

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California

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Lesson #11, Exodus 9:1-7 - March 16, 1980, 5th Plague, Disease on Beasts

We are studying the plagues of Egypt. Last week I apparently gave the impression that if you smoke you can't be a Christian. I didn't mean that in any way. Obviously you can smoke and be a Christian. As a matter of fact, two of my dearest friends are chain smokers, and they are solid citizens in Christ. However, the Lord is speaking to both of them. I do believe, though, that, if you are a Christian and are smoking, somewhere along the line God is going to speak to you about that. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God and not only that but statistics are overwhelming. I have had enough experience with men who have died of lung cancer that I want to assure you it is not something you want to play around with. So you can be a Christian and smoke. Some of you are Christians and smoke. I smoked for years, but don't be foolish. Don't tempt the Lord your God. I used to say, "It will never happen to me." Well, I have a scar all the way down to my navel. It did happen to me, and it can happen to you. Yes, you can be a Christian and smoke, but why be foolish? However, don't burden yourself with trying to quit before the Lord says, "Now is the time for you to quit," because you won't be able to. The Lord has a growth curve for you, and I am sure that somewhere on that curve He is going to talk to you about cigarettes. However, let Him talk to you about it not me or your wife or your husband or your neighbor or your friends. When He does speak, though, you listen and pay attention because at that point in time He will empower you to give it up. He never asks you to do something He doesn't give you the power to do, and since it is harmful to the body and the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God, there is sure to come a point in your growth where He will tell you to quit. Frankly it is easier for a person to quit smoking than it is for him to give himself totally to Jesus Christ. Generally a new Christian has areas they know they need to deal with. But what Christ really wants is that person in the totality of their being. Then, in His order and on His schedule, He will begin to deal with the areas of their life that need to be dealt with. I don't want to lay a guilt trip on you that now is the time in your Christian life that you must quit smoking. I do want to assure you that sometime in your Christian life the Lord is going to speak to you about it, and when He does, straighten up and fly right because it can happen to you. I would not be doing my job as a pastor if I tried to kid you on that. But wait for His schedule. Then, when it comes, obey, because if you do you will have the power to stop. There is, of course, the possibility you will go through the process I was talking about last Sunday because we are all incurably fallen and incurably prone to rationalization.

O.K., we are still in plague #4. We just started out. We are going to see the interesting conflict between the Lord and Satan. The Lord uses Moses as His mouthpiece and Satan uses Pharaoh as his mouthpiece. There is really a spiritual battle going on here. We are seeing the tactics of Satan.

When he tries to hold on to you and keep you where you currently are, his first tactic is the big lie. Back in verse 8, chapter 8 we saw him say, "I'll let you go from Egypt. Just call off this plague of the frogs. '...I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD.'" He makes the big promise, the big lie, and he has no intention of keeping that promise. Moses calls him on this deceit later one. But Satan will make any kind of a promise to you in order to keep you in bondage.

Now if you wise up to his promises, verse 20ff, chapter 8, the plague of the insects, he will try to compromise to keep you in bondage. When Moses is about to call upon Egypt the plague of these vicious blood-sucking dog-flies which settle around the eyes and can cause blindness, we saw in verse 25, chapter 8 Satan begin to compromise. He tries to get Moses to do anything but obey God. God has said, "I am going to give you a plague now, but I am going to set aside Goshen where My people dwell. I won't touch them. The land of Goshen will be free from this plague that you might know that I am God here in this land as well as God other places." [They had local deities in those days.] So Satan comes right back through Pharaoh and says, "Well, O.K. if God is in THIS land then worship the God within the land."

Worship God in your bondage to sin. You don't need to deal with the problem of sin in your life. You can still worship God and live in your sin. Just 1John1:9 it away. Satan doesn't mind you being religious. He just doesn't like you to be a Christian. You can go to church, teach Sunday School, give your tithe, give to missions, pass out tracts and do all kind of "churchy" things. Just don't give yourself to Jesus Christ. So Satan will go to any length to keep you in bondage. You notice he doesn't say to the Jew here, "You have to worship my gods in Egypt. No, worship your own god, but just stay in Egypt." Worship Jesus Christ but just stay in bondage to your sin even when He is putting the finger on it. Kid yourself about it, 1John1:9 it away. Try to quit. Put up a little struggle so it looks good, and then claim the forgiveness of God and the cleansing of God in 1John1:9. Next tempting comes by, put up a little bit more of a fight, a little more struggle, then give in to it again and claim 1John1:9. You can keep on 1John1:9ing all during your life, and your Christian life will just plateau. Only it really doesn't plateau. You never plateau in Christ. You go up or down.

Then in verse 26, chapter 8, Moses came right back and said, "We can't worship God in Egypt. We sacrifice animals that are sacred to the Egyptians. We do not use the ritual of the Egyptian priests. In Egypt only Egyptian priests are allowed to sacrifice. We will be an abomination

to them, and they will stone us." Incidentally, we know from historical records that that is a fact. It is true.

So now we have compromise #2, verse 28, chapter 8. Pharaoh said, "O.K. leave Egypt, but don't go very far." Always leave an escape route back home. Of course, the Jew would like that escape route. Pharaoh doesn't want the Jews out of range of his army, and the Jews don't want to be out of range of the flesh pots of Egypt, the leeks, the garlic, the goodies they had. They might be slaves, but they were fat slaves. There is security in slavery, my friends. There is security in having a slave master over you who "...gives us bread and beer," as a big inscription of one of the Pharaohs reads. There is no insecurity in being a slave. The slave master takes care of all your needs. All you have to do is just give him sovereignty over your life. The Jews got up in the morning, did a certain number of bricks and that was their total responsibility. Evening they got a six-pack and a loaf, and they had a party and watched TV. Yes, they were slaves, but until Pharaoh got nasty, they weren't kicking about being slaves. They were 430 years in Egypt. They didn't start kicking until the Pharaoh of the oppression got nasty with them.

So Satan is perfectly willing for you to go out from Egypt as long as you don't go very far. He will lengthen your chain considerably as long as the chain is still on you. Always leave an escape hatch out there to tunnel back into bondage in case you don't make it. Violate Roman 13:14 where it says, "...put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts." That is all Satan wants you to do, just violate that principle, and he'll lengthen your chains.

Now we pick up the response of Moses to the 2nd compromise in verse 29.

Exodus 8:29:

Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to the LORD that the swarms of insects may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to the LORD. And the LORD did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of insects from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

Plagues 2, 3 and 4 have caused Pharaoh a great deal of personal discomfort and, of course, a great deal of discomfort to the people. But plagues 2, 3 and 4 were deliberately designed by God to show Pharaoh that God was Yahweh, that He was God in Egypt. He wanted to show He had absolute control of the elements and of the very insects, frogs, and dog-flies that were representative of the Egyptian gods. Yahweh wanted to show them He controlled their gods. Remember with the frogs what Moses told Pharaoh that indicated God's total control? "When do you want them to go?" Pharaoh says, "Tomorrow." Moses says, "O.K. tomorrow." He deliberately told Pharaoh, "Be my guest. You choose the time you want them removed, and I'll remove them at that time," and He did exactly that. What did the magicians say to Pharaoh with the gnats? "This is the finger of god. We can't do this." ["Sacred scribe" is the word for magician in the Hebrew.] His own wise men, his own personal advisors, told him about the second plague, of the group of three, 2, 3 and 4, "This is the finger of god, Elohim, a god," but a god greater than them, greater than the gods they can call upon. From his own personal experience Pharaoh knows that the God that is doing this is Yahweh and that He is greater than the gods the Egyptian wise men, the sorcerers, the magicians can call upon.

How about the next plague, the insects? What does He do about those? How does God indicate His total control over the vicious dog-flies?

Class comment: They can't touch Goshen.

Bob's response: Yeah! They can't touch Goshen, the delta country of lower Egypt, where the Nile spreads out into a big delta. Because shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians and because the Israelites had brought their flocks and herds, Pharaoh told Jacob and his sons, as they migrated to Egypt, "Settle in Goshen and take care of your herds and care for mine also." So the luscious delta country of the Nile, the land of Goshen, was the home of the Israelites. God says, "I am going to bring dog-flies on you, on your servants and on your people, but I am going to set apart the land of Goshen where My people are. There will be no dog-flies there. I will put a division between My people and your people." There is a possibility the Egyptians even in the land of Goshen couldn't escape the dog-flies.

Now, what is God trying to do with Pharaoh with this evidence of His total power over all of Egypt? This is the wrath of God, but it is also something else about God. What is God trying to prove to Pharaoh?

Class comment: His power.

Bob's response: His power and also His evidence. Because of Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it," I hear all the time that we have a God who has this little gate and path which He has deliberately designed to be narrow, and He only lets a few of the chosen ones go through. Over here He has this great big wide freeway with a huge gate and into it He funnels all of humanity that He hasn't chosen. Well, that isn't true at all. The gate is wide and the way is wide because we are so perverse. God doesn't want Pharaoh to go to Hell, and He has given him evidence, after evidence, after evidence as to who He is and what He can do. My Bible doesn't say that Hell was made for man. It was made for the devil and his angels. They have no choice. The demonic angels and Satan himself have no choice. It was made for them and that is where they will be incarcerated for eternity. You and I go to Hell by choice. Don't ever blame God. We go to Hell in the face of overwhelming evidence. We go to Hell in the face of the overwhelming grace of God all through our lifetime. The rain does fall on the just and the unjust. The sun does rise on the criminal as well as the righteous man. In fact David complains in one of the psalms that the wicked survive in lavish style while the righteous go hungry and where is this just God. Then he goes into the temple and sees the end of the unrighteous, and he understands. This life is God's training school for those who are His. The tribulations we experience are designed to mold us, discipline us and shape us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Those who reject God He gives over to what they want, and this life is all there is. They have to make it big down here. They have to enjoy it now. They cannot take it with them. Howard Hughes, a billionaire in life, died broke. He went out in a pine box in a suit with no back in it just like the rest of us will

go out. All kinds of people fought over his substance which is proof positive it didn't go with him. There were more "wills" floating around than you could shake a stick at, and nobody makes a will about something that isn't there. If it was with him, who would be fighting over it? No one!! His billions were still here. They never left.

So, what God is trying to teach us is that down here is a preparation ground and that we can take it with us if we are in Christ. If we are Christlike and walk in obedience to Him, then all that Christ has done through us goes with us. That is the best investment I ever heard of. I may have done a bad job with most of my investments, but I made one that will really pay off and that is the one I made the day I received Jesus Christ as my Lord. All the things He has done through me in these 30 years I am taking with me. When I get upstairs I will have quite an investment portfolio, and I don't have to worry about inflation, or the stock market, or the IRS. No IRS in heaven. Everything that Christ has done through me by my permissive will, by my giving Him the option to use me for any purpose He chooses, it's there. It is waiting. It is growing interest, and it is non-taxable. Now that is what I call a good investment!

The fact is God didn't make the way narrow; He didn't make the path narrow or the gate narrow; He made it "whosoever will" which is as wide as all mankind. You and I make it either a freeway to Hell or a pathway to Heaven. So don't every blame God. Pharaoh can't. God has deliberately offered him specific proof who is God in Egypt, but this highly intelligent man has rejected it.

Now, God moves on. We are going to see a principle of Scripture demonstrated from now on. In John chapter 5 a man was lying by the pool of Bethesda with an illness that had in some way incapacitated him for 38 years. He had moved up in the pecking order to the edge of the pool. The Jewish tradition was that when the pool bubbled up an angel came down from God and stirred up the water. Then, the first one into that water when it was bubbling was healed. Obviously there must have been healings going on because the people believed it. We know today that 60% to 90% of all physical ailments, if not from some bacteria, virus or accident, are psychosomatic in nature. Your body can do remarkable things under the control of the mind. As an example, you can talk yourself into total blindness when your eyes are absolutely perfect. O.K., so here is this man who has worked his way up to the edge of the pool, but, being paralyzed, he can't get into the water first. There is always some joker on the edge of the pool who is a little faster than he is. Christ's question to him is very interesting. This man for 38 years has been immobilized, frustrated, despairing and Christ asks him, "Do you want to get well?" I submit to you that is the dumbest question in all the world except that the issue involved was the man's will. His illness was the result of sin in his life. Christ told him, "Arise, take up your pallet and go on walking." Now the man has to make a choice. Should he get well or stay helpless and secure as a beggar enjoying the gratification of his sin? It take faith to break sin. Sin is something which we long for and in which we feel secure once it gets a hold on us. It does gratify, and it is scary to try to break it. The man gets up, takes up his pallet and goes on walking. Now the Pharisees who saw him carrying his pallet on the Sabbath tried to pass the buck onto Jesus, but they couldn't find Him. Later Christ searches the man out in the temple and tells him, "Now, go and sin no more lest worse things befall you." When Christ frees you from some bondage, never ever go back to it because the second trip is going to be worse than the first, and the third trip will be worse than the second.

That is the principle we see worked out here. Up until now these plagues have been uncomfortable and painful, but they haven't actually cost Pharaoh. Now God is going to lower the boom on Egypt but particularly on Pharaoh. Pharaoh has kept on sinning, so now God is going to hit him right in the pocketbook, right in the wallet, right in the bread basket.

Chapter 9, verse 1, plague 5, the pestilence on the livestock.

Exodus 9:1:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. [This is typical formula. He is emphasizing that He is the God of the slaves, and now He gives Pharaoh some choices] "For if you refuse to let them go, and continue to hold them, behold, the hand of the LORD will come with a very severe pestilence [The word literally means "that which sweeps away" in the Hebrew] on your livestock [Remember they were sacred to the Egyptians] which are in the field, [At this time of year, about January to April, the Egyptians kept their animals out in the field because it was good weather. About the end of April the weather became so hot they had to put them under cover to protect them. So the animals are out in the field about this time of year. So this plague is only going to affect those animals which are in the field] on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. But the LORD will make a distinction [#1 because first of all it is only going to happen to the animals that are in the field and not under cover and #2 the Lord will make a distinction] between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel.'" [This time the land of Goshen is involved. God is going to go right down through Goshen and all the rest of Egypt and every animal that belongs to an Egyptian and is in the field dies. Every animal that belongs to a Jew and is in the field lives. Goshen is no longer a haven for Egyptians. It still is a haven for Jews] [#3] **And the LORD set a definite time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." So the LORD did this thing on the morrow, and all the livestock of Egypt died; [in the context "in the field"] but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.**

Pharaoh found out that exactly what God said would happen had happened, and he still wouldn't let the Jews go.

Does that tip you off to what the deepest slavery possible is to mankind. You talk about bondage to sin. What is the deepest bondage to sin in our lives?

Class comment: Pride

Bob's response: Pride! So here is a highly intelligent man capable of ruling all of Egypt, having been trained from his youth in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He is not a fool. He has been given evidence, after evidence, after evidence of who God is, so what is the problem? What does Pharaoh have to do in order to save the livestock, his horses, sheep, oxen, cattle, goats, etc.?

Class comment: He has to humble himself.

Bob's response: In what way? If he wants to save his animals, he has to do what?

Class comment: Obey Yahweh.

Bob's response: Obey Yahweh, and Yahweh is the God of whom?

Class comment: His slaves.

Bob's response: His slaves! He has to admit that Ra, the great sun god, the national god of Egypt can do nothing and, by the way, Pharaoh is god also. He is one of the manifestations of Ra which makes him a god in his own right, and this is also true of his first born son whom God is going to take care of also. Pharaoh would have to go out and make a public act of putting all his cattle, sheep, camels, horses and all his flocks under cover because of the God of the slaves. Remember what God said, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews." Boy, He likes to stick it to you when you don't correct yourself. In order to save his personal prosperity the "god" of Egypt would have to go out and publicly demonstrate that Yahweh is truly the God that can do this and that Ra cannot stop Him. Well, of course, Pharaoh won't do that. Then when the slaughter occurs, he even goes and investigates and still won't give in. Seem strange? Are you kidding?

I have a friend who has a very bad back that may cripple him. His doctor told him, "Do not under any circumstances ride a motorcycle." Do you know what he did the very first thing? He got on a motorcycle and took off like a bat. An interesting thing happened. Here is a Christian who goes roaring down the street against explicit instructions from his doctor and guess who pulls up in a car just behind him, his doctor. I would suggest to you that that is the grace of God. There is Dumbo the Great out there on a motorcycle roaring around, and God, in gracious love, takes the trouble to have a rebellious Christian face up to the fact that he is in rebellion by having his doctor drive up behind him. Well, that didn't work. His doctor then told him, because of the back problem, a bad stomach problem had been created and he should never drink any wine. So, guess what? He got a bottle of wine and drank it. He had a horrible stomach ache, but he didn't give in. He would not submit. Now God didn't ask him to do some great act. He just ask him to be a normal intelligent person and listen to his doctor. By the way, he is highly intelligent, has a very fine job and makes good money, but he will not submit to authority. He will destroy himself first but for the grace of God. Sound familiar to any of you?

So there are probably areas in your life right now that God has His finger on, but you are not obeying. You know He is only putting His finger on them because they are destroying you, but you are still not obeying. Well, then, don't laugh at Pharaoh or my friend on the motorcycle. We are all exactly the same. God is not trying to restrict us or pen us in. He is trying to release us from bondage in Egypt, and the greatest bondage there is is our own selves. If you insist, though, God will let you destroy yourself to keep your pride.

Class comment: I can understand why God would want to punish Pharaoh, but why is He punishing the slaves of Pharaoh. It's not their fault that Pharaoh is not obeying.

Bob's response: He is not punishing the slaves now. The slaves are being excluded from it. It's only the cattle of the Egyptians dying now. The first three plagues He did allow the Jews to go through. I think it was very well that He allowed that. They had to understand that Egypt was not where it was. They didn't want to leave Egypt either. We are going to see that they groused all the way through the wilderness. The lesson from these ten plagues lasted just about two months. They were unbelievably obtuse.

Class comment: I was thinking of the common Egyptian people.

Bob's response: Oh, O.K. Well, you will recall earlier when the male Hebrew babies were thrown into the Nile, Pharaoh called on all the Egyptians to do it because the midwives of the Jews wouldn't do it. The Egyptians, up to now, have liked having slaves. It sure takes a lot of sweat off their backs when Pharaoh needs bricks to build all these magnificent monuments. So when he calls on the Egyptians to put the finger on the male babies, they do. They are not without guilt, and they are getting their comeuppance in that sense, but God is also trying to lead Egyptians out from Egyptian bondage. We are going to see that He does. Sure, it is going to hurt, but we seldom stop until it hurts. We are all so obtuse that we will do something that hurts us until finally it is so bad that we have to give up and quit. That is what is going to happen to the Jews.

Class comment: We might also point out that when a person sins, the consequences of their sin don't necessarily fall only upon guilty people. Many innocent people can suffer because of the sinner.

Bob's response: It's one of the questions Christians often ask, "How do you explain the problem of sin and evil?" That could mean babies being born malformed or a young man being killed in his prime by some accident. It isn't fair to them, but what it does tell us is, #1: It is a flawed and fallen race out there. #2 We are not in control of our circumstances. #3 We had better start looking into doing business with God. It has tremendous value, maybe not to the person. The babies can't understand it yet. Maybe the young man should have listened, and he is gone now. It is too late for him, but not for his relatives and his friends. God is trying to speak to us in very loud and graphic terms. God has the right to take any of us home any time he wants. We are His creatures. We live, exist, move and have out being by the grace of God. We earn nothing. We deserve nothing, and God is interested in eternal values not temporal values, so He reserves the right to take even the finest Christian home in the prime of his life for His own purpose. We do not have a lease on life. We do not have a right to life. They have these "right to life" laws. No you don't have a right to life. God has the only right, and He can do with any of his creatures whatsoever He chooses, and it is righteous because God is God. He is the one and only standard of righteousness. You don't have the right to the next 5 minutes of your life. You could step outside church here and get mowed down by one of our cars and that is not being unfair. You are just fortunate you are alive this morning. God is perfectly willing to cut off a life down here if it can have an impact in reaching people down here for Christ.

Class comment: Bob, could you explain. Sometimes I get kind of confused how God brings us to obedience in light of the "New Covenant." [II Corinthians 3:4-6] We say in one breath that God is fully committed to accomplishing our obedience to His son. Then we are

posed with some pretty heavy commands that almost seem conditional upon our taking the initiative and sometimes I get confused. Is it us that takes the initiative and then God meets us in the New Covenant, or is it God you takes the initiative?

Bob's response: We take the initiative only to the point of choosing. Philippians 2:12-13 is a good example of that, "...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." Work out does not mean to gain your salvation. The word means exploit something you already have. We have found secular documents on this. A Roman mine over in Gaul was one example. The owner of the mine exhorted the superintendent to "exploit" it, work it out. God says, "I want you to wring out your salvation, get everything out of it that you can, 'with fear and trembling,'" which is a medium used again and again in I Corinthians. It does not mean with craven fear of a God that is going to hit you with a club. It means with a deep desire to please. So exploit your salvation with a deep desire to please God. Why? "For it is God who is at work in you." [The word is "energeo" energizing you] both to will [to step out with that initiative] and to [literally "energeo" again] put into operation His good pleasure." We do not have anywhere in Scripture the power to act. We have only the power to choose. The moment we choose either Jesus Christ the Lord God Almighty acts or Bob the slob, the flesh, acts depending on our choice. There is no "nice guy" down the middle. The flesh CANNOT please God. I can't stop the results of my choices; I can only make the choice. If I choose the Lord and His right to energize me, BAM, I never have to do anything He does not empower me to do. If I give it my best shot in the flesh, all I have is me, and unfortunately I cannot alter or eliminate the consequences. I can repent and turn around, but the consequences occur either unto life or unto death in terms of life in fulfillment or death in a fruitless existence down here. I think that verse is one of the best explanation of this. We have a God who is sovereign. There is the paradox of the sovereignty of God and the moral responsibility of man. I won't argue that for both are truly taught. God is a sovereign God and everything happens according to His will PERIOD. Nobody, but nobody, changes anything in His program. But also man is held accountable for believing, and if he doesn't believe, he is lost. All men are responsible for believing. The Word of God says so in a number of places. The two truths are clearly taught, "He that believeth in Him is not condemned. He that believes not is condemned already." Why? "Because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3. John 6 says, "No man can come to me except the Father who sent Me draws him." Same author, same Holy Spirit, same God. Two truths clearly taught, God's sovereignty, man's responsibility. Pharaoh's heart is a good example here. It is hardened by God in plague 6, and yet He considers Pharaoh is still sinning from 7 on. Pharaoh is still choosing to do what he wants, and if he can choose to sin, he can choose to repent. From the sovereignty of God's side, he is locked in because of his refusal. From the moral responsibility of man, he still has the ability to choose to repent. His courtiers do, and they are hardened also. We are going to see that. So I can't give you a nice pat theological answer to handle these two parallel lines of truth. From my standpoint, the moral responsibility of Bob Roe, I am to exploit my salvation with a deep desire to please God because it is God who is within me both to give me the will to want to act in faith and to empower me to do so. The moment I choose to go His route, I get the desire to go that way and the power to go that way, and that is the "New Covenant." God will give you an option, but you had better take His. If you take Him you are in all the way. If you take your own, you are out until you repent.

Class comment: In a sense I am not a Christian just because I say I am a Christian. The real Christian needs to step out and evangelize the world and be used by the Lord. He can't just sit in an easy chair & say, "Lord, you are doing great."

Bob's response: I Corinthians 3 makes it pretty plain that, when you stand at the Judgment seat of Christ, you can be that kind of a Christian and end up with a life that has no value in the eyes of God. Let's look at I Corinthians 3 starting with verse 10 to get the context. This is where Paul is dealing with the division in the church. The people were saying, "I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. I am of Cephas. I am of Christ." Starting with verse 10.

I Corinthians 3:10:

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. [In this case it is Apollos] But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. [The foundation] For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [So we all start out at this point with the foundation of Jesus Christ. We are all Christians at this point] Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day [This is the Bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ] will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. [As in Abraham's case] If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire" [As Lot, his nephew, who by the declaration of God in 2 Peter 2 was a righteous man.]

Where was Lot's home? Sodom. Where did he want to live? Sodom. Who did he marry? A Sodomite apparently. What did he do with his daughters? He tried to give them to a mob to rape, ravish and kill in order to preserve face as host to a couple of angels that he didn't yet know were angels. His daughters were so uninstructed in anything righteous that they got their father drunk and, by incestuous relations with him, founded two dynasties, the Ammonites and the Moabites, who were a thorn in the side of Israel all the rest of their life. Lot died in a cave in the hills of Moab. He was a righteous man [II Peter 2:7ff says so] whose soul was tormented daily by what he saw, but he never left. He couldn't give up Sodom, and when God pulled him out of there, what did he want? "Give me little Bela." There were five cities in that plain that were cesspools. All of them were to be destroyed by God. The smallest one was Bela, and when God, with these two little angels, drug Lot out of Sodom, Lot pleaded with them, "Don't send me to the hills. Send me to Bela," just a little cesspool. So God says, "If you want Bela you can have Bela." This is Romans 1:18-32. God gave Lot over to Bela. Its name was changed from Bela to Zoar which means "little." It was known as Zoar from that day on. Lot's monument is a cesspool named Zoar. Abraham's monuments are tents, altars, the father of believers down through time and out of his loins came the Messiah. Both were believers. One has a life that is nothing at all. The other has a life which blesses the world. It is not your performance as a Christian, it is your choices. If you make a choice for Jesus Christ as your Lord in the day of His rejection, He will never reject you. He will NEVER reject you. Your performance is NOT the issue. You stick with Him when others rejected Him, and He will never forget that. But the rewards which are given you in eternity at the Judgment Seat of Christ, well, you could stand there saved as though by fire (I Corinthians 3:15), your clothes gone, your hair singed, but you are there. I personally believe you are there much earlier than you expected. I think God calls you home. You get it in I Corinthians, I John, James. He reserves the right to call His ambassadors home if they don't behave themselves, and I think He does.

Class comment: Doesn't the thief on the cross prove what you are saying?

Bob's response: Sure, But he didn't sin after he became a Christian.

Class comment: But he made the choice.

Bob's response: Yeah! He made the right choice. That's a good point. The thief on the cross; that word is not "thief," by the way. In the Greek it is "robber." It is a word used for a revolutionary, a guerrilla warrior. Palestine was aflame with the riots of the Zealots. Simon the Zealot was one of Jesus' apostles. Christ even had a radical apostle. These Zealots felt that even the presence of the Romans in the land was an obscenity, a blasphemy. The Romans had all kinds of problems with them. They were finally so successful that they caused the Roman's destruction of Jerusalem in 60 AD. That "thief" was an insurrectionist. He was a killer. He wasn't a thief who would sneak into your house while you were on vacation and take your TV and stereo. No, he was like assassins who had some fellow lined up to kill. Then in a big crowd in Jerusalem, or some city, they would stick a dagger into him and walk away. The victim would just drop down in the crowd, and when the crowd thinned out, there he would lie with a dagger in his back. This man was a vicious killer, a Zealot, and all he did was say, "Lord, remember me when you come into Your kingdom," and Jesus said, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." It took the choice, an irrevocable choice that God will never disown. Your God does not love you because you perform. He loves you because He loves you. You make a stand for Jesus Christ in His rejection and He will never reject you I don't care what you do. He may call you home rather quickly, but you will go home. You will not go to Hell.

Class comment: You can't really judge, then, whether a person is a Christian by whether or not he is evangelizing can you?

Bob's response: That's right, but the catch is, not only I can't judge the person, but the person can't judge. My friends, if you are living in sin, and you don't feel lost, you are not Christians. My Bible says the Holy Spirit of God is grieved by the sin of a Christian and doesn't like to be quenched by the choice of the believer. My Bible also says the Spirit of God lives in the believer, and He is Holy and He is God, and if you are living in sin, settled down in it, enjoying it and relaxing in it, even though you make a profession of Christ, there is something wrong. Remember Lot, "whose soul was tormented daily by what he saw."

At 39 I went down front in the Church of the Open Door, and when you go down front in that church, you go down front. You go from the balcony, down the side of the main auditorium, down in front where the elders stand, and, man, they put you on display. When you make a choice down there, you are really making a choice. I went through the whole trip, through all the processes of receiving Christ. Then I went back and lived like the devil. Proof I was not a Christian in those days was the fact that my life didn't change. I was perfectly at home in the same old life. My Bible says if you are born of God you can no longer settle down and make your home in sin because you are born of God. So, if you profess Christ and you are enjoying your sin, you are in trouble. If you profess Christ and you are not enjoying your sin, Hallelujah! You may be hooked by it, but Hallelujah if it bothers you. God help you, however, if you are satisfied with your sin and have no conviction. That is a denial of the Spirit of God.

Next time Chapter 9, verse 8, Plague #6. I don't care if we never make it through the plagues. If you have questions, I really want to deal with the questions. We can get to the plagues anytime. So next time Exodus 9, starting with verse 8, the 6th plague.

Father, we thank you so much for Your love and Your grace and Your mercy to us, we thank You so much that You will not let us go, that You will hurt us if you have to, that You will take us home if You have to, Father, You will even kill us, but You will never let us go not if we are Yours. Father, we ask that each one of us my search our hearts; what is our attitude toward sin in our lives. Have we settled down and made our home in it and we are enjoying it just like the rest of the world that is lost? Father, then convict us of the fact that we are probably not Christians, but, Father, if we are in sin and in bondage to sin and struggling with it and guilty, feeling uncomfortable about it and wishing it weren't there, thank you, Father, for that grieved Spirit of God which is evidence that we are truly alive for dead bodies don't hurt. Father, help us, then, to appropriate the indwelling life of Christ by making willful choices and stepping out and believing You are going to perform what You claim You will do when we choose, that You will give us the will and the power to fulfill Your good pleasures. Thank you so much, Father, for the way you live in us and give us Your perfect love, and want us all to be Your children and to be conformed to the image of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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