



EXODUS

FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM

BIBLE TEXT | EXODUS 8:20-32

20 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. **21** Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. **22** But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. **23** Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.'" **24** And the Lord did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

25 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land." **26** But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the Lord our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us? **27** We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he tells us." **28** So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me." **29** Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." **30** So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. **31** And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained. **32** But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.



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DEVOTIONAL FOR EXODUS 8:20-32

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Have you ever had your faith challenged? Have you faced what seemed like overwhelming odds or felt powerless? I imagine the Israelites felt this way. Even after three previous plagues, Pharaoh refused to let Israel leave. For the fourth time, Moses will ask Pharaoh to let God's people go and Pharaoh will refuse. How frustrating the situation must have been to Moses!

After the tornado in Joplin, Missouri in May 2011, we felt a call to serve but faced challenges and difficulties all along the way. There were wiring issues, blown out tires and more. We could have focused on the hardships and quit, but that would have prevented us from not only delivering 10,000 lbs of needed supplies, but allowing us to lead 8 more trips in which we were able to help families rebuild their lives. Instead, we trusted God and He provided for all we needed and in ways that surprised us daily. How true that was for God toward His people in Exodus.

With Pharaoh refusing to budge, God had a plan. In fact, in verse 21 God says he will send flies to afflict the Egyptians. Why is this important? Why use flies? The answer is found in the original language in which we find that, when translated, can mean a type of beetle and not a housefly! In fact, it was likely a scarab (Khepri) beetle. These types of beetles would inflict painful bites as well as destroy crops and homes. More importantly, these beetles were actually worshipped by the Egyptians as a representation of the sun god who was associated with creation and rebirth. God used what the Egyptians worshipped against them and showed how powerless they really were. When we feel overwhelmed and unable, we can always trust that God can use even the strength of the enemy to give us victory.

What's interesting in this scripture is that God told His people to move away from the Egyptians before they made their sacrifices. Why? The road to victory in our lives and faith is one that can be very difficult, and it is often the road we avoid the most. We forget that we are called to be different. Romans 12:2 tells us not to conform to the world and John 17:13-16 tells us we are not of this world. The Israelites, like us, needed to move away from the world's ways. God calls His people to separate themselves from the wickedness of the world. We can't live as the world and walk with God (James 4:4). We serve a God who is jealous for His people and wants to connect with us personally. Like the people of Israel, God is calling us to separate ourselves from the world's ways and ideas and to focus on Him alone.



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Questions:

1. What obstacles are you facing today?
2. In today's scripture, God makes it clear that His people needed to be separated from the Egyptians to worship and sacrifice. What are the challenges you face in separating yourself from the world so you can meet with God?
3. How can you be an encouragement to others as they seek out God daily?