

Exodus 031

Last Call

Exodus 9:1-7

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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus. 9:1, as we continue our verse-by-verse teaching through the Book of Exodus. The title of our message this morning is "The Last Call."

You will recall that the Book of Exodus is about the redemption of a nation, the nation of Israel, that had been in a state of bondage for 400 years at the hands of a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph. God is taking that nation and bringing them out of bondage. He has raised up an instrument that He is going to use, a man named Moses, primarily. God has dealt with this man extensively, and by the time you get to about halfway through Exodus 7, God is now ready to use Moses.

It is through Moses that come upon the land of Egypt, ten plagues, four of which we have studied: the Nile to blood, the plague of frogs, the plague of gnats, and the plague of flies. Pharaoh, each time being given an opportunity to acquiesce to God, has chosen not to. As is typical, the plagues get worse and worse the more Pharaoh hardens his own heart against God. Here we are with plague number five: the death of the livestock—disease on cattle (Exodus 9:1-7).

Here is an outline we are going to look at today as we look at these verses. God's instructions to Moses and Aaron (Exodus 9:1-5); the prophetic fulfillment of what God said would happen (Exodus 9:6); and Pharaoh's reaction (Exodus 9:7).

Death of Livestock (Exodus 9:1-7)

- I. God Instructs Moses and Aaron (1-5)
 - A. God's edict (1)
 - B. God's consequence (2-3)
 - C. God's protection (4)
 - D. God's timing (5)
- II. Prophetic Fulfillment (6)
- III. Pharaoh's Reaction (7)

Pharaoh's reaction is scary. It is scary because this will be Pharaoh's last opportunity to do what is right. From this point on, Pharaoh is not hardening his own heart against God, God is hardening Pharaoh's heart, giving Pharaoh over to what Pharaoh wanted to do.

First of all, notice God's instructions to Moses and Aaron. We have God's edict (Exodus 9:1).

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me'"" (Exodus 9:1).

You will notice that the Jewish people, the nation of Israel—this very special nation that God has raised up in the Book of Genesis, this instrument through which He will bless the world—is being called here, the "Hebrews." That is the designation given to them. This is what, Potiphar's wife said concerning Joseph all the way back in Genesis 39:17, when she falsely accused him:

"Then she spoke to him [her husband] with these words, 'The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me'" (Genesis 39:17).

From that point on we are getting this nomenclature, this designation, the "Hebrews."

God says, "Here is what you are to tell Pharaoh: to let the Hebrews go." *"Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go.'"* Those are famous lines. I so appreciate them, because I think they summarize the whole heart and soul of God. God is about liberation. God is about taking people who are in a state of slavery and setting them free. Jesus talked about this in the New Testament in John 8:32: "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you absolutely miserable." No, it does not say that, does it?

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

Just as the Hebrews were under a terrible tyrant, the human race is under a tyrant. It is called original sin and Satan. We have a tendency to think that if I go and live life on my own terms, independent of God, then I am really going to experience freedom. It is the opposite. The further a person moves away from God, the more enslaved they become. God sees us in our need and sent His only Son to liberate us, to set us free, just as the Hebrews are going to be set free from political rule.

Jesus, in John 8:36 says,

"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:17 says,

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

That is how you can always tell when you are around Jesus. He takes the chains that once bound us—chains of bitterness, perhaps, chains of resentment, chains of anxiety,

chains of guilt—and He sets us free from those things. A lot of people use the name of Jesus to put people into slavery. Religion does that to people. It puts people on a treadmill of works, making people wonder if they have done enough good deeds to get to heaven. How different it is when you encounter Jesus, who gives a person at the point of faith alone in Christ alone, immediate assurance of salvation.

God is about freedom. In America, we are founded on freedom, as well. We have something called the Liberty Bell. That crack there in the Liberty Bell was created when it was rung at the death, if I have my history right, of our third Supreme Court justice, a man named John Marshall. That is where that crack came from. You will be interested to know that on the Liberty Bell itself is inscribed Leviticus 25:10:

""You shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family""
(Leviticus 25:10).

God was so interested in liberating people that on the fiftieth year, called the Year of Jubilee under the Law of Moses, people were released from their debts, all financial obligations. Can you imagine that? Household payments gone; credit card payments gone; and car payments gone. The Bible says:

"And the borrower becomes the lender's slave" (Proverbs 22:7).

There was a provision in the Mosaic Law to liberate people from debts that they were in that they could not get out of. That is in Leviticus 25:10, and that is what our founding fathers put on the Liberty Bell. I would like to bring this up, because a lot of people today want you to believe that America was founded on separating Christianity from public life. "Get the Ten Commandments out of the schools, get the manger scene off the city hall steps." Yet nothing could be further from the truth.

Our founders inscribed Leviticus 25:10 on one of our founding pieces of architecture, and it was an appropriate inscription because of its emphasis on liberty—liberty from tyranny—and freedom. It is no surprise here that God's agenda, through Moses, is to take Egypt out of bondage just like He wants to take you out of bondage, and He wants to take me out of bondage.

""Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me'" (Exodus 9:1).

We love Ephesians 2:8-9, do we not? But how come we never include Ephesians 2:10? Some of the first verses I ever memorized as a new Christian were Ephesians 2:8-9, but for some reason Ephesians 2:10 was never emphasized. You have to understand all these verses together to see the mind of God says:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Praise the Lord. Free from tyranny of sin, Satan, religiosity, from wondering if I have enough good works, the treadmill of spirituality—saved from all of that. But there is more to it:

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"
(Ephesians 2:10).

It is worth pointing out that "walk" there ("peripateo" in Greek) is in the subjunctive mood, meaning that it is the mood of possibility. In other words, God's endgame, His desire for us, is not to save us by good works, but to save us for good works. In other words, the good works do not come automatically. That takes growth, and they have nothing to do with birth. Birth is salvation by faith alone, but as you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, you start to see very quickly that God did not only save me from something, He saved me to something.

He wants to take my life, He wants to take your life, and He wants to begin to express His life through us as He works His plan out in our lives. He wants to make us a channel or a vehicle of blessing to other people.

This was a shock for me as a new Christian. I remember one time when I was in a little church. The pastor got sick and he asked me to fill in. I was about 22 or 23 years old, something like that. I was shaking like a leaf. I got up in front of this little church and I gave a sermon and people were like, "Wow, that was pretty good." Not to brag, but people enjoyed it. I started to realize that, "Wait a minute. God gave me something here. He gave me a teaching gift. He gave me a knowledge gift. He gave me a communication gift." He wanted to use that to bless other people.

That becomes the significance of spiritual gifts. Every Christian at the point of spiritual birth is given at least one spiritual gift from God. One of the interesting things about the spiritual gifts is that they are all others focused. They are not focused on the person receiving the gift; they are focused on somebody else. When you teach, someone else is edified. When you exercise mercy, someone else is edified. When you exercise administration, someone else is edified. When you lead, someone else edified, etc.

You say, "Pastor, I would like to learn more about these spiritual gifts. Where do I find them in the Bible?" That is easy. It is as easy as the pneumonic: 12-12-4-4—Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Peter 4, Ephesians 4. If you were to go home this afternoon and read those four chapters, you would have all of the data concerning what the New Testament reveals about spiritual gifts and the fact that every child of God has at least one spiritual gift.

I am convinced most people have more than one, because certain gifts run as a tandem like knowledge and teaching. It is hard to teach if you do not know anything, so that is a gift mix. There is the gift of evangelism. There is the gift of pastor-teacher. There are countless gifts that are spoken of, and they are all about (edifying) others.

As you begin to move into the realm of your spiritual gifts, you start to see that this is why God saved me. He saved me not just to keep me out of hell—which is a wonderful thing. I do not want to go to hell, but I am not only saved from something, but I am saved to something. He wants to use us to expand His eternal purposes on the earth, and that becomes an exciting discovery within Christianity.

That is why the nation of Israel is going to be released from this captivity. It is not only so that they can get away from the taskmaster and the cruelty that they were under, but so that they could actually get to a point of growth where God would start to use them. That becomes His blueprint for all of us. He sets us free to set us free, yes, but that is just half of it. That is only Ephesians 2:8-9. There is Ephesians 2:10 where He actually wants to use us.

I think that is the part of it that really caused the Apostle Paul to just marvel at the grace of God. Paul could not believe what God had done for him, considering his background. Paul, at one time, went by the name Saul. Some say Saul and Paul were always derivatives of his name. Not to get into that debate, but Paul or Saul was once an opponent of Christianity. He was a guy that actually had blood on his hands. This man who became the Apostle Paul. When you study Acts 7 and you move into Acts 8, he is the one that is actually holding the cloaks of those that were throwing rocks, literally, at a man named Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian or Church Age.

God Saved Saul and God did not just save Saul—I think this is the part of it that really got to him in terms of being blown away by what God did—God did not just save Saul, He made him an apostle. He calls himself the apostle that was ill-timed, abnormally born. He says, "If anyone did not deserve to be an apostle, it would be me, because I persecuted the Church of God. And here I am as an apostle, an advocate for the Church of God, promoting the Church of God, God using me to expand the Church of God."

Saul, who became Paul, could not get over the fact that he had not only been forgiven for what he did, but God started to use him. It is like what you see in Ephesians 4. Towards the end of the chapter, it talks about these hands that used to steal. "Now that you are saved, use those same hands for productive purposes so that you may have something to give away. Hands that used to steal now become hands of charity." That is our God, and that is a pattern of what He wants to do in our lives. I wish the good works were automatic in all of our lives. We have to grow into these, but these are things that God seeks to bring forth nonetheless.

The edict is given: "Let My people go." Then you look at Exodus 9:2-3 and there is a consequence if Pharaoh will not comply:

"For if you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them" (Exodus 9:2).

Notice that it is conditional. There is volition. Pharaoh, as an image bearer of God, is given a choice. "You are either going to let My people go, or you are not. Whatever you do is your choice," which is a frightening thing that God has given us as image bearers of Him. He has given us free will, and whatever decision I make with my free will, God will respect.

"If you want to reject Me and you want to go to hell for all eternity, then I am not going to override you. I am going to respect your decision. Of course, I will convict and agitate you and bother you till your dying day so that you do not make a bad decision, but if your decision is that you do not want Me, then I am going to respect your call."

If God were to override that, then He would not be respecting how He is made us as image bearers. There is always a choice with God. That is why when you get into the Garden of Eden, there are two trees there. There is the tree of life and there is a tree of knowledge. It was very clear. This tree over here—the tree of life—that is good for you. This tree over here is bad for you.

If God was not a God that honored choices, there would only be one tree. Why even put the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden to begin with, since it has caused so much trouble? Because God is a God of choices; He is a God of volition. It is how we are made in His image, and Pharaoh is given that opportunity.

One of the points I have tried to make as we have gone through this is that I believe Pharaoh is a type, if you will, of the devil. He wants to keep God's people in bondage. Satan is the same way. He is the illegitimate ruler over planet Earth. All of these verses indicate that Satan is the ruler of this world, the prince of this world, the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air, a roaring lion who roams about seeking someone to devour the world, lies within his power. He is the reason we have to put on the full armor of God, and he really likes his authority, which was handed over to him by Adam.

Satan as Ruler of this World

- Job 1:7; 2:2
- Luke 4:5-7
- John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Ephesians 2:2
- 1 John 4:4; 5:19



Satan came to Jesus testing Him, saying, "I will give you all the kingdoms of the world if You worship me." Jesus never said, "That is not true. You do not control the kingdoms of the world." Jesus never negated that because it is true. This is why the whole creation groans and we ourselves groan even in our bodies (Romans 8:22-23). Just as Pharaoh really did not want to let God's people go, Satan does not want to let this earth go. He does not like the time in history when he will be sentenced and banished and ushered ultimately into the lake of fire.

The good news in the whole thing is that God wins. There is coming upon the earth the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments and the golden bowl of wrath judgments. I have made the point, as we have gone through this series, that those judgments sound so similar to the judgments in Exodus. You will see the sores in both books; rivers to blood in both books' darkness in both books, Exodus and Revelation; hail and frogs in both books. It is a state of warfare that is happening as part of the angelic conflict and will continue to happen.

The struggle exists because the devil does not want to let this world out of his grip, just as Pharaoh did not want to; but God won ultimately with Pharaoh, and the great news of the Bible is that God is going to win. If you know Jesus personally, you are on the winning side of history. You may not feel like a winner, and you may not look like a winner. You may not have the self-image of a winner, but if you know Jesus, you are an overcomer because He overcame in our place.

The day is coming in history (Revelation 11:15), when the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule forever and ever. I, for one, cannot wait for that, because this world is not headed in the right place. There are perpetual problems in this world, and I long for the day where His kingdom will come.

In fact, we are told to pray for this, are we not, in the disciples prayer? "Hey, Jesus, how should we pray?" Jesus said, "Pray this way. Pray this: Thy kingdom come. Pray for the removal of the usurping power of Satan and the establishment of God's Kingdom on the earth."

As you go down to Exodus 9:3 God articulates the condition: if Pharaoh will not let the people go, what is going to happen?

"Behold the hand of the Lord will come with a very severe pestilence—"
(Exodus 9:3).

You notice how these plagues are getting worse and worse. That is just like the Book of Revelation. As humanity will not repent in the Book of Revelation, and they keep saying over and over again that they would not repent, God keeps turning up the pressure. It is not only a third of the grass that is burned in Revelation 8. When you get to Revelation 16 all of the grass is burned. It is not only a third of the sea that becomes blood in

Revelation 8, all of the sea becomes blood in Revelation 16. It is the same type of phenomena here.

""Behold, the hand of the Lord will come with a severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the on the flocks"" (Exodus 9:3).

It is an interesting thing because each of these judgments that we read about in the Book of Exodus is an attack, if you will, on an Egyptian deity—every single one of these. They worship the Nile, so God turned it to blood red. They worship frogs, so God multiplied them. They worshiped gnats and flies, so God multiplied them.

Ed Hindson makes this comment about this:

"Such a loss of livestock would be a body blow to both the Egyptians' economy and their religious sensibilities as masses of their sacred animals succumb to the plague. The Egyptian deities challenged by this plague were Apis and Mnevis, both represented by the bull and associated with the gods of Ptah and Ra, respectively; Hathor, the cow-headed goddess of love; and the ram-god Khnum, guarding of the Nile."¹

As God allowed this disease to break out all over this livestock, He was taking aim at all of these deities that the Egyptians were worshiping in the place of God. That is the nature of God. God hates idolatry.

""I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another—"" (Isaiah 42:8).

What is an idol? An idol is anything that we place in importance above God, something that I get my security, my sense of self-worth from other than God. It could be anything. It could be a talent; it could be a retirement account; it could be a family. There is nothing wrong with families. God created families, but you go through the gospels and to people that told Jesus, "I cannot follow you because I have to bury my father," Jesus said things like, "Let the dead bury the dead. You follow me" (Matthew 8:21-22).

An idol is anything that we place above God in importance. If that is something that is happening in our lives, God is going to take aim at that. That is His nature. He does not want any rivals. He is going to reduce us to the point where we see whatever it is we are trusting in is not going to help us, and only God can help us.

One of the greatest idols mentioned in the Bible is money. There is nothing wrong with money. The problem is the love of money. The Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil. It says that love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10).

¹ Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *KJV Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the KJV* (p. 93).

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount talked about this:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24).

God is a lousy roommate. He does not want to share the room. He wants jurisdiction over everything. One of the great things He does in our lives is that He exposes things that we have elevated above Him in importance. That is His nature, and that is what He is going to do with the nation of Israel. Eventually He is going to bring them to Sinai. He is going to give them the Law—613 commandments flowing out of the Decalogue. The first two commandments (and you know them well) take aim at idolatry: No graven images; and no gods before Me (Exodus 20:3-4).

You do not have to get far into the Law to see God's hostility and hatred for idolatry. The Egyptians worshiped everything and anything other than the true God. God starts, in these plagues, taking aim at each of their idols. "This is what is going to happen, Pharaoh, if you use your own free will against Me. There will be a consequence."

It never pays to do things our own way, even though God will respect the decision.

"But the way of the treacherous is hard" (Proverbs 13:15).

The devil would like nothing better than for you to believe that if you just lived without God, independent of God, that is where liberty is; that is where freedom is; that is where satisfaction is. The whole thing is an absolute lie. It is the opposite.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Does God love you and have a plan for your life? Yes, He surely does. He wants you to have life and have it to the full, but there is another side to that. Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life. The first part of that verse says:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

What is Satan's goal for your life? To steal, to kill, and destroy?. What is God's plan for your life? That you may have life and have it in abundance, or have it to the full. Keep that in mind the next time the devil whispers in your ear that the way to success, enlightenment, nirvana, self-actualization, whatever terms the world is using these days, is to live without God.

The devil, in the form of a serpent, came to Adam and Eve and told them that exact lie. "The day you eat from the tree, you will die" (Genesis 2:17). Satan says, "No, you will not. For God really is holding out on you" (Genesis 3:5). That is what he is saying. "God

knows that if you eat from the tree, you will be like him, knowing good and evil. Do you want to be godlike? Then live without God." That is the lie.

That is the lie that is being taught today all over the world. People believe it constantly. "If I get close to Jesus, He is going to wreck my life." It is the opposite; the opposite is true. Jesus is the one that takes the chains off. Jesus is the one that sets us free. Jesus is the one that helps us understand what life is about and why we are even here. That is why He says, "You find your life when you lose your life" (Matthew 16:25). You find meaning when you lose what you thought was so helpful to you, which we have been deceived into thinking is truth, and it is not truth.

"Pharaoh, if you go your own way, which God will respect because you are an image bearer of God, then there will be a consequence." This very severe plague is described in Exodus 9:3. Even when this plague comes, God's people are going to be protected through it in this instance. Notice Exodus 9:4:

""But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel"" (Exodus 9:4).

"Is that not an amazing thing, Pharaoh? You can make your decision, and the nation under your authority will experience a terrible consequence, but God's people living in Goshen are going to be supernaturally protected."

That same kind of thing happens a lot in the Book of Revelation. I do not think it happens every time, but it talks about people who had not received the mark of the beast and consequently were spared from certain judgments (Revelation 9:4 and Revelation 16:2). Of course we would expect to see that parallel in Revelation because Revelation is the ultimate Exodus. God is not only taking His nation out of Egyptian bondage, He is taking the whole planet out of the bondage that it has been in ever since Satan became the unlawful usurper over planet Earth once Adam turned the keys over to the devil.

Notice Exodus 9:5 where God puts in some timing. This shows us His sovereignty over these judgments as the Lord is still instructing Moses and Aaron what they are to say to Pharaoh:

"The Lord set a definite time, saying, 'Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land'" (Exodus 9:5).

Exactly tomorrow, at a particular point, this plague is going to start. Of course, this helps us to defend the idea that these are supernatural judgments. What people have a tendency to do—and they will do this on Mysteries of the Bible, A&E, the History Channel—is to bring on someone from Harvard trying to dismiss the miraculous nature of the miraculous. "The Nile turned to blood. That was just some silt that came up, and it comes up a certain time of the year. When that happens, that upsets the frogs and they

jump out of the Nile, so that is how they explain the frogs." They take what is miraculous and turn it into something naturalistic.

That is what the unbelieving mind always does. It takes something supernatural and pretend and tries to pretend like it is natural. There is nothing more supernatural than creation, that we are living in a universe that is designed and created. Does it take any skill to defend that? That is just stating the obvious. No two of our fingerprints are the same; snowflakes examined under a microscope, of all of the snowflakes that have fallen in human history, are never exactly the same. Here we are, with the earth moving around the sun in our heliocentric universe and solar system, and we are not so close to the sun that we burn to death, and we are not so far away from the sun that we freeze to death. We move, orbiting the exact distance from the sun to sustain life. It is absolutely miraculous. Yet your average person today has been deceived into thinking that all of this came about.

Coincidentally, it is called evolution, from the goo to you by way of the zoo over billions of years. It is a naturalistic explanation to the supernatural. The evolutionists say, and this is almost a direct quote: "We cannot allow a divine foot into the door." Why not? "The moment we acknowledge God, we have to acknowledge that we are under His authority and we cannot have that. The naturalistic, unbelieving mind works overtime, to explain away what is an obvious miracle.

It is very similar to what happened on the Day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit fell and they began speaking in known languages that they had never learned. The Bible translates that as "tongues," and it was an obvious miracle that happened there in Acts 2. Yet the unbeliever said that they were just drunk. Peter says, "Are you out of your mind? It is 9 o'clock in the morning" (Acts 2:15). I have had alcoholics in my extended family, and none of them started drinking that early, maybe three hours later, but not that early.

Peter says, "You guys are absolutely being foolish the way you are looking at a miracle here and trying to pretend like it is something naturalistic." People will do this with these Exodus judgments, but the biblical text will not allow you to do that because of these details Moses knew beforehand about these plagues. That is miraculous.

Then you have instantaneous appearance and termination. They are going to start tomorrow, and it is going to end at a particular point. They are described as signs and wonders. They keep intensifying as Pharaoh's heart continues to grow harder and harder. They are timed by God. They achieve a moral purpose. God allows them to happen until a moral purpose is achieved. Even Pharaoh's magicians tried to imitate them. So Pharaoh's magicians saw them as something supernatural, not naturalistic at all, as we are seeing here. The last seven plagues did not even affect the Jews living in Goshen. God said, "The plague is going to happen over here, but not over there."

When the Nile turned to blood people say, "All their water supply was contaminated because they got the water from the Nile," But that is not what the Bible says. It talks

about rivers, streams, pools, reservoirs, and independent vessels holding water that, that very second turned to blood as well. Make no mistake about it, these plagues that have come on Egypt are supernatural.

"Pharaoh, this is what is going to happen if you go against My will." The way of the treacherous is hard.

Then you drop down to Exodus 9:6. Are you surprised to read this? Everything God said would happen, happens. There is a short-term prophecy coming into fulfillment.

"So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died" (Exodus 9:6).

Everything that God said would happen, happened. This is a pattern in the Bible. This is why I like to promote this particular book, "Every Prophecy of the Bible," because it will show you this pattern constantly in Scripture. Everything that God says will happen, happens. Short-term prophecies like, "You are going to go into captivity for 70 years." Guess what? They went into captivity for exactly 70 years, not 68 years, not 73 years, but 70 years.

Jesus made reference to this constantly in the final week of His life. He said to His disciples in the Upper Room:

"From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you might 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).

He is telling His eleven disciples—Judas having already left the room—hand-picked disciples, "I am going to give you a series of short-term predictions, and they are going to happen this week. When they come into existence this week, you will know exactly who I am. There will be no ambiguity in your minds that I am He." "I Am," being a divine title, a title of God, as we have studied Exodus 3:14. Exactly what He said happened.

He starts calling out the guys that are going to fulfill the prophecies. Can you imagine that? "Peter, you are going to deny Me three times." "No way." "Yes, three times. Not twice, not four times. Three times." Biblical prophecy fulfilled. "I am going to be betrayed by a friend," speaking of Judas, someone Jesus called a friend to the very end. "The Jews will not kill Me; the Gentiles will." He said that over and over again. That is exactly what happened. He was rushed through the Jewish judicial system and turned over to Rome for execution, because Rome had come to power and taken away from the Jews the power of capital punishment. It was prediction, after prediction, after prediction that happened in real time.

I am completely convinced that when these eleven disciples saw this, there was no ambiguity in their minds as to the identity of Jesus. If they could have, they would have walked right through a wall for Him; and they did. These guys that He is talking to are going to go into the big, bad world out there, and they are all going to be killed.

The only exception to the rule is John, who was stubborn. He would not die. They tried to kill him. They tried to boil him in oil, and they could not get the guy dead. So they threw him out on an island called Patmos, which is an island there on the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Asia minor. That was God's purpose for John, because there he would receive the final book of the Bible that we call the Book of Revelation.

Look what happened to these guys: James the son of Alphaeus went to Jerusalem where he was clubbed to death; Simon the Zealot went to Jerusalem where he was martyred; James the son of Zebedee went to Judea where he was executed; Thaddeus went to Mesopotamia where he was beaten to death; Peter went to Babylon or Rome, or some combination thereof, where he was crucified upside down.

Foxe's Book of Martyrs documents these things. Peter, not even wanting to be crucified like Jesus because He saw himself unworthy. "Crucify me," he says, "upside down." According to tradition, Matthew went to modern-day Tehran where he was beheaded. John was flung onto the island of Patmos, although they tried to kill him. They tried to fry him in boiling oil. Philip went to East Turkey where he was tortured and crucified. Thomas went to India where he was speared. Bartholomew went to India where he was flayed. I do not even want to describe what that means. It is a form of death that is so disgusting that it is not even appropriate to talk about it in family circles. He was flayed and crucified. Andrew went to Ukraine, Russia, and Greece, where he was hanged.

You have to ask yourself, why did these guys do this? Because they knew who He was and they knew who He was because of His predictions. Of course, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them and compelled them, and that is obviously a big piece of the puzzle, but part of it was that there was no question mark in their minds as to the identity of Jesus, because He talked about this issue of fulfilling prophecy in the last week of His life, Passion Week, right there with them in the Upper Room.

Why am I a prophecy enthusiast? Why did we have a Rapture seminar all day yesterday? Why even waste time with that? Because all of these End Time prophecies are going to happen. Everything on this chart from the Rapture onward is going to take place because the Bible has a track record. The John Walvoord book, "Every Prophecy of the Bible," documents this. Everything that God says will happen, happens because God cannot lie.

There are certain things that not even God can do. Did you know that? The philosophers say, "Can God make a rock so big that He cannot lift it?" The answer is no. God is always sovereign over His creation. Can God tell a lie? He cannot. That is why the commandments, one of them is, "Thou shalt not lie," "thou shalt not bear false witness," or "to speak the truth in love."

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

"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).

Why all this emphasis on truth? Because that is who God is. God is truthful.

"It is impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18).

"God is not a man, that He should lie" (Numbers 23:19).

"God, who cannot lie" (Titus 1:2).

If that is how God is and we are to imitate His character, then we should not be people of duplicitousness—cunning, conniving, manipulating, fooling. That is not who we are, because that is not who God is.

The God of Islam is a deceiver in their theology, and he can lie. You can get before Allah on the day of judgment and he can say to you, "You have done a lot of good works, but ha ha, just fooling. I just ripped the carpet out from under you. You are going to hell." That is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is 100% truthful, 100% of the time, including the things that He has said are yet to come. I should believe those things because it is part of God's character.

As we are seeing here, it is part of God's track record. If you make nine free throws in a row, there is probably a pretty good chance you are going to make the tenth one. That is what these fulfilled prophecies in Scripture point us towards. This is a wonderful area of study called eschatology—"eschatos" and "ology," the study of what the Bible says about the end.

You can study that right alongside theology, the study of God; Christology, the study of Christ; and pneumatology, the study of the Spirit. These come from Greek words "pneuma" being the spirit. Anthropology, the study of man; hamartiology, "hamartia" meaning sin, the study of sin; Soteriology, "soterios" salvation, the study of salvation; angelology, the study of the angels—the good angels and Lucifer, who became Satan, a fallen angel, and the third that he deceived in his Luciferian rebellion called demons. We can learn about those in the Scripture. Also, ecclesiology, the study of the church. Arnold Fruchtenbaum throws in Israelology, the study of Israel. Prolegomena, at the beginning—"pro," intro, and "legomena," word—introductory word. What are some things you have to assume to do theology right? Last on the list is eschatology, the study of the end. What does the future hold?

I know of no other holy book on planet Earth that will lay out the future as if it has already happened, but your Bible does that constantly and challenges us to believe the things unfulfilled yet to come, prophetic fulfillment. Everything that God said happened.

Look at Pharaoh's reaction. This is frightening because this is Pharaoh's last call. That is why I entitled this message "The Last Call."

"Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go" (Exodus 9:7).

When it says there "Pharaoh sent," probably what that means is that he sent someone to Goshen, someone came to him from Goshen, or maybe he himself went to Goshen, where the Jews were, after this severe plague had broken out all over the animals all over Egypt. He went to Goshen to see if God's Word was true, and he saw that none of the plagues hit the Jewish people or the Jewish livestock.

Is it not a wonderful thing that when judgment comes one day you as a Christian are not a candidate for it?

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

I am here to tell you that judgment is coming. I believe that because of my belief in eschatology—"eschatos," last, and "ology"—study of the end. Not only am I a believer in eschatology, I am a believer in soteriology, salvation, that Jesus 2,000 years ago took His wrath in my place. He took the wrath of a holy God, God the Father, in my place 2,000 years ago. One member of the Trinity, God the Father, poured out His wrath on another member of the Trinity, God the Son, so that wrath would not have to be borne by me or you if we receive what He did in our place as a free gift.

That is Christology, and part of Christology is studying that Jesus as my substitute, not someone who comes into my life to make it complete, although that is part of it; not someone who gives me leadership principles, although that is part of it; not someone who gives me tips for better emotional control, although that is part of it. That is a small, narrow understanding about Jesus. Jesus ultimately died as my substitute and as the God-Man He is the only one that could do it.

Only eternal God could bear the wrath of an eternal consequence for sin. He is the Secret Service agent that jumps in front of the bullet at the last minute, and absorbs it in the place of the intended victim. There are a lot of things to know about Jesus in Christology, but I hope you never forget this one: He was your substitute and He was my substitute. The death that He died on the cross, I should have died, but Jesus exempted me from it.

When the judgment comes, the judgment will pass right over me. That is, by the way, what Passover means. There is a Passover scene coming in Exodus 12 when judgment just passed right over. The death of the firstborn, and that judgment passed right on over the Jewish homes when God saw the blood of the Passover lamb, which must be perfect and have no bones broken, typifying Christ. When God saw that blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts of the Jewish homes, His judgment passed right on over.

Jesus is our Passover lamb. Judgment is coming, but I am not a candidate for it. As far as difficulty, Satan's wrath, yes, man's wrath, yes, I experience that. The world's wrath, yes, but not God's wrath. For that we should rejoice. Amen.

You look at the second part of this, as Pharaoh has done some inspection here, and has seen that what God said would happen, happened. Would you not think that Pharaoh would repent at this point? But he does not do that.

"But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go"
(Exodus 9:7).

This is a self-hardening because God's name is not mentioned here. Ed Hindson says:

"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."²

Charles Ryrie says:

"Seven times Pharaoh hardened his own heart before God first hardened it, though the prediction that God would do it all."³

God is respecting the volition of Pharaoh.

There is a prediction of divine hardening (Exodus 4:21), and then there are six examples of Pharaoh hardening his own heart. Then finally you get to Exodus 9:12, which is coming next week, and you read these frightening words—and this is the first time it reads this way in everything in the Book of Exodus that we have studied:

"And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Exodus 9:12).

That is new; it never said that before. It has talked about Pharaoh's self-hardening six times, and then finally you get to plague number six and it says, *"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart"* (Exodus 9:12). What is happening here? God gave Pharaoh over to

² Hindson, E. E., & Mitchell, D. R., eds. (2010). *KJV Bible Commentary for Today: The Most Up-to-Date Commentary on the Time-Honored Text of the KJV* (p. 86).

³ Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, 96.

what Pharaoh wanted to do, and God said, "I will not bother you anymore." That is a terrifying thing when you think about it.

Pharaoh knew the truth, but suppressed it. Unbelievers do that constantly.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth and unrighteousness,—"
(Romans 1:18)

That is the problem. It is not a lack of information, it is a desire to live without that it is the problem.

"—because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.—" *(Romans 1:19)*

We say, "God, I wish So-and-so, an unbeliever, would go to church and hear a sermon, that they could get saved." What I am telling you is that they hear sermons every day. It is called natural revelation. They know God exists, but they choose to suppress it.

"—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).*

The problem is not a lack of information, it is a suppression of it. "We cannot allow a divine foot in the door."

Pharaoh keeps doing this over and over and over again, through about six plagues, five plagues. Finally in Exodus 9:12, Plague number six, for the first time God's name is inserted into this, and it says:

"And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" *(Exodus 9:12).*

What did God say before He sent the flood?

"Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever'" *(Genesis 6:3).*

We are so accustomed to the grace of God, we just think it continues forever, and it does not.

"As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you" *(Jeremiah 7:16).*

Is that in the Bible? That is in the Bible. I thought we were supposed to pray for people and intercede, and we are. But it reached a point in Jeremiah's day where God said, "Stop it. I am done."

"Last call, Pharaoh. This is your last chance, because once you rebel against Me again, you have crossed the point of no return. It will not be only you hardening your heart against Me, but it will be Me expediting the process." This is Pharaoh's last opportunity, which he is turning down.

*"Today if you hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness" (Psalm 95:7-8).*

That is our appeal today: if you hear God's voice, do not assume I can turn it down and hear it tomorrow. Maybe you cannot. Maybe it will happen. Maybe it will not. I do not know, I am not God. It is His call. But if you hear His voice today, respond today. Today is the day of salvation.

I am not just making an appeal here for lost people to get saved. I am making an appeal to believers where God, over and over again because of some kind of pocket of rebellion in our lives, keeps saying, "This needs to change, this needs to change, this needs to change." We postpone it and we ignore it and we put it off. If I am reading the Bible correctly, we do that to our detriment, and we do it under the false assumption that that grace and conviction is always going to be there. If I am reading my Bible correctly, you reach a point where God honors your decision. Today is a day of salvation. *"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Psalm 95:7-8).*

If anyone is here today and they do not know Christ personally, today is the day of salvation. Jesus stepped out of eternity into time, lived a life in my place that I cannot live, and died a terrible death to pay a penalty for my sins that I cannot pay. He did it all in my place. His final words on the cross were, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), meaning "paid in full."

He says, "I want you to trust what I did for you 2,000 years ago as a gift." You receive this gift through faith alone. Faith is another way of saying trust, reliance, dependence. I hope many people within the sound of my voice will do what God says and place their personal faith in Him for salvation.

*"Today, if you would hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts" (Psalm 95:7-8).*