

God Preserves His People **Exodus 9:1-12**

It is good to have you join us for today's teaching from Exodus. We hope our study in Exodus will remind you that there is no God like our God. Our God is at work during every time period. I am sure the Hebrew slaves at the beginning of Exodus were wondering, "Where are you, God? Can you hear us? Do our prayers make a difference?" We ask the same questions. "God, do you see? Do my prayers matter?"

The answer for the Israelites is the same as God's answer to you, which is the answer He always gives His children. It's a resounding YES. God knows, and God sees. He is involved in the details of His creation. He doesn't sleep, He's never on vacation, and His people are special to Him; He cares about us and is with us. It might not seem like it, but the story isn't over. Just like God showed up for the Israelites in Egypt, we trust Him with our story. We don't know how it's going to end, but He does, so we trust Him.

Thanks again for joining us on Hope for Today. This program is brought to you by Heralds of Hope; we are a small radio ministry serving a great big God. Let's go with Bible teacher J. Mark to Exodus for today's teaching.

With conditions as they are in the world, we often wish for assurances. Will things continue as they have in the past, or are there major changes coming? Sometimes when you and I look around us and see all the wars and violence and famines and pestilence, we feel greatly exposed and insecure. Many people all over the world felt that way during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

But I am glad to tell you that GOD PRESERVES HIS PEOPLE. Perhaps it does not always appear that way, but it is really true. The Bible gives us this great consolation and truth.

God has not chosen to always keep His people from harm. Some have gone through much suffering for their faith or suffering from some terrible disease. Even now, you may be going through great distress and physical hardship. We believe that God's love and goodness motivate Him to preserve His own. Even though we may pass through the valley of the shadow of death, we can walk without fear because God is with us. He promised to never leave or forsake us! And He promised to accomplish His work in us through our suffering. That makes the difference, because God will go with you and me through all of our trials and troubles as we trust Him.

The reality of God preserving His people is well demonstrated in the experiences of ancient Israel and ancient Egypt. We are following through the Book of Exodus in these meditations. This message is based on Exodus 9:1-12.

1. Then the LORD said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me.

2. For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still,

3. Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.

4. And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the children of Israel's.

5. And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, Tomorrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land.

6. And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.

7. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

8. And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, take to yourself handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

9. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

10. And they took ashes of the furnace and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.

11. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

In this Scripture, we see the ACTIONS God took to preserve His people in the land of Egypt.

The First ACTION God Took Was,

The Description of the Coming Event

He sent Moses to Pharaoh to tell him exactly what was going to happen. Once again, Pharaoh was given a chance to choose the way he wanted to go and what he wanted to do. The description is very

clear. The LORD said, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let them go, and hold them still, Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon your cattle."

When Pharaoh was given the choice, he was also told the outcome. God gave Pharaoh the opportunity to choose. He described for him what was going to happen. If he chose properly, he would have the blessing of God. If he chose improperly, he would have the judgment of God. The outcome was clearly set forth.

He was also told there would be a distinction between the children of Israel and the people of Egypt. God laid it out carefully. Pharaoh could not mistake what God was going to do because it was clearly stated. God was going to make a separation between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt. No cattle that belonged to the children of Israel would die.

Isn't God gracious? He took the time to make a description so clear to this ancient ruler, Pharaoh. But you know, God does that today in His Book, the Bible. I keep reading from the Bible each week. Yes, God has given a careful description of how we ought to live, and if we don't live that way, we'll have to suffer the consequences just like Pharaoh did. He has told us how we can escape the coming judgment, how we can be preserved unto eternal life. So, there is a description here of a coming event. God acts this way to preserve His people.

The Next ACTION God Took Was,

The Infliction of the Promised Event

This action came with exact timing because the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land." God doesn't have to say, "sometimes I'll do this, and for certain areas, I'll do this." No, He controls all time, so He said exactly the time - tomorrow. Then the LORD did that thing on the next day. The infliction of the promised event came to pass exactly like it was described, exactly like it was predicted. There it was.

The exact territory was stated too. He said He was going to save the cattle of the Israelites from getting the same kind of sickness as the Egyptian cattle. We know that disease under normal conditions does not bother with geographic or political borders. It goes wherever it wants to. But God said He was going to make a distinction. He was going to make a difference. He was going to inflict the promised event upon the people of Egypt but not the children of Israel. Pharaoh didn't really believe God until he had sent and checked that none of the cattle of the Israelites died.

Be sure you understand that God carries out with exact timing and exact territory the promised event which He said would come to pass. This is the action of God - the infliction of the promised event.

The Final ACTION God Took Was,

The Affliction Upon the Particular People

God had made a specific promise in connection with the disease that was going to strike the cattle. Following that, God made the same promise regarding the people. So, you have an affliction upon the particular people. What was that affliction?

Moses was told to go and get some handfuls of ashes from the furnace and sprinkle them toward heaven, causing boils and ulcers to break out upon man and beast all over the land of Egypt. That is exactly what happened. If you know anything about boils or ulcers, they are extremely painful. They are not something you want to experience.

When Moses did what God had asked him to do, the LORD brought the affliction upon the particular people whom He said would suffer that affliction. Notice that the magicians of Pharaoh's court were singled out in their particular way, and the boils were upon them and upon all the Egyptians. The magicians and counselors apparently tried to persuade Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go, but Pharaoh would not do it. He would not listen to the LORD. He would not listen to his counselors. Instead, he only hardened his heart more.

Apparently, the affliction should have been worse in order for him to be persuaded. He saw the action of God in the preservation of His people, but Pharaoh still refused to let them go. He would not hearken unto his own men of faith, those whom he had gathered around him for counsel. When they gave him their counsel, he rejected it; he refused to listen.

Pharaoh's rejection of God's demands reminds me of the words of Solomon in Proverbs 29:1. *"He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."* Pharaoh's arrogance and pride were going to end in personal tragedy for him and national tragedy for his people. God will humble those who walk in pride!

Throughout the millennia of time, God has always preserved His people, those who truly trust in Him. Today, He does that through their acceptance of the shed blood of Jesus as the only acceptable payment for their sin. By virtue of that faith transaction, they are adopted into His family and become His sons and daughters. By virtue of that same faith, they are kept by the power of God until they ultimately enter His presence and see Him face to face.

Are you one of God's children? Do you know Him, and does He know you? If so, you can be fully confident in His ability to preserve you to the very end. But what is the key to preservation? The key to preservation is listening carefully to what God says and walking in obedience to His commands. God will demonstrate His power through you to a skeptical and an unbelieving world.

Thank you, Pastor J Mark, for sharing this with us. Isn't our God incredible? I like how Isaiah put it, "Behold, the nations are like a drop in the bucket, and are counted as dust on the scales." In our eyes, nations and politics look big and very important, but to God, kingdoms and nations are very small. And if we look at the big picture, we can understand this.

What happened to Pharaoh? Where is Babylon? What about the Greeks and the Romans? Governments come and go; they are "a drop in the bucket." God's plan is not threatened by them; He actually uses each of them to accomplish His purposes, He did it with Pharaoh, and He does it today. He is the great one, and we humble ourselves in worship before His greatness.

Blessings to you as you walk with our great God. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching, just ask for it by title or passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each of these lessons in Exodus. It is called the Hope Herald, and if you would like one, we would be happy to send you one.

If you want to contact us for this or for any other reason, here are a few ways you can reach us. Email is a quick and easy way to contact us; our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, feel free to send us a letter. You can send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, PA 15533. Another way you can contact us is on our website. Our website is heraldsofhope.org. While you are there, please check out our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources we hope you will find helpful. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org.

Thank you for staying with us till the end; we look forward to being with you again next week as we continue this study in Exodus. Till next time as Paul told the Philippians, "May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus."