

Ask The Lord

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[0 : 00] As we come into the second half of chapter 8 in the book of Exodus, we find now that the plague of lice is visited now upon Pharaoh and upon the Egyptians, as it were, without any warning.

There's a complete absence of warning with regard to the plague of lice, but then on the other hand, there's been a complete absence of good faith from Pharaoh, and there's absolutely no suggestion that any amount of warnings had made any difference for the first plague, the plague of blood, about which he had been warned a little in advance before it began, and likewise the plague of frogs, that he was warned that it was coming.

This is now the third plague, but this time there's no warning, because Pharaoh has hardened his heart and set himself against the Lord when the frogs were removed, and they gathered them together.

But when Pharaoh saw verse 15 that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said. So without warning now, there comes the next plague, plague number three, the plague of lice.

And the Lord said unto Moses, say unto Aaron, stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

[1 : 16] Now this is the last plague in which Aaron is directly involved. Although he does get summoned to Pharaoh's presence, along with Moses, in subsequent plagues and subsequent occasions, when Pharaoh is interacting with Moses and Aaron, this is the last plague in which Aaron is directly involved, where he is told to be the one that stretches out his rod, or he's the one that's told to directly enact a plague on the Lord's behalf.

So it's one of these little subtle changes that if you blink, you miss it. Aaron has been involved directly from day one, from the opening stages, when he came to meet his brother in the wilderness in Midian, and he's been directly involved as Moses, sort of prophet, as Moses being a god, small g, to Pharaoh.

But increasingly now, we will see the Lord working either completely independently, we might say, without reference to Moses, or just doing something or enacting it, or working directly through Moses, and Aaron is no longer directly involved.

Whether this means that Moses is assuming more of the direct contact with Pharaoh, or becoming a direct channel of God's working, or whether it's simply that he's gaining in confidence or experience, the point is that Moses is now taking more centre stage, and Aaron is beginning to move into the sidelines here.

With regard to the plague of life, some commentators translate the word that we have here as life as mosquitoes, with their biting and disease-bearing capacities. And perhaps that might be borne out by the fact that in Psalm 78, verse 45, where there's reference to this, he sent diverse sorts of flies among them which devoured them, and frogs which destroyed them.

[3 : 05] And the diverse sorts of flies, that would include lice perhaps in it, but whether it's mosquitoes or other kinds of flies, that the biting idea and the transfer of disease, you might say that which destroyed them.

And that's one possibility. I wouldn't tend towards that on myself. Other modern versions translated as gnats, tiny little sort of lice-like creatures, little fleas almost, where the damage isn't so much major disease from biting, so much as just sheer irritation.

And yes, there'll be some physical reaction. But the emphasis really is almost on the smallness, the individual insignificance of the creature itself, and the damage or the infuriation that it's able to inflict on the people of Egypt, which is nevertheless, it's able to make the lives of human beings an absolute misery, despite its infinitesimal size.

And that's one reason why I think lice is probably a better translation. Gnats would be another one. But if you're trying to imagine the sort of damage and the sort of infuriating presence of the world, they're a man, they're a beast.

You can almost feel yourself beginning to scratch. You know, it said, you came on man and a beast everywhere, and the magicians couldn't do anything about it. And you can almost imagine them trying to conjure up all the time.

[4 : 34] They're a beast. It's like, you know, you can't do it because it's crawling with it. They're absolutely lice-ridden, literally lousy with these insects that are everywhere.

And this would appear to be also supported by the divinely appointed source of these tiny little creatures. That would imply also that it's not bigger insects like mosquitoes, but rather what's the source of the divinely appointed source.

We'll read verse 16. Stretch out thy rod and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lights throughout all the land of Egypt. Now, that's not so much kind of house dust as we think of in our culture.

It'd be the sort of, look at the dust of the earth. You pick it up and run it through your fingers. Tiny, infinitesimal little grains becoming infinitesimal little creatures. Now, we talked in previous weeks about the different Egyptian gods, small g, and each one implies or points to a particular Egyptian idol god, small g, that would be involved or that would be being reduced and overthrown by these particular plagues.

And I think, okay, well, what's the Egyptian god of lice? Well, there isn't an Egyptian god of, oh, maybe there is, but I don't know about it. Anyway, but the particular god being addressed here, small g again, is rather, almost certainly, it's not to do with lice, but it's rather the Egyptian god Geb, G-E-B, who was the god of the dust of the earth.

[6 : 10] It's not so much the lice themselves, which is an Egyptian god for, but the god of the dust of the earth. Can you believe they actually had a god for the dust of the earth? But here you've got Aaron stretching out his rod over the dust of the earth.

And this, for which they have a false god, a false deity, this becomes the means of plaguing them and absolutely driving them mad, almost, we must assume, with the lice that would crawl over everything.

And again, part of the message here is not simply the Egyptian gods are seen to be meaningless and helpless, but also, if we think about what God did with the dust of the earth, even at the very beginning of creation, we have also the message underlined, that even the very dust of the earth obeys the Lord.

I'll say that again. Even the very dust of the earth obeys the Lord. Stretch out thy rod and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

[7 : 27] And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. We can't imagine there wasn't enough lice for them to produce and say, look, okay, we did this too, but rather, almost, they can't do it because they're so busy being driven mad by these little creatures crawling all over them.

They simply can't do anything. And, you know, we may not perhaps have personal experience of what it's like to have lice, but, you know, think midges. Think if you had midges absolutely crawling over you.

You reach out your hand and it's almost black with them. You look down your clothes and they're everywhere. They're in your hair and your ears and your eyes. You can barely speak because they're in your lips. They're everywhere. This is what it would be like with these tiny infinitesimal creatures.

They're everywhere. And you just can't live with this. And the magicians tried it and they just couldn't. And they said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God.

We can't do anything with this. Think about the dust of the earth. Think of the sand in Egypt. And after it's been smitten by Aaron, almost beginning to see it can move and come alive and then just rise up and it all becomes these little creatures over everything.

[8 : 40] Man and beast, even the beasts of the field are being driven mad by the attentions of these little creatures. So they said, this is the finger of God.

Now this is a phrase, of course, which our Lord himself uses in the New Testament. If we go to Luke's account of the gospel, we see in chapter 11 at verse 20, where remember Jesus' enemies are busy saying, come on, the only reason he casts out demons is by Beelzebub. Interestingly, Beelzebub, of course, means the Lord of the flies, which the devil is content to be known as. He casts out devils by the prince of devils. You know, he gives him authority to cast out his own creature.

Why would he do that? But anyway, Jesus says, if I, by Beelzebub, cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges.

But if I, with the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. Now, so, of course, by some, the finger of God, the diminutive, is taken in place of the substantive, because usually you would talk about the hand of God doing something, but it's not even the whole hand of God that has to be lifted.

[9 : 53] It's just the finger of God. Also, in terms of, if you think of the index finger, by which, you know, somebody might be depicted ruling on their throne and pointing at something that was to be enacted.

So it is the finger of God enacting, being lifted and directing and ordering that which he was to do.

So if I, with the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Similarly, we have in Matthew 12, verse 28, a similar expression. If I cast out devils, Jesus says in Matthew, by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Or else, how can anyone enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods? Except he first bound the strong man, then he will spoil his house. The spirit of God is that which enacts and puts into practice that which the finger of God commands.

The active power of God is the spirit of God. And it is the finger of God which enacts it. And we see that right at the beginning of creation.

[11 : 02] The spirit hovered over the waters and God spoke and said, let there be light, and so on. But what is the fruit? What is the result of such work by Christ with the finger of God?

Casting out demons. Using the divine power to cast out the demons. And of course, as we see in Egypt, using the divine power to show the emptiness and helplessness of the devils that the Egyptians worship, the false gods that they worship.

What's the fruit of Christ casting out these demons? Is it to glorify the devil? Or beelzebub, as his enemies said? Well, look at what we see in Matthew 12, verse 23.

We read, all the people were amazed and said, is not this the son of David? That which Jesus enacted with the finger of God, the power of God's spirit, did not cause people to say, oh, the devil must be so powerful.

Oh, let's bow down and worship him because he's casting out the devil here and he's casting out the devil there. Only the devil could give him such power to do that. No, this rather, when Jesus casts out the devils, it causes people to say, this must be the son of David.

[12 : 13] This must be the Messiah. In other words, that which Jesus does causes people to turn to the Messiah, causes people to turn to the Lord.

And the evidence, the outworking of God's grace, of his power, will always be to turn people to the Lord. Now, some people, of course, when they turn towards the Lord, they don't like what they find and they reject it and they turn from it, but that's not God's fault.

He turns people to himself and some people recall from it, just as Pharaoh did even when his own magicians, even when his own sorcerers and so on said to him, look, this is the finger of God, we can't do anything about this.

And he had no more use for them after that because they didn't tell him what he wanted to hear.

And so we read that he hardened his heart and he did not listen to them either.

This is what we read. Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he hearkened not unto them. That doesn't mean in the context Moses and Aaron. It means his own magicians. He did not hearken to them.

[13 : 15] He was not interested in what they had to say because they were acknowledging the power and the witness of the Lord. Pharaoh will not even listen to his own people because they don't say what he wants to hear.

So Pharaoh's heart remains hardened. He hearkened not unto them as the Lord had said. So whilst the lice are still crawling all over everybody and everything whilst nobody can move or do anything because they're absolutely everywhere crawling then on top of that the Lord said unto Moses rise

up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh though he cometh forth to the water perhaps hoping for some relief in the river.

Thus saith the Lord let my people go that they may serve me else if I will not let my people go behold I will send swarms of flies upon thee and upon thy servants and upon thy people and into thy houses and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies and also the ground whereon they are.

You must watch it walking on the ground and flies are everywhere underneath it. Now Pharaoh might be thinking as he goes to the water well this is bad enough I mean how's it going to get worse if he sends more flies now?

Oh my goodness it can get worse. It is a foolish man that thinks well life is so bad what more can God do to me? God can do unlimited things and however bad we think things are when we are in defiance of the Lord they can get an awful lot worse.

[14:51] And so this plague of flies is sent on top of the plague of lights. There's not a pause there's no repentance by Pharaoh there's no asking for it to be lifted so whilst everybody is still smacking them away and itching them out of their head and their clothes then the flies come on top of that.

And I will sever in that day verse 22 the land of Goshen in which my people dwell that no swarms of flies shall be there to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth and I will put a division between my people and my people tomorrow shall this sign be now.

Sooner or later such a division was going to come. The Lord makes such distinctions we find at various stages in scripture Malachi chapter 3 verse 18 when we have read that they that fear the Lord speak often to one another and the Lord hearken and heard it and a book of remembrance was written he says then shall we return and discern between the righteous and the wicked between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Now this is the distinction God makes throughout scripture he is always he is always despite the fact of how he has chosen a people for himself God is always throughout salvation history more concerned with those who will serve him or not than he is with somebody's racial identity. you could be a racially an Israelite and still be completely godless but you could be a Moabite like Ruth and still have the love of the Lord you could be a harlot like Rahab and still have the fear of the Lord and be incorporated within the Lord's people you could be a unifus described in Isaiah 58 and so on or a stranger or a foreigner but if you come seeking the Lord you will never be turned away there will always be room for those who will love the Lord and seek him then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not and throughout scripture the Lord makes this distinction the righteous and the wicked the sheep and the goats the wheat and the tares throughout scripture those that seek the Lord and those that seek him not and so we find with the plague of flies the Lord makes an explicit distinction between his own people and the

[17:27] Egyptians now some commentators of course would argue that the Lord has been doing this already that he's already been making that kind of distinction between the Egyptians and his people they point to things like in chapter 8 for example here at verses 3 and 4 where they say the rubbish will bring forth frogs abundantly and will come into thy bed chamber upon thy bed into the house of thy servants and upon thy people and into thine ovens and into thine eating troughs all the frogs shall come up both upon thee and upon thy people and upon all thy servants it doesn't say upon the Israelites but it doesn't say that it doesn't and this is the first instance that we have at the plague of flies plague number four that we that we have an explicit reference to the Lord making a distinction between his people and the Egyptians and I think it is not only reasonable but I think it is accurate to understand that the preceding three plagues that of blood that of frogs and that of lice had afflicted and affected the Israelites just as much as the Egyptians and that if you think about it is logical if the

Lord sends judgment or plague or you know his particular outpouring of his wrath upon a particular place or community or country then you're not going to find that the Christians or the Lord's people are going to miraculously escape if a nation is overthrown because the Babylonians invade or the Assyrians or whatever then those who are truly the Lords may say well yep what did we expect if we turn away from the Lord but it doesn't mean that they are going to be immune from the famine and the strife and the destructiveness that comes so we have the Lord having I would suggest to you and if you think about it it's logical if the river is turned to blood it's going to be blood all the way

down to the delta so if the land of Goshen is in the Nile Delta they're going to have blood in the river too they're going to have blood for their water for that seven days the Israelites will be affected they will see the hand of the Lord in it they will be hopefully encouraged that God is acting on their behalf when the frogs come they will be just as much irritated by it as the

Egyptians but they will know that God is smiting the Egyptians with these frogs and with these plagues which are overturning the gods whom they supposedly worshipped and when we come to the lice then we must likewise deduce that the Israelites were afflicted by the lice also it's perhaps reasonable to say that when the flies came but they didn't come to the Israelites then maybe the lice likewise were lifted it wouldn't be logical for the Israelites to go on scratching away and suffering under the lice but not have any flies on top of it but we are told explicitly I will sever in that day between the land of Goshen in which my people dwell that no swarms of flies will be there to the end that thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth and some would interpret that in the midst of that land I am in Goshen I dwell there because I dwell in the midst of my people that's not unreasonable you could take it that way but I don't think it's necessary to apply it in such a unnarrow sense

I will put a division between my people and thy people tomorrow shall this sign be now I would suggest to you that I think it is probably more accurate and truthful in scripture that where these distinctions are explicit in other words in the plague of flies in the plague of cattle against the cattle in chapter 9 verses 4 and verse 7 of chapter 9 if you look you'll see that the Lord puts a distinction there as well between the cattle the livestock of the Egyptians and those of the Israelites with the hail and fire likewise we read in chapter 9 verse 26 again that there was only in the land of Goshen where the children of Israel were was there no hail again with the plague of darkness there is a slight exemption some exemption chapter 10 verse 23 the children of Israel had light in their dwellings now that's that's beyond what we're looking at tonight obviously but that would imply that where they light their lamps and their candles they work they are effective and from that you think well of course if you light a candle in your house you're going to have light but that would imply that the darkness was so dense so thick as we read in chapter 10 even such a darkness as may be felt that when the

Egyptians tried to do that their lamps or candles were extinguished so the Israelites had light in their dwellings but still if you went outside the door they'd pitch black so there would be a partial exemption in the plague of darkness and of course when it comes to the plague upon the firstborn we move then into the realm of the Passover and the deliverance brought for the children of Israel there so what we find is a perfect symmetry we find that with five of the plagues flies, cattle, hail and fire, darkness and the plague upon the firstborn the Lord makes an explicit distinction between his people and the Egyptians but where that explicit distinction is not made I think we must conclude that the Israelites were likewise fellow sufferers with the Egyptians in the plagues of blood, frogs, lice, subsequently of boils and also of locusts although they wouldn't be affected so much for locusts because they didn't have crops and fields and so on like the

[23 : 21] Egyptians did but they would be afflicted and affected by these things because we have no evidence that they were not in fact rather it would imply that these things came on all the land of Egypt as we read verse 16 and 7 stretch out thy rod smite the dust of the land that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt and likewise at verse 17 all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt the plague of boils chapter 9 at verse 9 it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt it shall be a boil breaking forth with plagues upon man and upon beast throughout all the land of Egypt likewise the locusts in chapter 10 verses 14 and 15 and the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested in all the coasts of Egypt very grievous were they before them there were no such locusts as they neither after them shall be such and they covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened and they did eat every part of the land now there's no escape from that kind of plague so we have five plagues blood frogs lice spoils and locusts by which the Israelites are directly affected and we have five flies cattle hail and fire darkness and the firstborn by which the Israelites are exempted but you'll also notice that the ones through which they are exempted tend to be more towards the latter end and so the Lord is making an increasing distinction between his people and the

Egyptians to begin with they are mutually afflicted they're all affected by it and then gradually bit by bit to begin with it sort of every second plague that they're exempt from and then gradually towards the end they're more or less completely exempted because the Lord is driving a wedge between

those who are his and those who are not that is his purpose in order to separate out this people for themselves so we find this distinction being made but eventually with the plague of flies of course Pharaoh has to conceive with the flies coming on top of everything else the land is corrupted by the flies and so we read that Pharaoh then asks for the flies to be removed Pharaoh called for Moses verse 25 for Aaron go ye sacrifice to your God in the land in the land of Egypt do it here now he could be simply saying I'm desperate just do it quick do it here do it now just get rid of the flies but more probably he's trying to negotiate instead of saying well instead of three days in the wilderness just do it here just do it now do it in the land of Egypt here Pharaoh simply wants to stop the plague yet he wants as far as possible to keep the Israelites near where he might still exert power over them he seeks in other words to bargain with God through Moses he wants to be able to say yes okay listen I'm gonna let you sacrifice but you know my second requirement is you gotta do it here now God doesn't enter into negotiation with anyone we are not equals with God we do not sit down at the negotiating table and try and thrash out a compromise God says X and we can say Y till we're blue in the face but if God says X it is X that is going to stand and anything less than that we're not going to get anywhere we will end up either having to comply completely with God's requirements or to continue in rebellion against him anything less than what God demands is our own selfish rebellion and Pharaoh is seeking to try and negotiate but there is no negotiating with the Lord but we've all I suspect if we are honest we have all been at the stage where we've tried to do that yes Lord of course I love you of course I'll serve you Lord but I want to keep this bit to myself I want to hang on to this pet sin I want to hang on to this particular indulgence Lord I don't want to give you everything because I want to keep this bit for myself but I'll give you all the rest I'll give you this and this and this but you know this fits mine and I want to keep this and I'll give you everything else you want as long as you let me have control over this bit of my life the one bit that we keep for ourselves like Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 is the bit that will destroy us that will demonstrate that our hearts are not completely the Lord's you know if you've got two people there marry each other whatever they're in church and this and one of them says well actually you know for better for worse Richard O'Cruill yeah but but not on Thursdays you know on Thursdays I want to go and do my own thing and I've still got a girlfriend I'd like to visit now and then if that's okay you know but the rest of the week I'm all yours but you know just just that one time if that's okay and she says well you know I'm still very fond of my boss I'm a bit of a thing going so you know on Tuesdays I'll go and see him but the rest of the time no I'll be completely faithful to you you know that's not gonna work is it that's not giving yourselves completely to each other and Pharaoh is trying to negotiate and we've all been there we've all tried to negotiate with the Lord and say I want to keep this bit I want to keep this bit under my control I want I want to still have some say over what you're asking me to let go but I'll go some other way with you because I'm a reasonable guy I'll do so much of what you ask but you know you're asking for everything and that's too much it's too much for us it wasn't too much for God what he gave for lost sinners was everything he came himself he came from heaven's glory he came down to this fallen world he became human he took upon himself the form of a servant he died on the cross he gave his very life a perfect life for us God couldn't give more than himself and that's what he gave he didn't simply say I'll give all the world for you sinners because I love you so much this world that I've created it's the pinnacle of my creation see all the stars and all the universe that I've made but this planet earth this is the one place where I've created life from the microscopic organism all the way to the great big blue whale that inhabits the ocean and all the stars in the sky this is my jewel in my crown I'll give all of this world for you and he could have done that that would have been impressive but he doesn't stop short of the world he gives himself he comes himself God the son the second person of the Trinity it's part of God himself who comes and lives and dies on the cross he gives everything for the love of his children and whatever we are asked to give for him it's going to be less than he gave for us because if we give him everything it's just like the widow's mite you know going in the temple treasury it's all we have but it's nothing compared to what he himself that's good so here we have this this seeking by Pharaoh to negotiate a friend I don't know what stage you're at tonight in terms of your relationship with the Lord or your inquiries after him but there's there's never going to be a time when you can negotiate some of us perhaps at a stage where we've learned that by experience we've really tried to do it we've tried to negotiate with God in the past it's not going to work it never has it never will all these swarms of flies and then some commentators say it means a variety of different flies you know although you'll notice that the word of flies is in italics in the

authorized version which means it's not there in the original it just means swarms is there in the original but we're told in the other Psalms you know

Psalms 78 verse 45 we looked at earlier Psalm 101 105 verse 31 he speak and there came diverse sorts of flies it's spelled out there and lice in all their coasts so basically it means it's not just like blue bottles it's rather every kind of winged creature you know it would be hornets it would be perhaps you know uh might be mosquitoes in that one there would be perhaps the winged beetle that the Egyptians also worship as a god and gadflies dragonflies every conceivable winged insect creature would be coming against fail on his people of course he wants rid of them but he tries to negotiate and say oh sacrifice in the land but nobody sits down at the negotiating table with the lord we're not his equals we accept his terms and we surrender them completely or we continue in Berlin against them but Moses said no we can't sacrifice you in the land because what we will sacrifice will offend the

[32 : 51] Egyptians now remember way back in Genesis 43 where Joseph has his brothers with him and they have to eat separately at verse 32 of Genesis 43 because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians turn a couple of pages you find in chapter 46 at verse 34 then he shall say thy servants trade and be about cattle that is livestock from our youth even until now both we and also our fathers that he may dwell in the land of Goshen that would imply separate from the other Egyptians for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians it is said that in Roman times a Roman official inadvertently killed a cat and yet because the cat was one of those that the Egyptians worshipped as a god a mob stormed his house and murdered him assassinated him because he had killed a cat and that was with the governor trying to restore order using his troops to try and you know break up the mob they still couldn't save the Roman official because the Egyptians literally killed this guy by a mob and that's hundreds of years later because he had inadvertently committed an abomination in killing one of the things that they worshipped now given how many gods the

Egyptians had if the Israelites were to sacrifice a cow or an oxen or a sheep or a goat there's going to be some Egyptian god somewhere with the head of a cow or the head of a goat or the head of a sheep that will be sacred to them if they sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians if they sacrifice that which is going to cause the Egyptians to be horrified they will turn on them and they would tear them limb from them if they are to offer to God on the other hand the kind of sacrifices that the Egyptians offer to their gods which might make them acceptable to the Egyptians it would be an abomination to the Lord but if they sacrifice what the Lord requires they'll be an abomination to the Egyptians so they can't possibly win if they stay in the land they've got to go their three days journey into the wilderness because God requires it this tells us three things first of all it tells us that if we would offer acceptable sacrifice to the Lord that we must first of all separate ourselves from that which is wicked and profane the idolatry of

Egypt would have tainted it it would have made toxic the very atmosphere in which the Israelites tried to wash it you've got to get out from underneath that if you're pursuing for example a sinful lifestyle you cannot pretend to give your life over to the Lord whilst pursuing that sinful lifestyle you're going to put distance between yourself and that sin you have to separate out separate ourselves from the wicked and profane practices or people or idolatry of whatever's going on separate themselves from the wicked and profane that's the first thing we must do secondly must retire from the noise and labor and distractions of the world let's say for example you might be somebody who is becoming genuinely genuinely converted and you want to read your Bible and pray and so on but you've promised somebody you'll go to a party so you're off to the party and you've got your Bible still in your pocket and say okay well I'm gonna read my Bible here and make sure I pray to the Lord tonight you know even though the party's going on you find yourself a corner and all the music's banging away and the lights are flashing and there's people all over the place whether dancing or smoking goodness knows what and the clinking of glasses and there you are trying to read your Bible sort of thing and trying to focus and consider you can't do it you can't do it you can't focus on two things at once you're gonna take yourself out of these rooms you're gonna take yourself away from the noise away from the distraction and the tumour whether or not these are bad people or good people we're not going there we're not passing judgment these things are gonna stop you focusing on the Lord if you're constantly trying to be busy 24 7 you haven't got the peace and opportunity to focus on the Lord and his word even Jesus set his disciples come here apart a little space and you know just rest a while if we are going to offer acceptable sacrifice to the

Lord we must retire from the noise and labour and distractions of the world and thirdly we must we must observe the divine appointment why did they have to go into the wilderness because God said it that's the beginning and the end of it Egypt will not do as a halfway house you know it's not okay just to say no we'll just stay here we'll do it well just go one day's journey into the wilderness and that'll be okay God says three days journey into the wilderness God says come and serve me on this mountain so that's what they must do because God says come and serve me on this mountain so that's what they must do because God says it and we are required in our worship to observe the divine appointment to do what God has required not to go beyond it not to add to it but not to take from it either because you cannot improve upon perfection you cannot improve upon what God has laid down so we have to separate ourselves from the wicked and profane separate ourselves from the noise and distraction labour of the world if we are going to focus on the Lord and we must observe the divine appointment that which God requires whatever wherever whenever God commands we ought to obey God rather than man the Lord rather than Pharaoh one final word we want to see you know as Pharaoh says okay okay just do what you like just take the flies away Moses went out from Pharaoh verse 30 and entreated the Lord and the Lord did according to the word of Moses and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh from his servants and from his people there remained not one although the Lord knows the wickedness and deceitfulness and hardness of every heart and every sinner see how ready he is to be entreated and how willingly he removes and relieves distress he doesn't wait for proof of proof of merit he doesn't say oh wait a minute Pharaoh's lied to me already I want to see some evidence of his faithfulness no he just does it Moses asks and he does it he takes away the distress he relieves the suffering of Egypt and its people he answers because he has been asked he does not wait for them to deserve it or to show proof of faithfulness although he knows the wickedness of our hearts although he knows the deceitfulness of our hearts ask and it shall be given ask for the help the relief the blessing of the Lord because we see here how ready he is how willing he is to be entreated how ready he is to answer and to relieve distress whatever may be your condition I can save you without fear of contradiction turn to the Lord and he will answer and he will help and he will relieve the distress in which you may be finding yourself and he won't wait for you to be righteous first turn to the Lord because that is where the source of blessing and relief is to be found and there may be many plagues to come just as there are here there may be much suffering still to be enduring but if you are going through it with the Lord then you know that you can face it because if the Lord is with you then ultimately you have nothing to be afraid of God bless you