



THE VOICE OF EVANGELISM INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

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Want to take our Scripture text today from ***Exodus 12:29, "And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; there was a great cry in Egypt; and there was not a house where there was not one dead."*** It would be natural to assume that Pharaoh's grief was over the loss of his firstborn child and that was what finally motivated him to let the Hebrew children go. Reading here from ***Exodus 12:31-32, "And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also."*** But his decision was probably less the product of human emotion than it was of politics and religion. This is because the tenth plague was the great finale in an epic contest to see whose God was more powerful, Egypt's or Israel's. We need to understand that to the Egyptians, Pharaoh was a God whose fate ultimately determined their fate. So when Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, claiming to speak for a new god whom they called the great God ***"I am that I am"*** Pharaoh was stubbornly vexed in his heart and mind. Pharaoh replied and wanted to know, who is this God? Notice the words of Pharaoh in ***Exodus 5:2, "And***

THE BATTLE OF THE GODS

Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." In effect, Pharaoh was throwing down a challenge or a gauntlet for the Lord God of Israel to prove himself and His purported deity. Jehovah accepted the challenge and therefore God brought nine catastrophic plagues upon Egypt to demonstrate His power and great deity. Some may ask the question, did Pharaoh have a chance? Pharaoh had as fair a chance as any other person to hear and obey the Lord, but he used this encounter with the living God as an opportunity to prove his own personal will and self-determination. God did not intervene in Pharaoh's decisions in a way that would take control of Pharaoh's will. Pharaoh kept complete control and responsibility over his own personal choices. Apparently, God had made Pharaoh to be what we would call a strong willed individual. Often times a strong willed person can create undue hardships within their own personal lives, as well as others. Therefore it is not surprising that Pharaoh determined to resist God's plan. When the Scriptures declared that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, it is a way of saying that Pharaoh became more self-willed and self-determined: he was acting even more like the strong willed person that God had made him to be. It is very interesting that not every Egyptian had the same response to the plagues as did Pharaoh. A number of the Egyptians joined the Hebrews and left in the exodus, we know this to be factual

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according to ***Exodus 12:38, "And a mixed multitude went up also with them: and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle."*** This again demonstrates how God would save Gentiles and bring them into the body of Christ even before the cross. We witness in the book of Numbers how not only did some of the Israelites die in the wilderness, but also some of the Egyptians died as well. We grasp this understanding found here in ***Numbers 11:4, "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a-lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?"*** We know that Pharaoh resisted all nine plagues that God had previously brought upon the Egyptians and their land. But with the tenth plague God struck down Pharaoh's supposedly divine child that would ultimately succeed him. When God struck down the firstborn male throughout all of Egypt, this was the ultimate blow to Pharaoh. This act of death undercut Pharaoh's credibility and authority as a purported God or deity. As our scripture text points out, this powerful, godlike ruler was suddenly no different than the lowest prisoner in his dungeons, or, for that matter, than the animals that were in the field. Notice very closely as to what our Scripture text declares: even the firstborn males in the dungeons or in the pits were also slain by the death Angel. It was evident in this battle of the gods that Jehovah would be overwhelmingly successful in not only delivering the children of Israel but also authenticating His Majesty and deity!

Jehovah is nothing to be toyed with, neither to be looked upon with disrespect or contempt. Though the Egyptians were masters of many trades, the Israelites were slaves. Though the Egyptians had a powerful, well equipped military and army, the Israelites had no military or any way in defending themselves whatsoever. It is true from the New Testament dispensation that Jehovah is the one who fights our battles for us according to **2nd Corinthians 10:3-5**, "**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds; Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.**" However, the most significant difference was the Egyptians worshiped many false gods, yet the Israelites worshiped the only true and living God. For that reason as believers, we put our hope and trust in the Lord God of Abraham. Jesus never fails in delivering His people no matter how great the opposition or the battle. We are told in **Exodus 15:3**, "**The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.**" Pharaoh had no idea how intense the battle would be, neither how great a warrior he would be competing against. No man can withstand God Almighty! It is evident when this last plague smote Egypt and all the firstborn males from Pharaohs courts even to the pits and dungeons died, Pharaoh had no recourse but to convey submission and humility. Never underestimate the power of Jehovah. God is not in the business of humbling people, but rather God wills that we humble ourselves. We are told numerous times throughout the Scriptures to humble ourselves beginning here in **2nd Chronicles 7:14**, "**If my people**

which are called by my name, shall humble themselves." Again we are told in **James 4:10**, "**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**" Once again the apostle Peter tells us in **1st Peter 5:6**, "**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.**" God desires that we willfully humble ourselves and not be forced into humility through suffering and harmful circumstances. Notice the purported disposition and humility that Pharaoh appears to embrace when his eldest son, that was to succeed him, died found here in **Exodus 12:32**, "**Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.**" Early on Pharaoh questioned; who is this God that I should obey? But after God dealt with him through untold chaos and unimaginable catastrophes he said to Moses, "**be gone and bless me.**" What Pharaoh was now requesting from Moses was: would he now bestow a blessing from his God upon him personally? It is believed Pharaoh could have possibly knelt down upon his knees and asked that he might receive a blessing from the God of Moses. The truth is though he requested a blessing, his heart was far too hard and calloused to receive a blessing because of his eldest son's death. Due to the hurt in his heart he did suffer Israel to leave but he then took it upon himself to pursue them because of his unfathomable bitterness. With vengeance now towards Israel, he would again suffer untold detriment and loss. God would now destroy the Egyptian Army in the Red Sea. In the end God Almighty divided the waters of the Red Sea and allowed Israel to cross upon dry land, but Pharaoh's chariots and his host followed Israel right into the depths of the Red Sea along with his chosen captains. Pharaoh's chariots, horses,

and riders would now be drowned in the Red Sea all because of the hardness of his heart. This is why to obey is better than sacrifice when the Lord begins to deal with us in His sovereignty. Don't ever think that God cannot harden any one's heart if he so chooses. The same sun that melts a ball of wax can make a ball of clay as hard as a rock. The Word of God will also do the same to each of us depending on how we respond to His Word. May we all allow the Word of God to melt us and make us pliable for the Masters service? In the end Pharaoh lost the war with the Lord God of Moses! My prayer is that this newsletter will encourage you in letting the Lord fight your battles because He has never lost a battle. Therefore, we are told in **2nd Chronicles 20:17**, "**Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you.**" All Jehovah ever requires of His children is to trust him, believe him, and simply set ourselves in our faith according to His Word. Paul the apostle told us in **Romans 10:17**, "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" The more Bible you immerse yourself, the greater your faith will become in this end time hour. If you have never thought to purchase the Bible on DVD with Alexander Scourby narrating the Scriptures I invite you to do so. You can find it on our website or pay \$35 by check, money order, or cash at P.O. Box 502 Casar, NC 28020. Bathing your mind in the Word of God is the most precious and valuable thing you can do for yourself spiritually. As always, we are humbled and thankful for your love and support here at the ministry. We hope to see many of you in an upcoming conference in the very near future.

Serving With You All,

Pastor / Evangelist David W. Lankford