

"By a Strong Hand"**REVIEW:**

Just as God had said (As the "great acts of judgment were to begin" **Exodus 6:1** "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.")

And once nine had been experienced and the 10th and most terrible was about to occur. **Exodus 11:1** "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely."

TODAY:

At long last, Pharaoh decides to let the people go! **Exodus 12:31,32** "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!"

And when it happened, it happened very quickly! **Exodus 12:33** The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead."

So the way it happened, when it finally happened, made it really really clear to the people of God that they were being looked after by God himself!

So many details seem to confirm it! **Exodus 12:35-36** The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians. Even small details seemed to confirm it **Exodus 12:40-41** The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of 430 years, **on that very day**, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.

WHAT TO KNOW:

1. Our great God is entirely able to resolve every one of our difficulties.

There is not one difficulty, one enslavement, that is excluded! You could be to sexual sin, e.g. "a pornography addiction", or some enslavement far less offensive and shameful: to gossip or to candy or to... but whatever is the difficulty, God is entirely able to free us from our problems. He is able to do it with "his strong hand." **Exodus 13:3** Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for **by a strong hand** the Lord brought you out from this place."

→ "strong" = **effectively**, and "hand" = **personally**.

Exodus 13:9 For **with a strong hand** the Lord has brought you out of Egypt.

Exodus 13:14 And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, '**By a strong hand** the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.'

Exodus 13:16 ... for **by a strong hand** the Lord brought us out of Egypt."

So we should be encouraged! And we should be "of good courage." **Isaiah 41:10** Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you **with my righteous right hand**.

But know this too about the ways of God...

2. Our great God does not always resolve our difficulties completely.

Exodus 12:37-38 And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. **A mixed multitude also went up with them...**

This mixed multitude was a major liability to the project. A major threat to its success. (e.g. The widespread grumbling. The proneness to idolatry. And they must have been a major annoyance.)

And this dangerous annoyance was not some strange exception to the rule. Compare the experience of the apostle Paul **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** ... a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me.

Paul was left in a position to wonder: "Why is God letting this happen to me?"

For many years the people of Israel were left with the question: "Who invited these guys?"

3. "For those who love God," the incompleteness of God's deliverances is a part of the goodness of his plan.

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

In time, Paul the apostle got this figured out... **2 Corinthians 12:2-9** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven ... And I know that this man was caught up into paradise ... and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter... So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."...

Whether or not we ever get it figured out in this life, God has his reasons! **Hebrews 12:5-7** "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

WHAT TO DO:

a) Become a person for whom these things are true, that is: entrust your life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, (Not superficially. Not flippantly) and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

John 3:16, 36 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life...Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

b) Become and remain completely convinced of God's sovereign kindness.

Not just that he can control everything, but that he does! So do your homework. Study the Bible. Then use the Bible to interpret the details of your life. All the details of the world in which we live! **Job 12:7-10** "But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.

Keep studying! But there is more to do than Bible study! **Exodus 13:1-3** The Lord said to Moses, "Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine." Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. Israel had "the Passover" and we have "Communion." And we should be careful to make the most of what we have been given as a "remembrance ceremony" And we should find other ways to remember our deliverances. Forgetting is easy and natural. Remembering is hard and unnatural.

c) As you persevere in your responsibilities to get free of all ungodly enslavements, rejoice in and give thanks for all the details of God's sovereign kindness.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ... But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

NEXT SERMON: (November 22): "*The Lord Went Before Them*" [Exodus 13:17-15:21]