

Exodus 7:8-8:32

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 1st November 2026 @ Deal Christian Fellowship
Reading: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

Introduction

We're studying our way through the book of Exodus, and in the opening chapter we saw that there was a new Pharaoh, who enslaved the Hebrews and even sought to kill their baby boys.

Yet in the midst of that, Moses had been born, hidden, found by Pharaoh's daughter, and ultimately brought up in Pharaoh's household as her own son. Then, aged forty, Moses thought he was ready to deliver his people. But, failing to do so, he then spent the next forty years in Midian (which *we* know as Saudi Arabia) where he married, had children, and tended to the sheep of his father-in-law.

And, now, aged eighty, Moses had been instructed directly by God at the burning bush to return to Egypt, where He would use him to lead His people out of the land, even providing signs to demonstrate his power to the Hebrews and to Pharaoh. But last week, in chapter five, we saw Moses' and Aaron's first encounter with Pharaoh, and (just as God said it would be), Pharaoh would *not* let God's people go, and in fact, made their conditions of slavery even worse.

And so in chapter six we saw God reassure Moses that He would *still* set His people free, and that He would use Moses and Aaron in the process. Which is why we then see their lineage, their family tree, recorded there to give us absolute certainty as to *who* these men were.

Now, as we began chapter seven last time, we saw God confirm once more that He would speak to Moses, who would speak to Aaron, who would speak to Pharaoh. And today, we'll see that begin in earnest. But as you likely know, Pharaoh would not yield. He would not let God's people go. And so God would send plague after plague on Egypt until He did. And we'll see the first of those plagues recorded in this chapter, as the river Nile is turned to blood.

Then in chapter eight we'll see another three plagues recorded, as the land was filled with frogs, then lice, then flies. And that's how far we'll get this morning, before next week we see the plagues of sickness on the cattle, of hail, and of boils. And then in chapter ten we see the plagues of locusts and darkness recorded, followed by the final plague being described in advance in chapter eleven, that would bring death to the firstborn in each of the Egyptian households.

And from thereon we'll see God's plan of salvation for the nation of Israel recorded, as well as His plan of salvation for us foretold as we read of the passover, and the exodus from Egypt taking place.

And as we look ahead to these things, as familiar as they might be, it's worth considering why God sent these *specific* plagues on Egypt. That is, why did He turn the water to blood? Why send frogs, lice, or flies? Why sickness on the livestock? Or why send boils, hail, fire, locust or darkness? Why kill the firstborn in each family?

Well, these specific plagues were not random — God wasn't sitting there wondering what plague to send next — but rather each plague was a judgement on the many false gods the Egyptians had made (out of almost anything), from worshipping the sun, to having gods of agriculture, fish, health, stability, to gods that were depicted as looking like frogs, bulls, and many other creatures.

In other words, God was bringing judgement on their idolatry, as well as bringing Pharaoh to a place where he would finally yield, and let God's people go. Indeed, we'll even read in chapter twelve as God speaks of the final plague, that He says to Moses "against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.". So then, God was dealing with a nation that was entrenched in idolatry.

So, bearing that in mind, let's get going in our study of chapters seven and eight, where we'll begin looking at these things in some more detail.

Overview of chapter seven

- **v1-7** — God confirms Aaron will be Moses' spokesman (continued)
- **v8-13** — The miracle of Aaron's rod before Pharaoh
- **v14-24** — The first plague: Waters become blood

And we'll pick this up in verse eight of chapter seven, as a miracle is performed before Pharaoh, and he is give a chance to let God's people go. Though it's a chance that he declines, resulting in the first of the plagues being recorded here...

Overview of chapter eight

- **v1-15** — The second plague: Frogs
- **v16-19** — The third plague: Lice
- **v20-32** — The fourth plague: Flies

And continuing into chapter eight with three more, which we'll see.

Chapter seven

So then, we read in chapter seven, from verse eight onwards:

> **Exodus 7:8-9**
> Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Show a miracle for yourselves,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.’”

God, then, knowing Pharaoh's heart, knowing that he would try and question Moses and Aaron's authority, or question God's ability, tells Moses that in that moment, he should speak to his brother, and instruct him to throw his rod down before Pharaoh, that God may perform a miracle with it.

But as we'll see, Pharaoh wasn't interested in finding answers as much as he was interested in finding an excuse. For he didn't *want* to obey God's command. But of *Moses and Aaron* we read:

> **Exodus 7:10**
> So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Which is a real contrast to Pharaoh's attitude, right? For they did *just* as the Lord commanded. And the Lord did just as He has *promised*. And Aaron's rod became a serpent.

Now, several Bible commentators have pointed out that the Hebrew word `tanyn` used here for *serpent* is not the same as the Hebrew word `nâḥâš` (nachash) which is used for *serpent* back in chapter four, and so some believe that the word used here, that is translated dragon elsewhere, speaks of a marine or land monster of some type, and specifically, they suggest that this is speaking of a crocodile. And I get why, for crocs are well associated with Egypt.

However, it is also translated *serpents* in Deuteronomy and Psalms, and furthermore, in chapter four of *Exodus* we read *"And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand.". What* had God put in his hand? The miracles of the rod turning (specifically) to a snake, and of putting his hand into his bosom that it might turn leprous, and turn back to healthy. And that settles the matter for me. But there's more symbolism too, and we'll get to in a moment. But first we read:

> **Exodus 7:11**
> But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

So then, these magicians, these sorcerers, mimic what Aaron had done.

However, this doesn't mean God met His match, because there is no match for God. He is not a created being, but rather the Creator of *all* beings. He is the self-existent, the eternal One. And Satan is merely a created being. He is *nothing* compared to God — nor are *his* followers that we read of here (of whom two, called Jannes and Jambres, are mentioned in 2 Timothy as having resisted Moses, but were exposed to be foolish). And indeed we read:

> **Exodus 7:12**
> For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.

Now, we don't know how many of these sorcerers there were, but there were certainly multiple of them — yet, as is always the case, one plus God is a majority, and the serpent that came from Aaron's rod swallowed up *all* the other serpents, which certainly is a show of strength. Yet it was so much more than that, for the snake, and specifically the *uraeus* — a stylised upright form of an Egyptian cobra — was used as a symbol of sovereignty, royalty, deity, and even divine authority in ancient Egypt. You can see such an example on the top of the golden face mask of Tutankhamun.

And this power that's supposed to represent the Pharaoh has just been swallowed up and shown to be *nothing* in comparison to that which *God* can do. That would have been very humbling.

> **Exodus 7:13**
> And Pharaoh’s heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

Again, Pharaoh wasn't looking for a *sign*. He was looking for an *excuse*. And we can tell that as when a sign was given, he didn't yield, but rather his heart grew hard and he didn't listen. But that was not a surprise for God. For indeed, as this verse notes, He had said to Moses several times that this is how Pharaoh would be.

> **Exodus 7:14**
> So the LORD said to Moses: “Pharaoh’s heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go.

A reminder again, that God can see *our* hearts. He can see *your* heart. He can see *my* heart. And He could see *Pharaoh's* heart here. And so, with Pharaoh not willing to listen, God said to Moses.

> **Exodus 7:15**
> Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river’s bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand.

Which of note, this is the word `nâḥâš` (nachash), meaning *serpent*. So again, it seems reasonable to me that the context is this is one and the same thing we're talking about here, that is, serpents. And Moses was to go and meet Pharaoh with this rod, this staff, the following morning.

> **Exodus 7:16**
> And you shall say to him, The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness”; but indeed, until now you would not hear!

And this is a specific and personal statement. It is saying the LORD, the self-existent One, the eternal One, the One true God, who is the God the Hebrews worship, has sent me specifically to you to demand that *you* let *His* people go, for they are *His* people, not *yours*. And *you* are to let them go that they might serve *Him* in the wilderness, not serve *you* in your brickyards. And we read on:

> **Exodus 7:17-18**
> Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I am the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.'"

That is, by this miracle you shall know that I am *Yahweh* (or *Jehovah*), the self-existent, eternal One.

> **Exodus 7:19**
> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.'"

This, then, would not be localised to one part of the river, or even to the river itself, but it would affect the streams, the branches, even the ponds and pools. Indeed, even water stored in buckets would turn to blood! The very thing that was the lifeblood of Egypt, the River Nile, would turn to actual blood. That which had been a blessing, would now be a curse. This is God turning things on its head as He judges their idolatry. And there were several Egyptian gods in the firing line here, from *Osiris* (the god of agriculture), to *Khnum* (the creator-deity and god of Nile source), to *Hapi*, (the god of annual flooding), to *Taweret* (goddess of pure water), to *Hatmehit* (the goddess of fish).

> **Exodus 7:20-21**
> And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

To borrow a phrase from Acts, this was not done in a corner! This would have affected everyone.

> **Exodus 7:22-23**
> Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this.

So, then Pharaoh's magicians could mimic this miracle. And so Pharaoh dismisses this as nothing more than sorcerers doing their thing. Yet first the irony is they have to dig to find pure water, and then, they take some of the limited water left to them, and turn *that* into blood. Talk about making a problem worse! Indeed, while they can mimic this miracle, they could not reverse it. And that's how it is with all that Satan and his followers do — he *can* never, so *will* never make a situation better.

> **Exodus 7:24-25**
> So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

And this is the first sense of timescale we get as we read through these plagues. And, if you stitch together all the plagues, and the time required for them to take effect or to pass, you'll find that the the ten plagues in total took somewhere between three and seven weeks to pass. So this is an intense period that Egypt is about to go through.

Chapter eight

And we continue straight on in verse one of chapter eight:

> **Exodus 8:1**
> And the LORD spoke to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.

Again, this was not Moses' idea or request, but God's. Because he cared about *His* people serving *Him*. And God continues:

> **Exodus 8:2**
> But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs.

There is no unfairness in this. Pharaoh was *still* enslaving God's people, putting them under hard labour. He had not reversed his earlier decision to withhold straw from them either. And so this second plague would also be severe. We read on:

> **Exodus 8:3-4**
> So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.”’”

And through this second plague, God would judge more false gods that the Egyptians worshipped, from Hequet or Heka (the frog-headed goddess of midwifery, childbirth and resurrection) to again judging the worship of Hapi (the god of annual flooding, who was depicted as holding a frog out of whose mouth flowed a stream of nourishment). And the thought of these frogs being everywhere must have repulsed the Egyptians, yet it seems that Pharaoh doesn't say a word on this occasion.

Maybe it was a shrug of the shoulders. Maybe it was an indifferent look. I don't know. But either way, he had a chance to let God's people go, with a clear warning of what would happen if he didn't. And given that he did not relent, that's exactly how it played out. We read:

> **Exodus 8:5-6**
> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’” So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Enough frogs to cover the land — that's a lot of frogs! And like with the Nile moving from blessing to curse, these frogs, which were helpful at keeping the insect population from destroying the crops, were now a menace themselves.

Indeed, as one pastor I heard put it; *that which was previously considered a blessing had now become a burden to them. That which they honoured had now become a horror. And that which once pleased them was now a plague to them. And that's always the way it is with sin.* Indeed God will sometimes let people have so much of what they mistakenly worship that they are sick of it.

Here, Pharaoh's sorcerers respond. We read:

> **Exodus 8:7**
> And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

So, once more they mimic, but cannot mitigate. They could replicate it, but couldn't remove it. And so Pharaoh asks Moses and Aaron to speak to God on his behalf, that God might remove this plague from the Egyptian people:

> **Exodus 8:8**
> Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, “Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD.”

This, then, is the first time Pharaoh suggests he will let the people go...

> **Exodus 8:9**
> And Moses said to Pharaoh, “Accept the honour of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, that they may remain in the river only.”

Interesting that Moses can talk, after all! And he says "OK, so *you* tell me when this plague should be removed" — in other words, Moses didn't want Pharaoh to be able to suggest that the removal of the frogs was just natural occurrence, but rather Moses was going to ask God to remove the frogs on the exact day Pharaoh chose, that Pharaoh may be under no illusion that it was God's hand.

> **Exodus 8:10-11**
> So he said, “Tomorrow.” And he said, “Let it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God. And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only.”

Again, Moses heart in the matter was that he wanted Pharaoh to know who God is, and that there is none like Him. And, remember, these two men had grown up together. So, maybe there was some lasting affinity that was part of what was going on here.

> **Exodus 8:12-13**
> Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields.

So then, we see something remarkable here — for God does as *Moses* asks. Not the other way around. Why? Because what Moses was asking was within the will of God. And friends, that is when our prayers will be answered too. In other words, when your will is God's will, then you will have your will! It's when we pray contrary to God's Word, contrary to His perfect plan for us, that God cannot say yes. But when we are obedient, when we are so in tune with Him that we are men and women after His heart, then God can answer our prayers.

And here, Moses prayed, God heard, and God answered favourably. For the plague was removed. But in case you were doubting how significant the number of frogs was that had appeared, we read:

> **Exodus 8:14**
> They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank.

I guess there's only so many frogs legs you can eat, right?

> **Exodus 8:15**
> But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

So then, Pharaoh goes back on his promise, on his side of the deal. But God was not surprised.

> **Exodus 8:16**
> So the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.’”

Here, there is no warning to Pharaoh. He breaks his promise, and there are consequences. And that makes me wonder, do *we* ever think about there being consequences to breaking our promises to the Lord? Do we consider that there might be consequences to our disobedience, or our sin? God will forgive us for anything past, present, or future. But that doesn't mean consequences won't be seen and felt in our lives. So we should take this as a warning.

And we read here that there was now to be lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Now, there is some difference of opinion as to whether that means lice, fleas, sandflies, gnats, ticks or mosquitos. And I'll be honest, none of those sounds like a great option.

But while the word lice could mean gnats or mosquitoes, J Vernon McGee notes *"Its root means to “cover” or “nip” or“pinch”."* Going on to say *"It is interesting that the nipping, pinching, or covering could not be fulfilled by a gnat or a mosquito. It is, however, a good description of lice."*

And he notes that one man told about his experience with them in Egypt: [saying] *"I noticed that the sand appeared to be in motion. Close… inspection revealed…that the surface of the ground was a moving mass of minute ticks, thousands of which were crawling up my legs…I beat a hasty retreat, pondering the words of the Scriptures, 'the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'"* — certainly, this isn't something I want to experience!

But also it isn't something one could expect to experience on the scale we read of here, for this wasn't mere natural phenomena, but God bringing a specific plague on the land; in this case dealing with the false Egyptian god of *Geb* (who was the earth-god) as well as with the priests and magicians themselves, who had intensive anti-lice rituals.

Now, here, we read that Moses and Aaron were faithful to follow God's instructions, that the third plague might come upon the Egyptians. Verse seventeen saying:

> **Exodus 8:17**
> And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

So then, God speaks to Moses, Moses faithfully passes on what God has said, and Aaron acts.

And that is how the pattern should be for us, including for me. One of the great personal blessings of our evening service is I'm hearing God's Word being taught too — I'm taking in. And let me say, if you give out regularly, you ought to take in regularly as well. That is vitally important.

Indeed, this is one reason why we need faithful, dedicated individuals to edit the audio and video and put it online each week. Just one of the reasons we need to do so.

> **Exodus 8:18**
> Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast.

That is, unlike with the first two plagues, the magicians couldn't replicate it. And so we read:

> **Exodus 8:19**
> Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

And so, the penny drops for these magicians, these sorcerers, that they are dealing with more than they can compete with. For they are dealing with the supreme God. Indeed, they even use one of God's Hebrew names, *Elohiym* here. But Pharaoh didn't want to listen, and was still refusing to let God's people go.

> **Exodus 8:20-23**
> And the LORD said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land. I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.”’”

So then, this isn't to be just in the morning, but *early* in the morning that Moses is to give Pharaoh this warning. And, as well as providing the details of what will come on the land if he refuses to let God's people go, Moses is to make clear to him that the Hebrews will be unaffected by this plague — that is, God is making it very clear that this plague is aimed at Pharaoh, his people, and ultimately at their false gods — in this case *Wadjet* (the protector against insects), Khepri (the scarab-god), and *Iusaaset* (the scarab-goddess).

Does this mean that the previous plagues *did* affect the Hebrews? Well, that seems to be the consensus in the commentaries and studies I checked this week. However, what bothers me about that is that we consistently see that God doesn't judge the righteous with the wicked. That's true with Noah and the world that perished in the flood, it's true of righteous Lot and those in Sodom, and it's true in Revelation, where we see the church raptured before God pours out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world. So, given we are not *told* that the Hebrews suffered those opening two plagues, I'm not inclined to say for sure that they did.

I think what is *most* important here, is that the purpose of telling Pharaoh that the Hebrews would be unaffected, was that God was saying that He will treat those who know and love Him differently. Not that God was going to destroy Pharaoh in one go here, but if he and his people wanted to enjoy the blessings enjoyed by *God's* people, then they needed to forsake their worship of these many false gods that the One true God was now dealing with by sending these plagues, including this one of swarms that was now on its way.

Now, the Hebrew text doesn't specify flies, only swarms of something. And as such, it's thought that God here sent scarab beetles, which the Egyptians revered, even deified, to fill all the land of Egypt, including inside their homes. Once again giving them what they longed for until they were sick of it. We read:

> **Exodus 8:24**
> And the LORD did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.

And evidently Pharaoh didn't like this plague, for we read:

> **Exodus 8:25**
> Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God in the land.”

That is, sacrifice to God here in Egypt. But that's not what God through Moses had asked for. In other words, Pharaoh was asking Moses to *compromise*. And church, remember that Egypt is so often a picture of the world, and worldly thinking — which means the clear parallel, the reminder that we should get out of this, is that Satan will try that same approach with us today, saying "Hey, why don't you worship God without changing?! After all, Jesus is happy for you to come as you are.".

But church, we have not been saved to *stay* as we are. Indeed, we read in James chapter four that *"friendship with the world is enmity with God"*, and we read Jesus' own words in Matthew six and Luke sixteen that *"no-one can serve two masters", and* in 2 Corinthians that we should *"not be unequally yoked with unbelievers"*. If we try to stay in the world, while trying to worship God, we'll neither fit in, nor please God. In a sense we'll do the spiritual splits, and it will hurt. Rather, what we must resolve to do is to *"not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."* as we read in Romans. Here, Moses is a great example of standing firm in the face of compromise:

> **Exodus 8:26**
> And Moses said, “It is not right to do so, for 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?

And so, he has logical reason to do so, for part of their sacrifices would have been cattle which were sacred to the Egyptians. And so he says:

> **Exodus 8:27**
> We will go three days’ journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us.”

In other words, not only will the Egyptian *people* not like it if we sacrifice here, but our *God* has *commanded* us to go into the wilderness. So, faced with compromise, even though it was *partly* doing what God wanted, Moses wanted to obey God's command *fully*. And what an example that is, that he didn't yield the to compromise Pharaoh suggested, for, as J Vernon McGee puts so well;

"This is the same kind of compromise that many Christians make. It is always satanic. This compromise says we can be Christians but not narrow ones. Be a broadminded Christian and don’t change your life.".

He goes on: *"If your life doesn’t change, you are not a Christian. Now don’t accuse me of saying you have to perform good works to be a Christian. I didn’t say it that way. We are saved by faith in Christ and nothing else—works are excluded. But when you put your faith in Christ to save you, it will change your life. That is where Christian conduct comes in. The inner man must be changed..."*

And he concludes: *"My point is that the contemporary church has made many compromises and for the most part is still in the land of Egypt. You cannot tell the difference today between the average Christian and the average man of the world."*

Church, may that not be said of us. May we want to obey God's command fully, as Moses did — refusing to compromise with Egypt, which is the world. Pharaoh's response here? Well, we read:

> **Exodus 8:28**
> 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. Intercede for me.”

So go, but not *too* far. That is, Pharaoh wanted to keep a short leash on his slaves. Yet, he expected Moses to plead with God on his behalf. And isn't that the same today?! Some people want *nothing* to do with God, and they would rather Christians were not too fanatical about Him, that they wouldn't go too far with this whole Jesus thing. Yet in times of crisis, trouble or adversity they not only want believers to pray for them, but want God to remove their difficulties!

Here, Moses agrees to pray, but doesn't back down on his demand, which of course is God's instruction, for the Hebrews to be allowed to go and sacrifice to Him in the wilderness. We read:

> **Exodus 8:29**
> Then Moses said, “Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms of flies 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.”

Thus Moses, who is doing a *lot* of the talking here (perhaps to Aaron's surprise), warns Pharaoh not to be dishonest, but instead be a man of his word.

> **Exodus 8:30-31**
> So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained.

Again, how few times we read of God doing what *mankind* had asked, yet again Moses was asking for that which was within God's will.

> **Exodus 8:32**
> But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

So then, he once more went back on his promise. And we read that he hardened his *own* heart — that is, while we *do* read elsewhere of *God* hardening Pharaoh's heart, He was ultimately only confirming Pharaoh's own decision. So we need not feel sorry for him!

And as we continue on we'll see how he continued to only look out for himself, rather than even his own people, or the Hebrew slaves whose lives he had made intolerable to the point they cried out to God in the first place. It's a sad record of a man who refused to yield to God.

Application questions

Now, next week, God willing, we'll look at all of chapter nine. But for now, let me leave you with some questions to consider:

- **What idols may God need to deal with in your life?**

- **Is there anything in your life where you're not fully obeying God?**
- **The world wants you to compromise, and be like them — are you?**

For the audio recording of this Bible study, and for additional studies, please see the DCF web site:

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