand and part the water. This is done in complete conformance and obedience to God's word and God's plan and God's time. What is it when someone lifts up their hand and decides that they will choose the time and they will choose the way and they will choose the procedure for the plan and for the ongoing progress of the people.

I want to show you something back in a verse that we have already covered. This is back in 14 and verse 8. Go back to the beginning of the chapter, Exodus 14, verse 8. The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the children of Israel and the children of Israel went out with boldness. In Hebrew, this is not the word for boldness.

It says they went forth byadrama. Byadrama. Ba means in, by or with.

It's the letter B. Yad is the word for hand. Ramah, I think I mentioned this before, is the place name. It's the hometown of Samuel.

Ramah. Ramathayim means the heights. Ramah or Ramah in the singular means height.

They went out with a high hand. The children of Israel went out with a high hand. So we're going to cover the doctrine of the high hand this morning in our concluding study in chapter 14 here.

Doctrine of the high hand. There are two kinds of high hand. There is God's version of the high hand and there is man's version of the high hand.

You will find this same description, lest you think that this is building something on a small point. God makes this very same statement over in Numbers, chapter 33 and verse 3. In rehearsing the history of Israel and their departure from Egypt, talking about their journeys and the path that they took, they departed from Ramses, Numbers 33, 3 says, in the first month on the 15th day of the first month. On the day after the Passover, the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the Lord had killed among them. Also on their gods the Lord had executed judgment. We saw how each of those plagues stuck a finger in the eye of the Egyptian fish god and the Egyptian Nile god and the Egyptian frog god and the Egyptian god that controlled the sun and light and all of that.

Then it goes on and recounts their path. But the Bible makes a point of the fact that they went forth with a high hand. They are now being delivered at Yom Suf, at the Red Sea or Sea of Reeds, with a high hand.

At the beginning, the way of deliverance is marked out and is created at the raising of Moses'

hand with the rod of God in it, which is the symbol of his divinely constituted authority. It's the rod he carried when he was first commissioned at Mount Sinai. It is the rod that was cast down before Pharaoh and turned into a serpent and consumed the serpents of the magicians and turned back into a rod.

It is the mark and symbol of his authority of leadership in Israel. And he raises it over the sea in the sight of Israel. This is what they see.

And there's a reason why God has them do it. It is to impress on the minds of the Israelites God's deliverance and God's plan and purpose are being communicated and brokered and implemented through this man who carries delegated, divinely constituted authority from God. There is another kind of high hand that is not raised in obedience and is not raised in claiming the grace of God for deliverance.

And you may have heard and remember before that there is a sin of the high hand. It is raising the hand when you're not supposed to. When you have not been offered the grace of God to claim and you are not reaching out and claiming and invoking the deliverance of God.

And you are not exercising divinely ordained and delegated authority. And the sin of the high hand is found in Numbers chapter 15. Let's turn there.

Numbers 15 verse 30. The earlier portion of this chapter is talking about unintentional sin. You start in verse 27 of Numbers 15.

If a person sins unintentionally, we do this sometimes. We inadvertently, because we just weren't thinking, we may slight someone or overlook someone or fail to acknowledge someone or something that someone has done. We inadvertently give offense.

We inadvertently do someone a disservice or an injustice. We don't realize it at the time and we look back and we say, oh, that was insensitive. That was unkind.

That was thoughtless. That was heedless. It was an unintentional sin.

We didn't say, that dirty bird, I'll get him. I'll wreak my own vengeance and take matters into my own hand. I'll execute judgment on that person.

We do this not with any malice or forethought. It is more of a sin of omission or a sin of thoughtlessness. If a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering.

The priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally when he sins unintentionally before the Lord. It's not him saying, oh, I didn't mean to do that. It's when the Lord looks at it and says, I can see that was an unintentional sin.

Remember when Jesus said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. The major sin of the people who crucified Christ and called for His execution by the Romans was not overt

rejection of the Messiah. Their sin was earlier in being calloused and heart of heart and insensitive, unseeing, blind and deaf so that they were unable to identify Him.

They didn't realize that He was the Messiah and say, we don't want the Messiah. Their sin was earlier. And when Jesus looked at them and said, here they are crucifying the Lord of glory, why does He say they know not what they do? They don't know who He is.

And that was their sin. Their sin was in having already established a pattern of rejection and of evil and of alternate righteousness before Jesus ever appeared on the scene so that they were incapable of identifying Him. And their sin of crucifying the Messiah was an unknown sin.

They didn't know they were crucifying Him. They knew they were... I mean, it was wrong and it was sinful in a lot of ways. That's why Jesus says, forgive them.

He doesn't say they're not sinning. But He says, the basis for my appeal that you forgive them is they don't understand what they're doing. They don't have perception of it.

It is not an excuse because it is a sin and it does need forgiveness. But it is not the same as overt rejection that results in no salvation and consignment to the lake of fire. Some of the people who called for Jesus' crucifixion, I believe, were saints under the Old Testament system of salvation.

But because of their reprobate status, because of their hardness of heart, they were so blind and so deaf that they couldn't see the Lord when He appeared before them. And so there is actually an appeal for forgiveness. The standard view would say, those who crucify the Lord, they're hell bound.

I mean, how can you get more hell bound than someone who said, crucify Him, crucify Him. You know what I mean? But if Jesus says, Father, forgive them, then there must be forgiveness for whatever it is they are doing. So there is a difference between rejecting the Father as you reject the Son and in missing the Son because you have already calloused yourself over.

We're talking about that in more detail in our Acts study. But here you have the unintentional sin. The priest will make atonement.

Who sins unintentionally before the Lord to make atonement for Him, it shall be forgiven him. You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them. It doesn't matter what your status is if you committed an unintentional sin.

The atonement and forgiveness is all the same. Look at verse 30. But the person who does anything presumptuously, it says, Bayad Rama.

Very same phrase. Bayad Rama. The person who does anything with a high hand, whether native born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord and he shall be cut off from

among his people.

Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment, that person shall be completely cut off, his guilt shall be upon him. Notice, there is no sacrifice made available in the Levitical system to obtain forgiveness for a sin of the high hand. Now, lest we think that this is an anomaly, there are illustrations that immediately follow this in numbers.

Look at verse 32. And there is a reason why this follows. This story follows that commandment.

While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. Does this endanger anyone? Does it harm anyone? Has someone suffered a theft or a crime of any sort? God said, do no work on the Sabbath day. Well, what if you're cold? What if you need to cook? What if you have a reason and a justification in your own mind? There is no logical reason to not do the same thing you do in the other six days.

It is only because there is a command of the Lord that says, thou shalt not gather, thou shalt do no regular work on the Sabbath. It is a day to be set aside for something else. God made that up out of his head for no practical reason that a human mind could understand.

It is an ordinance of God. God has his own reasons for making that ordinance. This man says, I don't understand the rationale behind this.

It makes no sense to me. He gathers sticks the other six days. I need some sticks.

I wonder if he'll get them. And he does. Those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation.

They put him under guard because it had not been explained what should be done to someone who violated the Sabbath. The Lord said to Moses, the man must surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.

Now, this is the same penalty as for murder. This is the same penalty as for blasphemy or for any other capital offense. So, as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones and he died.

Well, guess what? A lot of people did not understand this and didn't agree with it. They said, my lands, nobody was hurt. What was the harm? It made sense.

He needed some sticks. What's the big deal? The Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel. Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and put a blue thread in the tassel of the corners.

What does blue stand for? Remember when you studied the American flag? What does blue represent even today? Loyalty. Faithfulness. You're loyal and true.

True blue, we say. It's a blue tassel. That's what it meant in the biblical times.

You shall have the tassel that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them and that you do not follow the harlotry, the fornication, the prostitution to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined. Well, my heart tells me that there's nothing wrong with this. I look around and see other people doing it in the nations and nothing happens to them.

Why can't I do this? God says, look, you put a little physical reminder. Today we might have a refrigerator magnet or a verse tacked up on the washroom mirror or something. He says, you need to find a way to remind yourself to be loyal, that you may remember and do all my commandments and be holy for your God.

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord your God. I am your authority.

I am your father. I am your provider and your protector and your security and my authority. Remember that? The reigning authority goes all the way down through the time of Samuel.

He says, you've got to learn to do what God says because God said it. Now, look at verse 1 of chapter 16. Korah the son of Ishar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi.

He's a Levite. Same family Aaron is from. With Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, who were sons of Reuben, took men, rose up before Moses with some of the other sons of Israel, 250 leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown, well-respected leaders in the community.

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron and they said to them, You take too much upon yourselves. All the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. This man that was gathering the sticks, you came down on him too hard.

We're all priests. We're all holy. God has consecrated all of us.

Who are you to say that he can't make up his own mind about what constitutes a life of righteousness before God? Why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? When Moses heard it, he fell on his face. He spoke to Korah. He says, Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is his and who is holy and will cause him to come near to him.

The one whom he chooses he will cause to come near to him. So do this. Take censers, Korah, and all your company.

Put fire in them. Put incense in it before the Lord. It shall be that the man whom the Lord chooses is the holy one.

Who has God delegated authority to in this crowd? Is it anybody who is among the company of the saints? Or is it the one God has designated? That's the issue. Moses said to Korah, Hear now, you sons of Levi. Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from

the congregation of Israel to bring you near to himself to do the work of the tabernacle and to stand before the congregation to serve them? He has brought you near to himself.

He's already given you special status. He's already given you a great opportunity for service. You and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, but are you going to seek the priesthood also? You want the leadership? You've got to have the top spot? You want the supposed autonomy and the supposed prestige that comes with being in the top slot, the most visible slot? Are you seeking the priesthood also? Therefore, you and all your company are gathered together, not against Moses, not against Aaron.

You are gathered together against the Lord. See, they've come up and said, Moses and Aaron, you're taking too much on yourself. You've elevated yourself and exalted yourself over the people.

Who told Moses to stand and raise his hand? Who put that rod in Moses' hand? God did. And to reject Moses and reject his leadership is to reject the Lord. Therefore, you are gathered together against the Lord and what is Aaron that you complain against him? So Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, we will not come up.

We don't acknowledge your authority. You don't have the right to tell us where to go. We'll stay where we want to stay.

We no longer accept your leadership. We're going to do what's right in our eyes. So they will not come up.

Look at what they say in verse 13. Is it a small thing that you've brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey? So now, bondage in Egypt is a land flowing with milk and honey. To kill us in the wilderness and you should keep acting like a prince over us? Moreover, you've not brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey.

You have not given us the inheritance of fields and vineyards. You're a failure. There were promises and you've not kept them.

We're not where you said we would be. When you put out the eyes of this man, do you think that we can't see? We don't know. But we're not able to see just as well as you.

We will not come up. Moses was very angry and said to the Lord, do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them.

They haven't suffered any loss since they left Egypt. I didn't take a tax from their flocks. I haven't aggregated anything to myself.

I've derived no personal benefit from this job. He says to the Lord, Moses said to Korah, tomorrow you and all your company are to be present before the Lord, you and they as well as Aaron. Let each take his censer and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before

the Lord.

Two hundred fifty censers, both you and Aaron, each with his censer. What's the whole deal with the censer? This is a bronze torch kind of a thing with a cuff at the top that has a reservoir for oil so that it can be lit and burned, and it also has a place for incense. This is something to appease, to create a sweet smelling savor as you approach the Lord.

You don't just go schlepping up to the throne of grace. You don't just go in your cutoffs and your flicks and your raggedy t-shirt up to God and say, Hey God, how you doing? Let's give the Lord a big hand. There is such an irreverence and such a lack of understanding of the righteousness and holiness of God in our modern day.

You saw it back in the 60s and 70s with the Jesus freaks and the Jesus people who just think Jesus is everybody's buddy and Jesus is everybody's friend, and they demean and diminish and make the Lord just one of the guys. He's my buddy. He's my pal.

Moses says, look, your best shot at having any opportunity to approach the Lord without dying is to get a censer and light it with fire and put incense on it and hope that God will accept you. Every man took a censer, put fire in it, laid the incense on, stood at the door of the tabernacle in a meeting. Corrie gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle in a meeting.

The glory of the Lord appeared to the congregation. The Lord spoke to Moses, get away. Light these, get away, that I may consume them in a moment.

They fell on their faces and made prayer, made appeal on their behalf. God, the Spirit of all flesh, shall one man sin and you be angry with all the congregation. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the congregation saying, get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram. The elders of Israel followed him. He spoke to the congregation saying, depart now from the tents of these wicked men.

Touch nothing of theirs lest you be consumed in all their sins. So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents with their wives, their sons and their children.

Nice little family tableau there. Moses said, by this you shall know the Lord has sent me to do all these works. They should have known it from the first day on the western shore of Yom Suf.

The Lord has sent me. I do not do these things at my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, if they are just visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me.

But if the Lord creates a new thing and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these

men have rejected the Lord. It came to pass as he finished speaking all these words, the ground split apart under them. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with all their households, all the men with them, all their goods.

They and those with them went down alive into the pit. The earth closed over them and they perished from among the assembly. Sort of a terra firma example of what is happening at Yom Suf to the Egyptians, isn't it? Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry.

They said, lest the earth swallow us up also. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God as a believer, as a child of God, who willfully rejects the word of God. It is a caution.

It is a reminder that to reject God's authority, to reject God's system, to reject God's call and the means by which He implements it in this life is to reject God Himself and He does not take it lightly. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your word.

We thank you for the warning, the rebuke and the correction that come from its pages into our soul. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will be able to wield your word as a sharp sword to expose the thoughts and intents of our hearts, to cleanse us and purge us from our known and unknown sins in such a way that we can bear fruit for righteousness, we can reflect your glory and acknowledge our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who died to save us not only from the lake of fire but out of this present evil world. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.