## **Three Common Questions**

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 October 2008

Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[0:00] We're going to turn for a while this evening to the chapter that we read in Exodus and chapter 2. And I want perhaps this evening to think about the whole of the chapter.

We could look at verse 11 just as a focal point. Exodus 2 and verse 11. One day when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.

He looked this way and that. And seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together.

He said to the man in the wrong, why do you strike your companion? He answered, who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid and thought, surely the thing is known.

When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well and so on.

But just... The Bible is not just a history book. If we wanted to look at history, we could pick from a variety of different cultures and history and people.

From the Far East, the Middle East, the West, you name it. The evolution of the... And I don't mean that in any kind of Darwinian sense.

The evolution or the sort of progress of the human race is a variety. It's a vast... There's a vast variety of progresses. The Bible, though, is different.

It's by itself because it tells a story of how God has worked through a particular people. Beginning with Adam, beginning with Abraham.

How he chose to communicate with Abraham and to promise him that he would be their God. And he would be the God of Abraham's family after him.

[ 2:04] That meant his children and his grandchildren and so on. All through the ages of the earth that God would be Abraham's God and his family after him. And here, hundreds of years later, we have the same family.

The family that came from Abraham many hundreds of years after Abraham has died. And they are in deep trouble. They're living in the land of Egypt. They've been there for 400 years.

And at first, they were guests because their forefather, Joseph, had been the prime minister of Egypt. And he had invited them at a time of famine to come and make their home there in order to deliver them from the famine.

They had come. Only 70 of them had come at that time. And a plot of land had been given to them at that time by Pharaoh, who deeply favored them because of Joseph. But now, it's 400 years later, Joseph has died.

His brothers have died. And now they're descendants. Loads of them. Not just hundreds. Not just thousands. But there are millions of Hebrews living in that same space of land.

[3:09] And they have now become, at least in the opinion of the new Pharaoh, a Pharaoh who had nothing to do with Joseph, who knew very little of Joseph. He was now on the throne.

And he saw these Hebrews as a threat because he said to himself that perhaps one day they might rise up against us and try and take over our land and take our land from us.

And so he began to be afraid. And that kind of irrational fear had the same effect on Pharaoh as many as an irrational fear has on this kind of person.

It makes them paranoid. And paranoia can be an awful thing in which it can be very destructive. And in this case, Pharaoh turned against the Hebrews.

At first, he started trying to force them into hard labor, trying to force them into doing what he wanted them to do. That didn't work. They only grew the more he oppressed them. The more they grew in number, the more numerous they became.

Then he concentrated on the midwives to try and force them to kill the baby boys that were born in chapter 1. There are these two Hebrew midwives, Shifra and Pua, who he tries to manipulate to try and get them to make sure that as soon as a baby boy was born, that they would make sure that he died.

But, of course, these women feared God. And just like any Christian. And here is a very interesting rule, a very interesting principle in the Bible.

The Bible tells us to pay respect, to give respect to the government. That means that a Christian must be a law-abiding citizen in every single respect, whether you agree with the laws or whether you don't.

Paul makes that very clear in Romans, that we are to obey the laws of the land because authority has been put there by God, whether it's been put there democratically or by any other process.

But there are exceptions to that. They don't happen very often. Thankfully, in our time, they don't. But there are exceptions. And one of these exceptions is when the government forces you to do something which you know would be a violation of God's law.

[5:20] And here, in this case, Pharaoh was forcing or trying to force Pua and Shephra to do something that they knew was a violation of God's law, which said, you shall not kill.

For them, if they were going to obey Pharaoh, it means that they would have to be murderers. They would have to turn into murderers. And they couldn't cope with that. And presumably, they risked their lives.

And presumably, they knew the penalty or what the penalty might be if Pharaoh ever found out that they were deliberately letting the baby boys live. So presumably, they were brave enough and courageous enough to be prepared to stand in front of Pharaoh and to even risk their lives or to put their lives on the line in order to put God first.

That's what it means to live in the light of God's word and God's principles. And so that's the next thing that Pharaoh did. But the third thing in desperation that he did was to simply send his forces and they were going to take the baby boys, every baby boy that they found, and throw them into the river Nile.

That's the awful situation that the Hebrews found themselves in. Now, tonight, here is the story of how God begins to deliver his people, the Hebrews, begins to remember his covenant and his promise that he made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to deliver them.

[6:39] And he does that through this individual that was born and whose birth is recorded for us here in this chapter. Now, I have a choice of either starting at verse 1 and going all the way through the chapter and verse by verse and taking us through it.

And that would be okay. But what I want to do rather to be just a little bit different this evening is to try and focus on this chapter by asking three common questions that people ask about the Christian faith.

And try and approach it because I think most of us have read this chapter before and most of us are quite familiar with the birth of Moses. And the chapter speaks for itself.

It's a very simple chapter. We've read it together. And I guess if I asked you any question about the chapter, you'd probably, in the space of time that we've taken to read the chapter, you'd probably be able to remember it. So I want us to ask three questions that people commonly ask about the Christian faith.

And to try and understand the chapter and some of what the Lord is enlightening us by in that chapter. First of all, the first question is this.

[7:45] How does faith and work go together? I think that's a very interesting question. And there's a good example of how that can be answered in the how do faith and works go together.

You remember in the New Testament, if you read the book of James, there were some in the church at that time and saying, well, look, what matters is my faith. Faith is really what matters. And as long as I have faith, I'm okay.

That's what they were saying at that time. And James was very careful to respond to them by saying, no, that's not just what matters. Because faith never exists by itself. You can say how important, you can talk all you want about how important faith is.

But if your faith does not result in a changed life and in a visibly changed, a life in which your faith is put into practice and in which you act and behave differently from other people, then it's not faith at all.

Because real faith always results in action. That's why a person who claims to be a Christian has to be a different kind of person altogether from the type of person who's around him.

[8:52] And that's the way in which he's able to witness and to show that the Lord has changed his life. How does that work, though? How does that happen?

Well, I want us to notice how Moses' mother, her name was Jochebed. We don't find out her name here, but we find it out later on in the book. Jochebed. She was an ordinary woman, a person who was unknown to anyone apart from her friends.

And would have been unknown if it hadn't been for this incredible act of faith in which she was tested. In which her love for the Lord and her faith in the Lord was tested.

And that's always what happens when a person follows Jesus. Following Jesus is always something that is tested. And here we have a woman who's put through the most horrendous test.

I mean, how much closer relationship can you possibly get than the relationship between a mother and her child? And here is a situation where the child is under threat.

[9:59] As soon as she had that baby, she knew that the possibility was that the soldiers would come and they would take the baby away and that they would kill him.

Now, the first thing we notice in this chapter, the first thing the Bible tells us, is how she viewed her child. We're told in verse 2, Now, that didn't mean that he would win the nicest, most beautiful baby competition if there was such a thing at that time.

That doesn't mean that at all. It wasn't that he was more beautiful or more cute than anyone else. That may be what it appears to be, but that's not what it means at all. It means this.

If you look at the original language, it means that there was something special about that child. Now, you might say, well, of course there was something special. There's something special about every mother's child.

Of course there is. But it doesn't just mean there was something even deeper than that in those words. And that's because that Jochebed was a woman of faith. In other words, she loved the Lord.

[11:08] That's where faith begins. Faith begins when we listen to God and when we seek first the kingdom of God and when we put God first. And when God takes the central place in our lives.

That's what God asks us. That's what God commands us. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. Not just part of your heart, but with all of your heart. Here was a woman who was putting God first.

That meant that every event in her life was a God-centered event. Nothing was random. Nothing happened by chance. It's the same as our lives.

Nothing happens by chance. And when we have God at the center, we know that everything that happens to us is a major event. It's a significant event that God has brought into being.

Whether it's a happy event or even a sad event. And when you see these events from the perspective of the Lord, your whole life is transformed.

You see your whole life in a whole new light altogether. But here is this woman and she has a child. Now this was no ordinary event in any case. It's never an ordinary event when a woman has a child.

It's not just a happy event. But here is a woman who sees a gift from God. And that God has created a new life to be hers. To belong to her.

And for her to have the responsibility of bringing up. And perhaps for a moment as she held him in her arms. She saw him from God's perspective. Not just the love, the natural love that a mother always has for a child.

But that the love, that, that the recognition rather. That here was a gift from God. That's what it means.

That he was a fine child. And as a gift from God, there was no way in this earth. That she was ever, ever going to let him lose his life in the hands of Egyptian soldiers.

[13:14] And if he did, so be it. But she was going to do everything in her power. To make sure that if possible, if at all possible, that wasn't going to happen.

Now the reason I'm saying that is because that's not the usual picture of faith, is it? Faith is very often pictured off, well let's let go and let God. Let's just, let's just pray about it and see what God does. And it's as if this kind of, we have this mystical notion of what faith is.

Faith is something that doesn't involve us at all. But that's not the biblical picture of faith at all. The Bible tells us that it was specifically Jochebed's faith that motivated her to use all her resources and all her intelligence and all her creativity and her mind and the gifts that God had given to her to make sure that this child was protected as best she could.

That was faith. And that faith was that she did it prayerfully. She did it because she loved the Lord, because she, because she was so energized by the glory of God and the promise of God and the existence of God.

And she knew that she didn't know what was going to happen. Nobody knows what's going to happen. And yet she was driven by a sense of the divine. That's the way we should be in everything that we do.

[14:33] Driven by a sense of, of the closeness of God and our relationship to him. That's what faith is all about. And that's the connection between our love for the Lord and the way in which we live.

That's the connection. God expects us to put that love into practice in, in, in applying his word and applying our knowledge of him into, into our daily lives.

So that's the way in which, just the same way as, as Shifra and Pua acted in chapter one, even if it meant putting their lives on the line.

So what did she do? Well, she did what was available to her and she, she made a basket. What? It's amazing the creativity and the imagination that she used in, in doing what she did

I don't know how she thought of this. No idea how in the world she thought of doing such a, a strange thing. But it worked. And it worked in ways which not even she expected, I guess.

[15:38] She made a basket and she took papyrus leaves. Papyrus is a plant that grows by the, by the side of the river Nile, they tell me. And apparently you, you, you open up the leaf.

Apparently you open it up, you unfold it. And you can use it once it dries out in the sun, you can use, they used it in those days instead of paper. They didn't have paper in those days. They used it for writing. But you could also make things with it.

And this is what she did. She fashioned it into a box big enough for her baby to go in. And she, she pitched it. She coated it on the outside with pitch so that no water would, would get in so that it wouldn't leak.

And then she left it in, in the, in the most dangerous place in the world. Isn't that incredible? You know, there's terrific irony.

We'll come on to that in a few moments time. There's terrific irony in this story. Here is a woman and you would think that she would want to hide the baby in, in her house somewhere.

You would think that she would try and hide him in, in what to her was the safest place in the world. Maybe she did that at first. But then, of course, when he grew and her, his voice grew louder and there was more of a danger of the soldiers being able to hear his crying.

That was the time when she had to try and isolate him from, from where the soldiers might come in. So she had to put him in a remote place. But she chose the most, the very place that the soldiers wanted to throw him.

The very place where there were crocodiles. They tell me that there were, the place was infested with crocodiles. And so here she is and she's placing her baby right in, right in the middle of where the crocodiles were.

One snap and the basket and its contents would have been mints in one moment. And yet she chooses to do that because she is prayerfully working out, working out the best possible plan in order to save and to protect and look after her child.

Isn't it amazing how God works through human intuition because God uses our gifts. He's given our minds and our creativity to us in order to work out his own purposes.

[17:52] And if we don't take the risk for the Lord, then we're disobedient to him. We need to take risks if we're on God's side.

We need to step out of our comfort zone sometimes to be on God's side. God leads us into places that we never expected to be in. You find that all throughout the Bible, but it's faith and works going together.

Well, I'm just going to leave that for the moment because time is not on our side. Let me turn to another question that people ask about the Christian faith. And they ask this. Is it possible to stop God's plan?

Is it possible to prevent God doing his work? Is that possible? I think this chapter tells us that it's not possible at all.

And it tells us very clearly. And it's a warning to any one of us that thinks they can live without God. Because the person who tries to live without God is a person who is opposed to God.

And here is a man, Pharaoh, who is deeply opposed to God. And the reason what motivated Pharaoh. Pharaoh could have been a lot more reasonable, couldn't he? If he had tried, if he had made the effort to get to know the people of Israel, the Hebrew people, a little bit more, and if he had been reasonable with them, then they could have lived in comfort and in safety together.

But there was something else driving Pharaoh. The same thing as drove the Philistines. And to some extent, the Babylonians. And all the other elements of, all the other enemies of Israel.

And that was, this is a spiritual thing. This is a spiritual problem. That Pharaoh recognized that here were a people that were unique because of the God they worshipped.

This God was different. We'll see that in a few moments' time. The God that they worshipped was different from his gods. And from any other god that he had heard of. And what made him unique was that he was one god.

And there was something that made sense. More sense than any other kind of religion that he could think of at that time. And so he made up his mind to oppose this people by getting rid of them.

[ 20:15 ] By making sure that they didn't increase any further. He was the superpower of the day. And here they were trying to live within that superpower. And trying to survive at the same time.

But his plan didn't succeed. His plan failed drastically. Not only so, the way in which his plan failed is another almost amusing irony in this story.

Think about it like this. Pharaoh's determined to get rid of the people who are Hebrews. And he's doing that by trying to destroy the baby boys.

And he thinks, and to a large extent, on a human level, he was right. He was the superpower. He had a vast army who could do anything they wanted to. And he had given the order that they were to make a point of going through the Hebrew areas.

And to kill any babies that they could find. While they're doing that, you know what's happening? His own daughter is going down to the River Nile to wash.

[21:29] She finds the baby in the basket. She takes pity on the baby. Unbeknown to Pharaoh. She takes pity on the baby.

And comes to a deal with the baby's sister. That the mother of the baby, the real mother of the baby, will look after him half the time. And he will be brought up from the age of ten in Pharaoh's palace.

What does that mean? It means that whilst on the one hand his determination is to get rid of God and God's people.

God, on the other hand, is working in such a way that he's bringing up the person who's going to destroy Pharaoh.

Is growing up under his very nose. In his very house. And his upbringing is at his very expense. Isn't that ironic, isn't it?

[22:32] That's the way that God works. And if this chapter shows us anything at all, it's how futile it is to think we can live against God.

To think we can oppose God. And to think that we can ignore him. You can't. Because at the end of the day, God will win. And so why tonight do we not simply surrender to him?

In the person of Jesus Christ who he has sent to open the door for people like ourselves to discover him. And to live for him. And to discover how great he is.

And how worth serving he is. It's amazing really, isn't it? When you think of a man like Pharaoh who had all the power under the sun. And yet the day would come in God's time when he would be utterly destroyed.

And it was through this very person who God raised for that moment. But the Bible tells us lots of things about Moses.

[23:39] Mostly about his later life. We don't have much information about this early part of his life. Except what it tells us in Hebrews and chapter 11.

In Hebrews chapter 11 it tells us something very interesting. About a stage that Moses had to come to. Where he had to make a choice.

And that stage came. We don't know what age he was. But we know that by faith. Verse 24. Hebrews 11. By faith Moses. When he was grown up.

I'm not quite sure when that was. Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God.

Than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. Now what does that tell us? It tells us this. I believe the picture is this. That as Moses grew up.

[ 24:35 ] He had a. What we might call a dual education. Because from one point of view. He was brought up by his mother. Well. His mother had nursed him from the day he was very small.

From the day he was a baby. Up until the age of 10. But I don't believe that that was the last he saw of her. He would go and visit her. From the age of 10. He would have gone for his education. Into Pharaoh's palace.

And there he would have learned all the science. The Egyptians were incredibly educated people. They knew. They knew. And of course. And as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

If you like. The prince of Egypt. He would be entitled to the upper classes. He would be part of the upper classes. And he would be an educated man. He would learn language.

He would learn literature. He would learn poetry. He would learn song. He would learn astronomy. And all that the Egyptians knew. So by the time he was grown up. He was an incredibly educated man.

[ 25:27 ] But he would also learn about religion. Ari if you like. The religion of the Hebrews. The Egyptians.

In Pharaoh's palace. And that's the problem. That's where the conflict arose. Because as he grew in his understanding. Of what the Egyptians believed.

He saw more and more. That there was a direct contradiction. Between the God of the Egyptians. And the God of his parents. And the more he discovered.

Of the Egyptian religion. The more he discovered. Of the contrast. The incredible contrast. There was. Between what he had been taught.

In his own home. About the living. And the true God. And the personal relationship. That his own people had. With the living. And the true God.

[ 26:24 ] So much so. That he had to. Make a choice. The day came. When he had to make a choice. Because. You see. It has to be God alone.

There can't be God plus. We can't worship one God. One day. Another God. Another day. There aren't many roads to God. There's only one road. Jesus Christ.

There is only one God. God. And it's as he came. To compare. What the Egyptians believed. With. With the truth. That he knew. Of the God of Abraham.

And Isaac. And Jacob. The promises that God had made. To his own people. That he realized. That he was going to have to say goodbye. To the upper classes. And no longer.

Enjoy the good food. And the good surroundings. And the comfort of. Of. Pharaoh's palace. And that must have been a really difficult thing. For him to do. But he couldn't have the two things.

[27:23] He chose. To associate himself. With the people of. Of God. Rather. Than to enjoy. What it tells us. The pleasure. Of sin. And that's always the challenge.

Of the gospel. The gospel. Always. Challenges us. To leave the old life. Behind. And to put God first. To love the Lord.

With all our heart. And all our soul. And all our mind. And all our strength. They tell me. That if you belong. To the upper classes. In Egypt. It wasn't just.

That you look down. On the slaves. And those who are working. On the. On the cities. That they. On the laborers. And the bricklayers. And the. And the. The carpenters. And all of these. They were treated like slaves.

And it wasn't as if. There was a second class. They were treated. With utter. Utter. Contempt. The upper classes. In. In. In.

[28:19] In Egypt. Absolutely. Hated. The lower classes. So when we. When we read. That Pharaoh made the. Hebrews slaves. What that means.

Is that. They absolutely. Despised them. They utterly. Hated them. They treated them. Honestly. Like animals. They were like. Donkeys. So that gives us.

A wee insight. Doesn't it? In. What we mean. When we read. That the. The Hebrews. Were. Oppressed. Wasn't just. That they were. Forced. To work hard. They were.

Beaten. They were. Abused. They were. Tortured. They were. Killed. In order. Because. The upper classes. In Egypt. Treated them. They created. Slaves.

Out of them. And they treated them. With that kind of. Contempt. Now here. Here we go. Moses. Came to the day. When he made. The choice. That.

[29:14] These were. The people. That he wanted. To be amongst. The scum. Of the earth. Isn't that incredible. He made that choice.

To leave his. Comfortable bed. And his. Plenty of food. And all the respect. That he got in Egypt. And to. Go on to be with. Those who were treated. Like donkeys. In Egypt.

That's what it means. Hebrews chapter 11. Choosing rather. The affliction. With the people of God. Rather. And that's. Of course.

That reminds us. Of what. Jesus. Says at some point. Doesn't it? If any man. Would come after me. Let him. Deny himself. And take up. His cross.

Daily. And follow me. That's what it means. To be a Christian. To deny ourselves. To take up. Our cross. Daily. And follow.

[30:11] Jesus. Moses. Is such an example. Isn't he? Of someone. Who came. To that point. In his life. Where he put God first. Where he discovered.

The futility. Of every other. System of belief. And I don't. I don't think. That's why. I don't. I don't have any problem. With children.

Learning about other religions. You might think. Well that's very surprising. Why as a Christian. Are you saying that? You don't have a problem. I don't have a problem. At all. With children. Learning. As long as they learn. About.

Other religions. Because. I think. It is. As you learn. Just as Moses learned. About other religions. You discover. How utterly.

Unique. The Christian faith is. You see. There's this idea. In our world today. All faiths. Are the same. That's just. Such nonsense. All faiths. Are not the same.

[31:05] But it's only. The person. Who knows. About. Other faiths. That can say that. If you don't know. What you're talking about. Then. Yet. That's the kind of opinion. You'll have. It's ignorance.

That says. All faiths. Are the same. They aren't. Anyone. Who knows. About the faiths. In the world. Will tell you. That all faiths. Are radically different.

So. I have no problem. At all. With children. Learning. About other faiths. As long as. When it comes. To learning. About the Bible. That they're taught.

The truth. Of the Bible. The Bible. As it really is. My problem. My problem. Is. Not. Learning. About other faiths. It's that.

Very often. Children. Learn. A twisted. Version. Of the Bible. A perverted. Version. Of the Bible. And that. Is what does. The real damage. By all means.

[32:03] Let's take. An interest. In belief. And in faith. But let's. Use it. As an opportunity. A real. Opportunity. To.

Present. The next generation. Like Moses. Was presented. With the truth. Of God. Third. Just. In two minutes. The third question.

That I think. Is found in this chapter. Is this. Is it possible. For a Christian. To be outside. Of God's will. Is it possible.

To. Do something. That. Is so damaging. That it. Puts you. Outside. Of God's will. For all time.

Is it possible. For you to. Make such a mistake. That. God. Will have no more. To do with you. That's the kind of situation.

[ 32:58 ] We have here. Isn't it. Where Moses blew it. When he grew up. Where the chapter. Tells us. One day. When Moses had grown up. He went out to his people. He saw an Egyptian. Beating a Hebrew. You look this way.

And that. Seeing no one. He struck down the Egyptian. And hid him. In the sand. Thought nobody had seen him. Then the next day. Went to two of the Hebrews. And he asked one of them.

They were fighting. He asked one of them. Why are you fighting your brother? And he said. The one. He turned to him. And he said. Who made you a prince. And a judge over us. Do you mean to kill me. As you kill the Egyptian. Then Moses was afraid.

And he thought. Surely the thing is known. Pharaoh did find out. About it. And Moses became a refugee. He had to flee the country. He had to go and be. He had to go and live. In a foreign country.

In the country of Midian. Where he had to make a new life for himself. And where. To all intents and purposes. He could never go back. To Egypt. Once again.

[33:52] Was that the end. Of God's purpose for him. Well no it wasn't. Because. What did he discover.

In Midian. He discovered. That the Lord. Who he had already come to serve. Still had a purpose for him. It was a purpose that took many years to unfold.

God is never in a hurry. We are. God isn't. God. But. But what he discovered was. That God is able. To take.

Even our mistakes. Even the things that we do wrong. And weave them. Together. Into his plan. Like the apostle said.

In Romans 8. He's able to work. All things. Together. For good. To those who love him. And those who are called. According to his purpose.

[34:53] Now I want to finish it there. Because I want to come back to it next week. And I want to talk about. What can we learn. What can we discover. What can we find out.

About. Who God is. In the burning bush. In the burning bush. God. Showed himself. To Moses.

He taught. Moses. Something. About. Who. He. Is. And there is an enormously. Important. Passage. In. In.

In Exodus. Chapter 3. In our understanding. About. Who. God is. So when. God. Meets. With Moses. In the flames. In the bush.

They meet. Face to face. For the very first time. It was going to be. A face to face. Meeting. That would happen. Often. In the lifetime. Of Moses. But I want us to ask. What can we learn.

[35:47] With Moses. About. Who God is. From. The burning bush. Let's pray. Our father in heaven.

We. Give thanks. For the teaching. Of your word. And we pray. Lord. To go home. This evening. With much. To think about. With much. To pray over. We pray. To go home.

Prepared. Lord. For. For. The coming days. If it be your will. To save us. We pray. Lord. To be enriched. We pray. That you will take. What was said. This evening. In all its defectiveness.

And we pray. That you will sift. Through all of that. And we pray. That you will apply. To us. The truths. That you want us. To remember. And that you want us. To come back to.

And to. Make use of. As we live. For you. We ask. Lord. For anyone. Who. Has not yet. Come. To that point. Of commitment. Like Moses.

[ 36:42 ] Had to. We pray. That you will show them. The truth of yourself. So that. In Jesus. That they might discover. And that they might come. To live. For him. And that they might come.

To have eternal life. Through what he has done. For us. In Jesus name. Amen.