

# Moses before Pharaoh

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     May I welcome you all from our own congregation and those outside our own congregation who have signed up to receive our service by an email link. You will be aware that it takes around 12 seconds from the time the recording begins until the service commences and that will also be true at the end of the service. It'll take around 12 seconds before the recording stops.

The coronavirus has become a concern for all and it is our duty to care for our people and act upon advice that we have received from medical experts and from government.

And it was after much thought and consideration that it was decided to suspend all church worship services and all activities until further notice. It is the duty of everyone to take precautions to maintain their own health and to make sure that they do not pass any infections on to others.

So today we are meeting in a very unusual way, unable to have public worship in the manner and way we would desire. Nevertheless, we are thankful to the Lord that we can share the gospel today by electronic means.

So let us worship the Lord together. Let us join in prayer. Eternal and ever blessed Lord, today we acknowledge that that thou art the one who is sovereign, that thou art the one who is sovereign, that thou art the one who sitteth upon the throne, and that all nations are in thine own hands, that our times are in thine own hands.

[ 2 : 2 2 ]     And as we come before thee, O Lord, in this act of worship, in this manner today, we pray that it would please thee to show thy favour to us, that it would please thee to grant to each and every one of us the grace, to acknowledge our sinfulness, to repent of our sins, and to take that place that belongs to us at thine own footstool, in humility of mind, of heart, and of spirit.

We pray, O Lord, that we may always be aware of who thou art, that thou art the high and lofty one, that thou art the one that inhabiteth eternity, that we would always be aware of the fact that our God is a consuming fire, that thou art holy.

But we give thee thanks, O Lord, this day for the access that thou has opened for us into thine own presence, in and through thine own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that in and through him, that we have boldness and confidence to come, and to lay out petitions before thee, acknowledging, O Lord, that we have no merits of our own that we can bring before thee, but that we come through the merits of thy Son, whoever liveth at thine own right hand.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the efficacy of his finished work, that if we come and confess our sins, that thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, through the efficacy of the finished work of thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank thee, O Lord, for his work and for his continual ministry at thine own right hand, as he intercedes for all those that thou didst give to him in the covenant of redemption, those for whom he came into the world, whose sins he bore upon his own body, and who redeemed them through his blood, through his precious blood.

- [ 5 : 01 ] Oh, we give thee thanks, O Lord, today for the gospel, as it has been proclaimed throughout our nation and throughout other nations of the earth.
- We pray, O Lord, that it may go forth with power in the demonstration of thine own spirit, in convicting and converting, and in the building of thine own church here on earth.
- We pray, O Lord, that in this present crisis that we would be Christ-like, that we would show compassion and care for those around us.
- We remember before thee, O Lord, those who are lonely, those who now find themselves more confined and restricted to their own homes.
- We pray, O Lord, that thou would be near to them. And we pray, O Lord, for those who have been touched in ways that up until now we have not been touched, those who are suffering from this current virus.
- [ 6 : 16 ] We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst be near to them and to those who care for them. We pray, O Lord, that our Scottish and Westminster governments would be given wisdom and guidance as they go forward.
- That those working to contain the virus, such as healthcare workers and all key workers, who are putting themselves at risk of infection in order to maintain and provide lifetime services to others.
- That the Lord would guide and prosper those who are working tirelessly for a vaccine that will bring remedy to our present danger.
- And that the Lord would protect our communities and those who are most vulnerable at this time. We pray, O Lord, as thy word goes forth today, that it would be a word that would edify us.
- O may we have that petition of the psalmist of old, who said, Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with thy face. And we pray, O Lord, that the nations may indeed know thy saving grace.
- [ 7 : 30 ] That we would come and that we would humble ourselves. That we would repent of our sin. Seeking, O Lord, that it would please thee in thy grace and mercy.
- To bring healing to our nations and to our people. And all that we ask with the forgiveness of our many sins. Is in Jesus' name and for his sake.
- Amen. We are now going to read a portion of the word of God from the Old Testament and the book of Exodus and chapter 5.
- And we shall read the first 19 verses of this chapter. And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.
- And 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.
- [ 8 : 40 ] And they said, The God of the Hebrews have met with us. Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.
- And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works get you unto your burdens? And Pharaoh said, Behold the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.
- And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick as hithertofores.
- Let them go and gather straw from themselves. And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore. Ye shall lay upon them. Ye shall not diminish aught thereof.

For they be idle. Therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there be more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein, and let them not regard vain words.

[ 9 : 53 ] And the taskmasters of the people went out, And their officers and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go ye, get your straw where ye can find it.

Get not out of your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hated them, saying, Fulfill your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw.

And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and today, as year to four?

Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, And they say to us, Make brick.

And behold, thy servants are beaten, but the fault is in thine own people. But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle. Therefore ye say, Let us go unto sacrifice to the Lord.

[ 11 : 06 ] Go therefore now and work, for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case.

After it was said, Ye shall not minish aught from your bricks of your daily tasks. May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word.

Let us again read from the beginning. And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

And 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. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us.

Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with a sword.

[ 12 : 13 ] And today we will cast our thoughts upon these words, seeking the blessing of the Lord. The book of Exodus brings before us two nations, Israel and Egypt.

And two men, Moses, the man who was to lead the children of Israel to freedom, and Pharaoh, the enslaving tyrant, who tried to destroy the Israelites, the covenant people of God.

Now, before we come to look at the situation that existed between the children of Israel and the Egyptians, I would like for us all to remember that the whole Bible has only one theme, and that is God's redemptive plan.

If we are looking for answers from the Bible, then we are to come with questions in relation to God's redemptive plan. Not questions like, what would have happened if man had not sinned.

The fact is that man sinned, and what the Bible answers is God's plan of redeeming the man that had sinned. Exodus is a continuation from the book of Genesis, wherein we see how God was bringing forward his plan of redemption, especially in the call of Abraham, and how the children of Israel became God's special people, because it was through them that God's promise of a deliverer was going to be fulfilled.

[ 13 : 58 ] The book of Genesis tells us how Jacob and his sons and household came down into Egypt. Over the years, the Lord blessed the children of Israel and they grew into a strong body of people.

Over time, there came to the throne of Egypt a Pharaoh who did not know Jacob's son Joseph and what he had done to save Egypt at a time of great famine.

He was afraid that because the children of Israel had grown, that if there was a war, that they might join with the enemies of Egypt, and so he decided to make them slaves.

The life of the Israelites were very bitter and hard because the taskmasters who were set over them showed them no affection whatsoever, but the more they mistreated the Israelites, the more they multiplied and grew.

So the king came up with another idea that every male child born to the Israelites was to be cast into the River Nile. But there was one family of the house of Levi, of whom the writer to the Hebrews teaches, by faith Moses, when he was born, was sent three months of his parents because they saw he was a proper child and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

[ 15 : 27 ] After three months, the parents could no longer hide him, so they made an ark or a basket out of bulrushes and covered it with slime and pitch to make it waterproof, and they put the child into the basket and laid it by the rushes on the river bank.

Moses' sister Miriam stood a little distance away to watch what would happen. We are told that Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river along with her maidens to wash herself, and when she saw the basket among the rushes, she sent one of her maids to fetch it.

When she opened it, she saw the child who began to cry, and she had compassion on him, and she knew immediately that it was one of the Hebrews' children.

Miriam, when she saw what had happened, came to Pharaoh's daughter and said to her, Shall I go and call a nurse from among the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?

And Pharaoh's daughter said, Go. Of course, Miriam went for her mother to whom Pharaoh's daughter gave the child. Unknown to her was the fact that this woman was the child's mother.

[ 16 : 46 ] She was to nurse him until he came to a certain age, and then she was to return him to Pharaoh's daughter. In spite of everything, we see that God had a plan for this child.

God was in complete control. There are times in our own lives when it is difficult for us to understand providence.

At times, it may seem to be against us. It is easy for us today to look at this situation in hindsight and see how it all worked out.

But if we were to put ourselves into the shoes of the children of Israel at this time, I am sure that it could be quite a mystery for us. We see the plan of God and that God is in complete control.

Pharaoh's daughter had to come at that certain time and on that day to the riverbank because God was going to take care of the child that he was going to use so mightily in working out his redemptive plan.

[ 18 : 01 ] While the child was nursed by his mother, there is no doubt that he would have been taught about the things of God. But the day came and the child had to be returned to the palace.

The child had to be returned to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted the child as her own son and called his name Moses. For she said, I drew him out of the water.

Moses grew up in the palace, so he would have known all about the Egyptian culture. But one day he was out in the field and as he watched the awful way in which the Egyptians treated the Israelites, he saw an Egyptian hitting one of the Israelites and he went up and hit the Egyptians so hard that he killed them.

And he looked this way and that way and he buried the Egyptians in the sand. But next day when he was out, he saw two Israelites fighting and he went up to them and asked them why they were fighting and hitting one another.

When one of them turned round to him and said to Moses, who made you a prince and a judge over us? Moses, are you going to kill me like you killed the Egyptian?

[ 19 : 23 ] Moses was afraid because he knew that his sin was found out and so he ran away and came into the land of Midian. And one day he sat down by a well and on that day the seven daughters of the priest of Midian came to draw water and certain shepherds came and sent them away.

But Moses got up and he held the daughters of the priest of Midian and watered their flocks. Eventually after returning home and telling their father of what had happened, he sent for Moses and gave him one of his daughters or his wife and gave him work as a shepherd and he faithfully shared the priest of Midian as a shepherd for 40 years.

Again, God had a plan and God was in control. One day out in the desert, God met with Moses in a very spectacular way.

He spoke to Moses from a bush that was burning and yet the bush was not destroyed. God told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the children of Israel go into the desert to worship their God.

Now this meant that Moses would have to return into Egypt and things were not going to be easy for Moses.

[ 20 : 46 ] However, we must remember that God who was working out his plan of deliverance, God was in complete control and it was as it was then so it is today.

God has not changed. God has a plan and God is in complete control. He is in control of nations. He is in control of individuals.

He is in control of me and you. What is true of Exodus is true of the whole Bible and that is that it is a God-centred book.

In Exodus, we encountered God. It is a book that tells us about the character of God. It reveals God to us in his justice, in his mercy, in his holiness and his glory as the mighty God who sovereignly rules in heaven and earth and who saves his covenant people.

As we already noted, it is proper for us to say that the whole Bible is about God and his redemptive plan and therefore it is about Jesus Christ.

[ 22 : 05 ] The Old Testament theme is about the Redeemer that was to come and the New Testament is about the Redeemer that has come and is coming again. The beginning of the book of Exodus which records for us the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage is a pattern for us of a greater deliverance for it anticipates for us the deliverance accomplished once and for all in Jesus Christ from the bondage and the slavery of sin.

In working out his redemptive plan Moses was commissioned by God to go to Pharaoh. Now therefore behold the cry of the children of Israel has come unto me and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppressed them.

Come now therefore and I will send thee into Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. Eventually himself and Aaron approached Pharaoh.

We read Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh Thus saith the Lord God of Israel Let my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

And 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.

[ 23 : 43 ] We are not told how Moses and Aaron managed to get such easy access into the presence of the king but it must have been a strange experience for Moses to be returning to the place from which he had run as a fugitive so many years earlier.

and now here he is not only coming to the presence of the palace but into the very presence of the king of Egypt himself. Now courage and confidence are not what we usually expect from Moses.

Nevertheless on this occasion he displayed both courage and confidence as he made his way into the presence of the most powerful man in the world and demanded the release of the slaves.

What made what made the difference to this man from being a weak and frightened man to be a man full of courage and confidence in the presence of the most powerful man in the world in the presence of Pharaoh the king of Egypt.

Well the writer to the Hebrews says to us by faith he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

[ 25 : 05 ] The secret is in these words seeing him who is invisible. Moses encountered God he had met the living God he had seen God's glory in the burning bush here is testimony to Pharaoh the God of the Hebrews hath met with us.

Moses stepped out in faith and despite his many failings he was fully equipped and armed by God to do what God called him to do.

Moses did the right thing in spite of his fear. Who am I that I should go into Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

But Moses stepped out in faith he obeyed in reliance upon God's word and promise certainly I will be with thee.

I know that he made excuses and that eventually God accommodated his weakness and fear by giving him Aaron. Nevertheless it is Moses who obeyed.

[ 26 : 25 ] So Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel let my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

The God of the Hebrews have met with us let us go we pray thee three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord our God lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with a sword.

God's ultimate plan of course was to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt altogether. So why did Moses and Aaron request a three days journey into the wilderness?

Well there is evidence that the Pharaohs of Egypt sometimes honoured such requests and that slaves were sometimes given time off to worship their gods.

So what is happening here is that God is putting a test before Pharaoh that will reveal Pharaoh's hardened heart. Pharaoh responded by saying who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?

[ 27 : 35 ] I know not the Lord neither will I let Israel go. Who is the Lord? I suppose that he used these words with much mockery.

But Pharaoh posed a question that many in our day ask who is the Lord? Many like Pharaoh who asked the question show how ignorant they are of the Lord's identity.

One of the basic principles of Egyptian religion of course was that the king himself was a god. So Pharaoh in his ignorance set himself up in the place of God.

But Pharaoh's response shows that he was ignorant of God's identity. Therefore he was resistant to God's authority. He was totally defiant to God's word and command and spitefully and maliciously and he was very vindictive towards God's covenant people.

And these are characteristics that belong to all unbelievers in this world. Some carry them to an extreme forum more than others.

[ 28 : 54 ] But it is the trait the mannerism that belongs to all unbelievers. Paul writing to the Ephesians says having their understanding darkened been alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.

We acknowledge that the very existence of our truly transcendent God is a mystery. If we could understand all there is to know about God he would no longer be God.

But God has revealed all that is needed to know about himself to us through his son the Lord Jesus Christ for he was God manifest in the flesh.

To say that God does not tell us everything is not to say that he tells us nothing. God does not tell us all we want to know but he does tell us all that we need to know.

But not only was Pharaoh ignorant of God's identity and showed resistance to God's authority and was malicious towards the covenant community but he was indicating or suggesting by his response that God had no claim upon his life.

[ 30 : 21 ] 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.

Isn't that a picture for us of our own secular society today in what they call post Christian times when the majority of our society are ignorant of God's identity when they show resistance to God's authority through his word when they show hatred to the covenant community when they say who is God that I should obey his voice I don't know him the word know here is a far deeper meaning then I don't recognize him in biblical terms this word know means that they have no loving relationship with him who is the Lord that I should obey him I have no loving relationship with him not only was

Pharaoh asking a question but he was making a very profound statement who is the Lord that I should obey him I have no loving relationship with him the most solemn statement that ever can be made by anyone is that he has or she has no loving relationship with the Lord so I ask you today have you got a loving relationship with the Lord and it all climaxed in his action neither will I let Israel go complete defiance to God's command complete defiance to God's word and you today may be in complete defiance to

God's command believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved it is a command from the Lord the gospel is not simply an invitation but it is a command believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved but maybe today you are just like Pharaoh was in complete defiance to God's word you are saying who is the Lord that I should obey him I have no loving relationship with him this request came to him twice but the second time he is warned the

God of the Hebrews have met with us let us go we pray the three days journey into the desert and sacrifice into the Lord our God lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword but Pharaoh gave no heed to the warning his ears were completely shut to the voice of God and his heart was hardened and his understanding was darkened God judged Egypt by sending plague upon plague ten in all wherein the Lord was showing his power over creation yet the more Pharaoh suffered the harder his heart became so one by one God defeated the gods and the goddesses of Egypt the plague of blood defeated the river gods of the Nile the locust defeated the field gods of the harvest and the darkness defeated the gods of the sun and the sky and so on and finally

[ 34 : 49 ] God sent the tenth plague the death of the first born and what is surprising here is that the Israelites were also under the sentence of death the Israelites must have been shocked to discover that their lives were in danger all the previous plagues had left them unscathed but the same night that God brought death to every home in Egypt he also visited the home of every Israelite with the purpose of killing the first born like the Egyptians the Israelites deserve divine judgment but unlike the Egyptians they would be saved by grace through faith here God was teaching his covenant people about his redemptive plan what God's people needed was atonement and what God provided in the form of a lamb a lamb offered as a sacrifice for sin the

Passover lamb the shedding of blood the sprinkling of blood the application of the blood the writer to the Hebrews tells us through faith that is most he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood the sea that destroyed the firstborn should touch them they needed the Passover lamb they needed the shedding of blood they needed the sprinkling of blood they needed the application of the blood they had to apply the blood in the manner that God told them when I see the blood I will pass over it wasn't enough that a Passover lamb was given its blood had to be shed its blood had to be sprinkled its blood had to be applied and dear friend it is not enough for deliverance for your salvation salvation that a lamb has been provided for you to be delivered for you to be saved the blood of that lamb has to be applied and it can only be applied by faith many years later John the Baptist hailed Jesus as the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world Israel was taught that God in his sovereign grace and mercy gives what he demands he provides what he requires God provided what God required so that Paul could write Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us who is the Lord he is the God of judgment and the God of mercy what we are taught here by God is that he is in control and working out his redemptive purposes how did Pharaoh receive the message of God he treated him with utter disdain and with utter contempt who asked the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go may I ask you today how do you receive God's message Pharaoh said I know not the Lord neither will I let Israel go I have no loving relationship with the Lord neither will I do what he demands my dear friend is that your attitude today disobedience to God's demands Pharaoh was warned lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with a sword but Pharaoh gave no heed to the warning and Pharaoh saw the judgment of God and all the first born in the land of Egypt shall die from the first born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne and there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of

Egypt such as there was none like it nor shall be like it anymore when judgment came Pharaoh was left without any sheltering blood he wasn't finding any refuge under the sheltering blood on numerous occasions this man said I have sinned I have sinned and yet when the crisis was over his heart hardened more against the Lord my dear friend it doesn't always mean that a crisis will bring us to the Lord a hardened heart needs more than a crisis it needs the regenerating work of the

Holy Spirit it requires a new creation it requires a new heart it is not a crisis that brings life and salvation but the Holy Spirit may the Holy Spirit enlighten your darkened mind and understanding to see your need and bring you to a loving relationship with the Lord in the end the Lord said and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord who is the Lord and the Lord said the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh upon his chariots and upon his harsh men 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 and Moses and Aaron said to him the God of the Hebrews have met with us let us go we pray the three days journey into the desert and sacrifice into the Lord our God lest he fall upon us with pistols or with the sword oh my dear friend let Pharaoh be a beacon of warning for me and for you today let us come to know who the Lord is through his son the Lord Jesus Christ who has revealed God to us may we be brought into having a loving relationship with the



[ 42 : 52 ] Lord may the Lord bless these thoughts to us today let us conclude in prayer eternal and ever blessed Lord we give thanks to thee today that thou art the one who rules in heaven and in earth we give thanks that thou art working out thine own redemptive plan that thou art calling thine own through thy word through thy spirit and that thou art edifying thy people as they walk through the wilderness of this world as they are on the journey home to be with thee O Lord we acknowledge that there are many things that confront us in our wilderness journey but we give thee thanks

O Lord that we have been promised and the promise has been sealed for us through the precious blood of thy son and thy promise shall not fail when thou hast promised that you will never leave or forsake thine own that thou art ever with them and when the heat of the wilderness may leave us tired and weary we give thanks that thou doth open wells for thy people through thy word wherein they may drink and be refreshed we ask O Lord that would continue with us for the rest of this day remember those who are hospitalized remember those who are in care homes those who because of the restrictions that are upon us at this time will not meet with their families or friends we pray for them and we pray that this time of affliction may be blessed to many and this time of restrictions may be blessed to us that we would sit and ponder upon our relationship with our

God and that it would be a means of bringing us to that place wherein we can say with confidence by thy grace that we have a living relationship with our Lord we seek oh Lord thy mercy and thy grace to help us in our time of need and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you all Amen