

Exodus 026  
One of a Kind  
Exodus 8:9-15  
December 7, 2025  
Dr. Andy Woods

Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 8:9. This morning, Lord willing, we are continuing our verse-by-verse teaching through the Book of Exodus, looking at Exodus 8:9-15. The title of our message this morning, which fits very well with the singing that we just did and the time of communion at the Lord's Table, is "One of a Kind." God is one of a kind. You will never find anything like Him, ever, particularly as He has expressed Himself through the person of Jesus Christ. After all, He is the reason for the season.

The Book of Exodus is a historical account of how God redeemed a nation that was in bondage to the Egyptians for 400 years, as there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. It is the story of how God took His special nation out of bondage and captivity. It is the same story with us on an individual basis. We too are redeemed of the Lord. We have been released from the slave market of sin bondage because of the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ.

It is also an account of how tightly the devil hangs on to things that really belong to the Lord. This is a battle. This is a process, if you will, where God is going to accomplish this through ten plagues. The first one we have studied—the Nile becomes blood. Now as we are studying, there will be a multiplication of frogs all over Egypt.

The Egyptians worshiped the Nile and they worshiped frogs. That is why God took their Nile and turned it to blood. He said, "Do you like frogs? Here, I will help you." So He multiplied them to such an extent that they are going to ask Moses to ask God to reverse the judgment.

Frogs (Exodus 8:1-15)

- I. God's Instructions to Moses (1-5)
- II. Aaron's Obedience (6)
- III. Pharaoh's Miracle (7)
- IV. Pharaoh's Condition (8-11)
  - A. Pharaoh's Request (8)
  - B. Question of Timing (9)
  - C. Pharaoh's Answer (10a)
  - D. Moses' Promise (10b-11)
- V. Fulfillment of Prophecy (12-14)
- VI. Pharaoh's Condition (15)

We have had God's instructions to Moses (Exodus 8:1-5), and Aaron's obedience (Exodus 8:6). That is when the judgment begins of the multiplication of frogs. Pharaoh breathes a sigh of relief because he cannot stop the judgment, but his magicians, under satanic power, occultic power, were able to replicate the miracle.

Now Pharaoh says, "Look, I can replicate the miracle, but I cannot stop the miracle." He comes to Moses, laying out a condition. Pharaoh makes a request. "Moses, make the frogs go away." We pick it up there in Exodus 8:9 as Moses tells Pharaoh to set his terms. "When do you want the judgment to disappear?" This is quite a question, is it not?

*"Moses said to Pharaoh, 'The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, that they may be left in the Nile?'" (Exodus 8:9).*

The first thing you notice here is that Moses treats Pharaoh, who is in rebellion against God, respectfully. He says, "The honor is yours." He does not get on social media and start criticizing Pharaoh, like we as Christians have a tendency to do with leaders that we do not agree with. Why is Moses treating Pharaoh with respect? Because Pharaoh, regardless of his problems, is operating in an institution that God Himself ordained, called the institution of human government. There is a description of that in Romans 13:1-7.

*"Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:7).*

You see this attitude of not just blindly submitting to Pharaoh, but even as Moses is rebelling against Pharaoh, he is still treating him respectfully. "The honor is yours." He also uses his proper title.

I do not think the biblical position on this whole issue of civil disobedience is that you have to obey everything the state says, but I do see that even when, God forbid, we have to say no to the state, we have to maintain respect for the powers that be, because they are ultimately established by God in the institution of human government.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—those are their Babylonian names; their Hebrew names were Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael—were, as mere teenagers, thrown into the fiery furnace in the Book of Daniel. Even in the midst of that ordeal, because they would not bow down to a giant golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar had created, they still maintained respect for Nebuchadnezzar, even as they are rebelling against him.

*"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king, but even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (Daniel 3:18).*

I find that interesting. As Moses is rebelling against Pharaoh, he is also maintaining respect for Pharaoh at the same time. That is a difficult balance, is it not?

*"Moses said to Pharaoh, 'The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, that they may be left in the Nile?'" (Exodus 8:9).*

"Pharaoh, you do not like the frogs? Then you tell me when you want the frogs to stop." This is interesting because God brought the frogs into existence at a miraculous starting point (Exodus 8:6). Then He is going to end the judgment at a miraculous stopping point (Exodus 8:13).

Why even bring this up? Dr. Ed Hindson, in his commentary on the Book of Exodus, says:

"Those who hold to the miraculous intensification of natural events theory of the plagues suggests that the red sediment, algae, or the fungus, coupled with the dead fish, had so polluted the Nile that the frogs abandoned the river and swarmed over the land and into the houses to seek moisture."<sup>1</sup>

What people do is come up with a very naturalistic explanation to all these things. "Oh, the blood! There was just some sediment in the Nile. By the way, that aggravated the frogs, so the frogs jumped out of the Nile." You watch these kinds of cable television shows and they give you these sorts of explanations, but not only does it remove the miraculous nature of this, it does not take into account that the frogs came immediately and would stop immediately the moment Pharaoh named the time in which they will stop.

"This explanation, however, does not sufficiently address the text's presentation of the abundance of frogs or their swarming at Moses' precise signal."

There is very little doubt about it. As much as people try to naturalize this, what we are reading about is indeed a miracle coming from the miraculous hand of God. Moses asks Pharaoh, "Pharaoh, name your time when you want the frogs to stop." You see Pharaoh's answer there in Exodus 8:10: *"Then he said, 'Tomorrow.'"*

Is that not a little odd? Why not say now? Why wait until tomorrow? If the frogs are that much of a hindrance, why not just get rid of them now?

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<sup>1</sup> Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *King James Version Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the King James Version* (p. 91). Thomas Nelson.

Ed Hindson writes:

"That thou mayest know (v. 10). To demonstrate that it was done by the power of the Lord, Moses granted Pharaoh the honor of choosing the specific time for the frogs' removal. By this point, apparently, Pharaoh is so troubled by the plague that he is not thinking clearly. Instead of choosing to terminate the plagues immediately, he chose for it to end on the following day."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, when a person is in rebellion against God, do not expect their mind to work correctly.

*"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1).*

The moment a person says there is no God is the moment their mind becomes foolish.

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).*

If you want knowledge to increase in a person's life, get them to submit to the authority of God. Romans 1:18-20 talks about how men take a knowledge of God and suppress it.

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18-20).*

Obviously God exists. Look at this world that we are living in. But what do people do is take that obvious knowledge and suppress it. Why do they suppress it? Because they want to be God themselves. "I do not want to live according to the dictates of God. I want to be God myself." So you take the obvious knowledge of God and you hold it down in unrighteousness. The moment that happens, the human mind does not think the way it is supposed to, because the human mind was supposed to think under God's authority. The moment a human being steps out of that design is the moment his mind becomes darkened.

The following verses there in Romans 1 say:

*"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart*

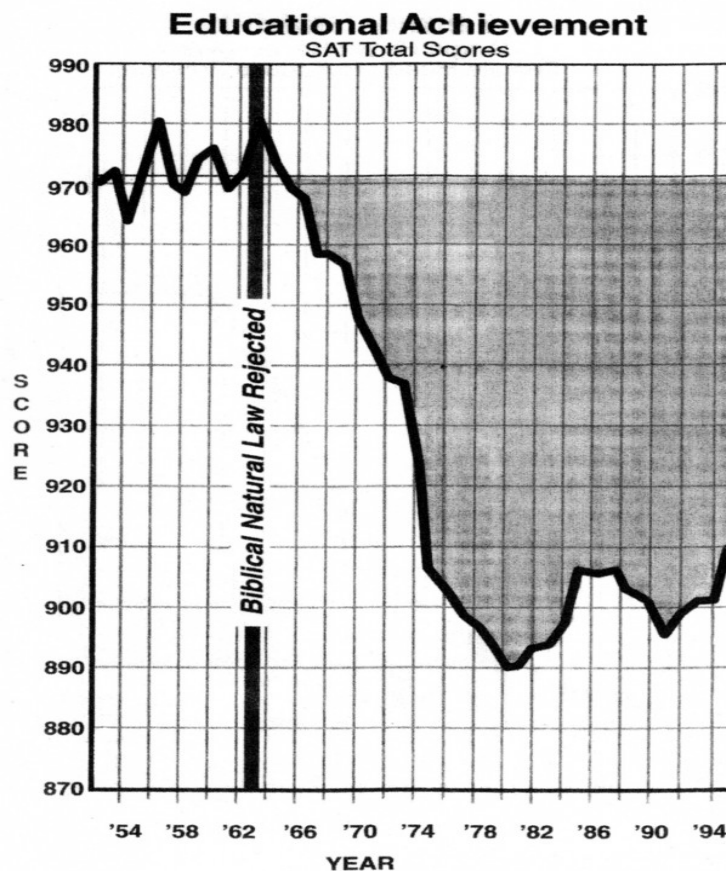
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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 92.

*was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"*  
(Romans 1:21-22).

I have shared this graphic with you several times, but I never tire of showing it. It shows SAT scores in the United States of America, and it maps the year in which those SAT scores started to decline precipitously. There is a great big bold line there, and the date of that is 1962. SAT scores started to plummet in the United States after 1962.

We say to ourselves, "What in the world happened in 1962? Did a meteor hit the United States and make us all stupid?" That was the year we decided with our Supreme Court to throw the Bible and prayer completely out of public schools. No more Bible, no more Ten Commandments. Education is going to be humanistic from this point on. It is going to be secular. The Bible teaches that when you do that, when you suppress what is obvious, when you hold down actively what the country was initially based on, you start to think in ways that are very darkened.



Basic data from the College Entrance Exam Board, New York.

The atheists and the God haters promote themselves as the smartest people in the room, but the Bible is saying it is the exact opposite. The mind does not think the way it is supposed to think. It starts to come up with weird, crazy things because it is not functioning under the authority of God's word.

Take Nebuchadnezzar, who I mentioned a little earlier. He was very angry at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael are their Hebrew names—for not bowing down to his statue. He was enraged. He had what we might call one of those anger management type problems. He gave an order:

*"Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated" (Daniel 3:19).*

In fact, it became so hot that the people that threw the three Hebrew youths into the fiery furnace themselves lost their lives. Think about that for a minute. If you really hate what these guys are doing, would not a slow death be preferable? If you are thinking in a logical way, you would lower the temperature and let them burn to death slowly, but he is not thinking that way. He is just angry. "Heat it as high as it can be heated, and we will incinerate these guys on the spot."

I had a youth pastor that put it this way: when you move into sin, you are going to do a lot of dumb stuff. I have never forgotten that. Unfortunately, I have done my share of dumb stuff in my life, not in times when I am walking with God, but times when I am walking out of fellowship with Him. What Pharaoh is saying here does not even make any sense. Anybody in their right mind would say, "Stop the frog judgments now," but he does not. He sets another date. "You can stop them tomorrow."

What happens here is that Moses, understanding the condition, makes Pharaoh a promise:

*"So [Moses] said, 'May it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile'" (Exodus 8:10-11).*

"Tomorrow it is all going to stop, just like you asked for." Sometimes, be careful what you ask for, because you might just get it. "It is going to work this way so that you can learn something, Pharaoh. You are going to learn some theology through this." What is the theology? That "there is no one like the Lord our God."

That is why I entitled this sermon "One of a Kind." God is completely and totally unique. You will not find anything like Him revealed anywhere as given in Scripture. The more you seek throughout the earth to find something, you are not going to find a better plan of salvation. You are not going to find a better description of why salvation is needed. You are not going to find a better relationship. You are not going to find something that fulfills you the way the God of the Bible will. You are only going to find these truths and these words of wisdom in the book that we are studying now.

You walk into so many churches and I ask them, "What are you studying?" They name some Christian bestseller. I always think to myself, "What a waste of time when you could be studying God's book." Why study what someone wrote about God's book when you can study God's book itself? This is where you find truth. Very young at my first pastorate, I remember an older gentleman. He pointed to the chapel that we were meeting in, the steeple with the crucifix, the cross on top, and he said, "The truth is in there."

That is what everyone is looking for. He was not raised or reared in a Christian environment, but he recognized that this is where truth is. Truth is in places that will exalt, honor, and lift up the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why our agenda here is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.

God, through the prophet Isaiah said:

*"Remember the former things long past,  
For I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there was no one like Me" (Isaiah 46:9).*

As we mentioned a little earlier during our time of communion—what a special time to be talking about this during the Advent season, celebrating the birth of our Savior—John 1:14 says:

*"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory,  
glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).*

I have to be honest with you. As a new Christian I would commit many verses like this to memory, John 3:16 for example, where Jesus is described as the only begotten and I had no idea what it meant. Who even talks this way today? Only begotten. "Only begotten" is a translation from Greek. The Greek word is "*monogenes* [μονογενής]." You recognize "*genes* [γενής]," species, kind. When you study biology they use a similar word to describe a certain species or kind.

It is a compound word. It is "*genes* [γενής]" connected to "*mono* [μονο]." You recognize that word—monopoly, mononucleosis. "*Mono* [μονο]" means something singular. "*Mono* [μονο]," singular, is connected to "*genes* [γενής]," kind. That is what only begotten means. Jesus is one of a kind. Meaning what? He alone is the God-Man. He alone is the eternally existent second member of the Trinity.

At the point of the virgin conception there was no subtraction or substitution. It was an addition. Humanity was added to eternally existent deity, and He stepped out of eternity into time to live among us. Only He could solve the problem between God and man, because to solve the problem between God and man you have to represent both sides. That is why He is called a mediator.

First Timothy 2:5 calls him a mediator. What does a mediator do? A mediator brings two camps together. How do you bring a holy God and the sinfulness of man in some kind of reconciliation? Who can even do that? The answer is that there is only one candidate, someone that is both man without sin, of course, and God in one person. The God-Man.

These people today think, "I am just going to get to heaven my own way," the Frank Sinatra approach to religion. I did it my way. "Do not tell me Jesus is the only way, because I am going to do it my way." I say to myself, "have you found another God-Man?" There is only one of those. Only the God-Man can reconcile the problem between God and man. That is why He is called the "*monogenes* [μονογενής]," one of a kind, completely and totally unique.

He is not a magician, although He did a lot of miracles. He is not a philosophical teacher, although He gave the world the greatest philosophy it has ever received. He is the God-Man, one of a kind, completely and totally unique. You can search the Earth several times over throughout any age or era, and you will never find anything like this.

It is like when Jesus gave a sermon and emptied out the church in Capernaum. (I do not know if Jesus would be invited to teach at a church growth seminar.) In John 6 in Capernaum He emptied it out. They heard what He said, and everybody left. How would you like to put that on your resume? He says to the disciples, first of all, "Are you guys going to go too?" I love how He gave them the choice. "You can leave with everybody else if you want. I am not going to hold you here against your will."

Peter is just classic. He says, "Where else do we go? We have never encountered anyone like You. You are it. You are the God-Man. Where else am I going to go? Is there a Savior B somewhere around that I do not know of? Is there another Christos? Is there another Meshiach?" There is no other one. This is why, if you want to get to the Father, you have to get to the Father through the Son.

*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me'" (John 14:6).*

Spirituality and religiosity will not get you to the Father. Only through God the Son can a person come to God the Father, because there has not been anything like God the Son. There is nothing like it that has preceded Him. There is nothing like it that has ever followed Him. He is one of a kind. He is the "*mono* [μονο]."

That is what Moses is trying to get Pharaoh to understand. "We are going to do things your way, Pharaoh. We are going to stop the frogs when you want them stopped, but there is a theology lesson that you need to learn through this." It is right there at the end of Exodus 8:10, that there is no one like the Lord our God. Now the prophecy is fulfilled.



*"Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried out to the Lord concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh" (Exodus 8:12).*

The words that jump out to me are "cried out." This is not a casual prayer like God bless the food. This is something where Moses got into the presence of the Lord and just cried out. There is that angle in prayer, which I do not think we in the West know an awful lot about. It is where the need is so deep, and the need is so great that the only thing you could really do is to get in the presence of the Lord and agonize before Him and cry out, "Lord, this is not going to get fixed unless You do something." It is something that comes out of the heart.

Paul the Apostle talked about this when he talked about prayer. This is what he said in Romans 15:30, as he is writing to Christians. This is not how someone gets saved. He is writing to people that are already saved.

*"Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30).*

"I want you to get together and pray for me," Paul says. "I do not want you to pray. I want you to strive together." Now, I am the kind of person that wants to know what "strive together" means, so I looked it up. Here is the Greek word that is translated "strive together." See if you can pick up on what English word we get from this. It is "*synagonizomai* [*συναγωνίζομαι*]." Any guesses? Agonized. "*Syn* [*συν*]" is a prefix. It is agonized, where we get the word "agony."

It is almost like the need is so deep that a little casual prayer is not going to cut it. You are agonizing before the Lord. I do not know how that looks in all of our lives. I remember my professor, Stanley Toussaint, who is now with the Lord, teaching us in a doctoral class at Dallas Seminary there in Romans 15. I believe it was from him that I first understood what Paul was saying there with this word "agonize." He said that when his wife got cancer and it looked like her life was going to be terminated prematurely, he got into the presence of the Lord and he agonized with God.

That is the intensification of prayer, the level of prayer that we are dealing with here. That is what Moses is doing. It is not this, "Hey, God, stop the plagues." Moses is functioning almost like crooked Egypt's representative and crying out to the Lord, "Lord, the plagues need to stop."

I am not here to tell you that there is some formula that you have to follow. I am not here to tell you that if you agonize the right way, it is some kind of guarantee that your prayer request will be answered. I do not have any power or ability to make you that kind of a promise. I am just a fellow struggler, as you are, but I know that there is a place for prayer that is much deeper than most of us are willing to go. I think sometimes we miss out on God's best for us because we are casual about the whole subject of prayer.

Moses and Aaron, particularly Moses, are intervening. As I said before, I cannot guarantee you will get an answer the way you want. Dr. Toussaint got an answer with his wife struggling with cancer. That issue got resolved. He actually passed on before his wife passed on. His wife, I do not mean to rush her into the grave, is probably still alive right now.

Dr. Toussaint got an answer to his prayer request, although he himself passed on. Believe me, he is a lot happier now. Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. If the worst thing that can happen to you is that you are going to die, that is actually a favor when you think about it. That is why Jesus came into the world. Hebrews tells us He came to remove from us the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Men have spent their whole lives, and women, fearful of death. Jesus came into the world to fix that problem. You could be afraid to die if you want, but you are living way below your privileges. In fact, the truth of the matter is that you are really not ready to live for Christ until you are ready to die.

Prostate cancer was a new terrain for me. Fortunately, things are looking better lately in terms of PSA numbers, but prostate cancer? Me? Yours truly? That is what other people get. Not me. I have to be honest with you, having that diagnosis changes your perspective. You stop doing dumb, trivial stuff, and you start living for things that matter and are going to count. The truth of the matter is that this life is not going to go on forever for any of us, if the Lord tarries.

I was talking to someone recently about my mom who is struggling at 89, and I said "I think my mom is dying." The answer back to me was, "I am sorry to hear that, but the truth of the matter is we are all dying." All of us right now are dying. The moment a child is born into the world is the moment that child starts to die. As I have said before, if you do not believe me, just break out your high school yearbook and your modern day driver's license picture and put the two together, and you will see exactly what I am talking about.

Dr. Toussaint agonized before the Lord, and the Lord spared his wife's life, I believe, because of those types of prayers, although he himself went on to be with the Lord.

Here comes an answer for Moses. It is in Exodus 8:13-14. Look at this.

*"The Lord did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul" (Exodus 8:13-14).*

Moses agonizes before the Lord in prayer, the Lord hears Moses, He and answers the prayer request. Do you think prayer works? I think it does. The thing that really causes Satan worry and anxiety is not so much when we are doing a bunch of Christian activities, although there is nothing wrong with those. It is when we cease from activity

and start praying. He would rather you do anything than that, because activity, human activity, is not going to move the hand of God the way agonizing prayer does.

*"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit" (James 5:16-18).*

Elijah put on his shoes one foot at a time, just like the rest of us. He was nothing special in the sense that he had special access to God that no one else had. He had the same access we have. You mean my little prayer request can alter weather patterns? I have been praying for things to cool a little bit more in Texas. Maybe that has something to do with it.

Jesus taught a parable. He taught a parable of a man who was an unjust judge. This guy was basically a jerk, to put it lightly. He did not love God and he did not love man, and he gave unjust rulings. He would not give this widow that kept coming before him the justice that she wanted. She kept asking over and over again, "Bring justice to my situation." Finally, he just did not want to hear anymore, so he gave her what she wanted. Jesus said, "If a guy like that does that for somebody on account of persistence, what do you think your Heavenly Father is going to do, who is not a jerk and is not like this unjust judge who does not respect God or man? If the unjust respond to petitions, how much more will your God in heaven respond?" That is Christ's point.

*"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1, KJV).*

Other translations say, "People ought to pray and not to give up." I do not know about you, but I give up quickly. I get discouraged quickly, because I have obstacles in my life, just like you have got them in your life, and they are too big. I cannot move them through human power. It is so easy to get tired, get fatigued, get faint, and give up. Yet here is Jesus saying that men ought not to give up, but they ought to pray.

Is there something in your life that is too big for you? Quit trying to solve it. Start praying about it. Do you want to see people's hearts change? Rebellious people in your life? Family members? Children, grandchildren going the wrong direction? Does it overwhelm you? Then start praying. Is there someone in your life that is a total roadblock and seems to oppose everything that you want to do? Start praying about that.

What happened as this prayer request was answered? God fulfilled prophecy. The frogs stopped just like God said they would stop. I have promoted this book before. It is "Every Prophecy of the Bible." It simply shows that everything that God says will happen exactly like He said. Jesus in John 13:19 says:

*"From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He" (John 13:19).*

*"Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe" (John 14:29).*

The Bible has a track record of short-term prophecies in terms of their accuracy and literal fulfillment. If I were a betting man, which I am not, I would bet my bottom dollar on the Bible and the things that are yet to come.

I have a podcast, as you might know, where I talk about all kinds of things related to prophecy. I talk about the mark of the beast technology and the coming Antichrist. People write in and say, "You are too literal with those predictions." They always try to make the prophecy sound less than what it says. "That is just a symbol. That is not actually something that is going to be put on the right hand or the forehead. It is just a symbol. There is no real Antichrist coming because there is a spirit of Antichrist." They have all these kinds of things that they say. It is always this kind of game of they are trying to make it less than what it says.

I cannot do that because I know enough about the Bible to see a track record. What God says happens. If I can make nine free throws in a row, you bet your bottom dollar I can make the tenth because you have watched a track record unfold. As this prophecy is fulfilled, you get a window here of Pharaoh's condition (Exodus 8:15). What impact did this have on Pharaoh? Not a good one.

*"But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart" (Exodus 8:15).*

"I am out of trouble, and because I am out of immediate trouble—the frogs stopped when I wanted them to stop—I am clear. I am going to go do my own thing." That is how a lot of people are with God. They never really seek God until something goes wrong and until something goes wrong in their lives, from the human perspective, they just live the way they want.

*"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion  
And to those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria" (Amos 6:1).*

"Do you see those people in Zion, and those people living in security in Samaria?" Amos says. "They are in a dangerous place because they are not seeking God."

*"And Jesus said to His disciples, 'Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'" (Matthew 19:23-24).*

"You see the rich?" Jesus says. "They are at a disadvantage." The problem with being rich is that you are used to buying your way out of your problems, and you do not have to go to the Lord. That is why James 1 talks about the rich being in a low position spiritually. It is the poor man who is in a high position because he is used to going to the Lord. The rich are used to solving their own problems. If you are used to solving your own problems, what do you need salvation for? You have got life figured out.

This is what Jesus said in the Book of Revelation to the church at Laodicea:

*""I know your deeds, that you are neither hot nor cold; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked"" (Revelation 3:15-17).*

Wow! Talk about some politically incorrect terminology there. When was the last time you heard that preached in a church? This is Jesus talking to His own people. "I can do something with hot water, and I can do something with cold water. I cannot do anything with lukewarm water. The problem with you, Laodiceans, is that life is too easy for you. You are rich to the point where you say, 'We do not even need God.' You are running church the way you want to run it."

This is what Laodicea means. It is a compound word "laos," people, combined with "dikeia," to rule. It means "the people ruling." Jesus is outside the door of the church in this passage, knocking on the door seeking admittance. It is an unbelievable scene there where they are having church without Christ. They are having Christianity without Jesus. Jesus confronts the church over this. The problem is that things are too good. It is a very different way of looking at problems, is it not?

"To those that are at ease in Zion." Maybe that is why God allows things to go south, so to speak, in our lives. Maybe it is God saying, "I have not heard from you in so long by way of prayer. I want that intimacy with you that I am going to allow a few things in your life to not work out, or to bother you, whatever terminology you want to use." Maybe that is why God allows us to have different trials and things of that nature.

Pharaoh is out of trouble, so he goes his own way. He hardened his heart (Exodus 8:15). Do you notice that Pharaoh keeps hardening his own heart?

Ed Hindson says:

"For the initial five plagues, the text registers Pharaoh as the agent of hardening. Not until the sixth plague does God participate in the confirmation of Pharaoh's own volitional choices."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 86.

Charles Ryrie says:

"Seven times Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God first hardened it, though the prediction that God would do it preceded all."<sup>4</sup>

You have the prediction of God saying that Pharaoh's heart will be hardened (Exodus 4:21). Then you have Pharaoh repeatedly hardening his own heart. Not until the sixth plague did God harden Pharaoh's heart and say, "Do you know what? I am going to give you over to what you want. You do not want Me. Have your own way." To me, these are some of the most frightening words in the Scripture, when God gives people over to what they want to do and will not bother them anymore.

That is what it was like in the days of Noah.

*"Then the Lord says, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he is also flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years'" (Genesis 6:3).*

"I will strive with you, but after that point in time, I am not going to bother you anymore." What do the prophets say? *"Seek the Lord while He may be found" (Isaiah 55:6)*. The smartest thing you could ever do with your free will, which is an awesome power that we possess, is to give it right back to God. That is the wisest thing you could ever do with your free will. Yet so many people live life acting like God is not there.

I think it was C.S. Lewis who said, "Pain is God's megaphone to a deaf world." Is there something going on in your life that is hurtful? Rather than being resentful, you ought to say, "Praise the Lord." Paul would not have become the Paul that we know in the New Testament without his thorn in the flesh, which we do not know what it was, but we know that it was something that hurt. He asked God to take it away three times. God said, "No, My grace is sufficient for you. My power is perfected in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Go home and read it yourself. You will see it is all there.

Paul became Paul because of this thorn. It is what drove him back to God, even though apparently it was not a lot of joy or fun in the experience. We would not have that Paul that we know today, he would not have been that usable, pliable vessel, had it not been this thorn in the flesh. You get around theologians who are always trying to debate what made Paul Paul. Someone says it was his education. It was his pharisaical background. It was this. It was that. It was his talents. It was his abilities. It was none of that. It was the thorn in the flesh. That is what made Paul Paul. Pharaoh's thorn in the flesh just got taken away. The frogs are gone. He does not want anything to do with God.

We will close with the very end of Exodus 8:15.

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, 96.

*"But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as the Lord had said" (Exodus 8:15).*

The Lord said long in advance that this was what would happen. All the way back in Exodus 7:4 it says,

*"When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people, the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments" (Exodus 7:4).*

He will not listen. It is part of the plan. It is not as if Pharaoh's stubbornness against God suddenly throws God's plan off. This was part of the plan, because through this stubbornness, more judgments are going to come which are going to have a reflection on God's glory. Pharaoh, through his own free will and his stubbornness, is bringing about God's plan. Wow. Who could pull that off other than God?

You mean Christ rejectors and Christ haters are resisting God through their own will? Yes. Do you mean to tell me that when they do that, they are fulfilling God's will? Yes they are. Can you explain that? No I cannot. That is way above my pay grade to explain something like that. I just know it is in the Bible. The prophecy of Pharaoh's hardness comes about just like God said.

Let us pray. Lord, we are grateful for Your truth. Grateful for Your Word. Grateful for this time of the year. The tragedy, Lord, of somebody here today never being given the opportunity to respond to Your grace, we do not want that. We do pray, Lord, that anyone within the sound of my voice who has not trusted in You and Your finished work might understand the love of God for them, what Jesus did for them. As they come under the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, I pray that they might place their trust, which is another way of saying belief, into the finished work of Jesus Christ.

I just pray, Lord, that many, many people within the sound of my voice will be taking this opportunity to place their trust in what You did 2,000 years ago for their eternity and the safe keeping of their souls. I cannot think of a better time to be born again. During the time period when we celebrate the birth of Your Son into our world. We do pray, Lord, that You would accomplish this great work. We will be careful to give You all the praise and the glory. We ask these things in Jesus' name and God's people said, Amen.