

It's Going to Happen

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[0 : 0 0] Now as we come to this fifth chapter in the book of Exodus, we find Moses and Aaron now having their first interview, as it were, with Pharaoh on behalf of the Israelites.

Afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

Now the first thing you know to see is that access to Pharaoh was clearly a lot easier, a lot freer in those days anyway, than subsequent eastern tyrants would allow.

If we think for example of how close a throne room Esther's husband, King Ahasuerus, had in Esther chapter 4 verse 11, we read, All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live.

But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days, said Esther. So that was his wife, his queen, who could not enter the throne room without a special invitation.

[1 : 1 2] Of course she took her life on her hands on behalf of her people, the Israelites, and was spared. But of course we see there the closeness, the sort of almost paranoia about not letting anyone near the king in those days.

But that was in the future. In Pharaoh's time, in the comparatively earlier time of ancient Egypt, clearly there is access to Pharaoh for his subjects and to visitors and so on.

So this is something we see again at verse 15, but it's something to bear in mind. Pharaoh, as bad as he is, at least there is access to him. Those who have grievance, those who have a plea, they can get to him and they can make that plea.

So, thus saith the Lord God of Israel. Let my people go. The Lord God of Israel. This is the first usage in the scripture referencing God as the God of the people Israel.

And we're so used to this phrase, the Lord God of Israel. They think, oh, well, it's always been used, hasn't it? It's always been there. It's been used once previously, and that's in Genesis 33 at the last verse, as a reference to the altar that Jacob built.

[2 : 2 2] And he calls it El Elche Israel. That is, God, the God of Israel. But Israel referred to there is the individual. It is the person, Jacob, who in the previous chapter has just received his new name of Israel.

So it's a reference to himself, his own God, as opposed to simply the God of Abraham's father and the God of Isaac and so on. And the Lord is often referred to, of course, as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or the God of the Hebrews, as Moses and Aaron referred to in the following verse.

But this is the first usage of the Lord God of Israel as a nation, that he is sort of owning them in that sense, as his own people.

And therefore, as it says later on in the prophets and Zechariah and elsewhere, whoso toucheth him, toucheth the apple of his eye, because Israel is precious to him. Israel is my firstborn, as he said in the previous chapter, in chapter 4 and verse 22.

Thus shalt thou say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord Israel is my son, even my firstborn. And I saith unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me. And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

[3 : 35] Now we're not at that stage of that kind of confrontation with Pharaoh yet. It's simply an initial request. Let my people go. The Lord God of Israel is making this request through Moses and Aaron.

So, of course, perhaps predictably, Pharaoh answers, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? Now this is where the way in which our translation has it is slightly confusing.

We're so in tune with thinking in terms of the Lord as a title of reverence and respect. And, of course, people use the capital L, small O-R-D, to refer to rulers and those in command and those who occupy places of nobility.

To be a Lord of this or a Lord of that was to have a place of high power and esteem and reverence in a country or a state or whatever it may be. So to refer to God as the Lord, it implies that there is a reference for him and a respect for him.

But that's really just kind of in our translation. Because as I think I've mentioned in the past, what we have in translation is the terms the Lord, capital L, capital O-R-D, is what is put over the divine name in the Hebrew.

[4 : 55] The divine name in the Hebrew, which would roughly translate as Yehovah in Hebrew, which we have transliterated with vowels into Jehovah. That is the divine name which was considered so holy that the Israelites, the Hebrews, were afraid to pronounce it, even in the reading of Scripture, lest they pronounced it with insufficient reverence, and so were guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain.

So wherever the divine name, the Yehovah, or Jehovah, as we would call it, appears in the original Hebrew Scriptures, they would put over it this term, the Lord.

So that they were simply referring to him as, you know, the Lord, the Master, in that sense. So they're not using the divine name because it was considered so holy. This means that in our particularly English translation, we have this anomalous situation where Pharaoh is referring to God as the Lord, which sounds very respectful, and it sounds like almost deference, but really he's using the actual name.

He's saying, effectively, well, who's this Jehovah you're telling me about? I've never heard of it. And if I've heard of it, why should I listen to it? Why should I recognize it? I know not. You know, who is Jehovah?

I know not Jehovah. It's certainly possible that Pharaoh had literally never heard of this God, the God of the Hebrews. He might never have heard of him, you know, as we've already got.

[6 : 29] It's the first designated use, as verse 1 makes clear, on behalf of the nation, the Lord God of Israel. But if so, we have to say that's a reflection on the Israelites. You know, they've been 400 years in Egypt, and yet the ruler of Egypt and his princes round about him, they don't know who this Jehovah is.

The Hebrews have been living amongst them, working for them, pastoring their flocks and herds, and building their cities, and yet they've never come across this sacred name of Jehovah.

They've never come across the Lord God of Israel. What have the Israelites been doing all this time? What is their identity? What is their worship? Well, the sad fact of the matter is, they have become paganized.

They have become naturalized. They've begun to, if they worship anything at all, worship the gods of the Egyptians. That's why Moses, a couple of chapters earlier, says, you know, they'll say to me, what is his name?

If I go and say, the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have appeared to me, they'll say, what is his name? And that's when he says, I am that I am. And although it's not an exact reference, an exact translation, the divine name, the Jehovah, it roughly translates into the I am, or the being, you know, of God.

[7 : 50] And so the I am that I am is pretty much in shortened form that Jehovah, that's what it roughly translates as, I am that I am. How else do you describe God other than the divine, the great I am?

So the Israelites have been so steep in Egyptian idolatry that the Egyptians are completely unaware that there is a God of Jehovah who is meant to be their God, their identity, and the one that they worship.

Having been thus introduced, we might say, to the Lord God of Israel, Pharaoh, perhaps not unnaturally, judged the character and the power of this God by the abject and miserable condition of his worshippers.

He says, well, he can't be much of a God. I mean, look at the people that worship him. They're slaves. They're scum beneath our feet. We do whatever we want with them. He can't be that powerful, or surely he would be mighty to exalt them and to make something of them.

We wouldn't be able to rule over them if their God was mightier than our gods. So their God, if he exists, and no doubt that Pharaoh would accept that he did exist as a God because Pharaoh accepted all the hundreds of gods in Egypt.

[9 : 02] So, of course, there's always room for another one. But whenever he ranks, he must be way down the ranks. Because look at his worshippers. Look at his people. And so he says, well, if that's the condition of the people that worship this Jehovah, then he can't be up to much.

He can't be up to much. But why should I? I, Pharaoh, who am a god in Egypt. And, of course, the Pharaohs were regarded as gods in Egypt. Why should I obey and do what he says and let his people go?

You know, and in the same way, many people still, whether Muslim countries or Hindu countries or other lands and so on, where those who are wealthy and powerful and influential, they worship the gods that are honored locally in those countries, the false gods of these countries around the world.

And the people who follow Christ in these lands are often the poorest of the poor, those who clean out the sewers, those who sweep the streets, those who are the scum of the earth in the eyes of the well-to-do of these countries.

And so they judge their God accordingly. They see, well, who are the people that worship him? They don't see that this is good news for the poor. It is precisely the people who have nothing, who are attracted to the God who gives them and offers them everything.

[10 : 20] Whereas those who are rich in terms of this world don't see their need of the living God. Pharaoh decided, not perhaps unnaturally, the Lord must surely hold as low a ranking amongst the gods, of whom he believed in many, as the Lord's people did in the land of Egypt.

Demonstrating the omnipotent supremacy of the true God over all the false gods of Egypt was what the plagues were all about. Because, you know, the plagues, when they happened to the land of Egypt, the Hebrews didn't do that.

The Israelites weren't responsible for turning the river into blood and making the frogs come and sending the hail and fire and all these other things. They couldn't do it. They couldn't make that happen. God made it happen.

And all the gods of Egypt were powerless to do anything about it. It was a demonstration of the power and authenticity and the omnipotence of the living God, the God of Israel.

That's what the plagues were all about. The Israelites did not make any of those things happen. They did not have the power. They didn't have any powers. The Lord made them happen.

[11 : 32] And there were no gods in Egypt that could stop them. First of all, however, before all that happens, there had to be a genuine and open opportunity for Pharaoh to freely accept or freely reject the Lord and his demands.

Because, you know, God is a God of justice. It would have been quite unfair if God had said, right, well, I'm not going to tell you about it, but I'm going to send all these plagues in the land of Egypt. I'm going to destroy your country.

And it's all because I want my people to come out and worship me in the desert. Because Pharaoh might have turned out and said, well, that's not fair. If you'd only asked me, I'd have let them go. If you'd only said, this is what you want, of course I'm going to let them go.

God cannot be charged with injustice. And therefore, there's always opportunity freely given to either freely accept or freely reject the Lord and his demands.

And not this similar opportunity is afforded to us in the gospel. What is our response to the Lord when without plagues and without pressure, we have the opportunity to accept him in love or to reject him in rebellion?

[12 : 48] You see, it's one thing to submit to the Lord's judgment or submit to the Lord's will when we've been absolutely crushed and shredded by plagues and difficulties and absolutely crushed and taken into a corner.

We've got nowhere else to go, no other option. That's one thing. But to decide whether or not we'll love the Lord and obey him or else reject him and turn against him when there's no such pressures.

What is the choice of your heart? That's what the Lord puts to sinners in this day and age. That is the offer of the gospel. Come unto me and be ye saved all ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else.

He invites all those who are weary and heavy laden to come to him and those who recognize a need in themselves they come and those who think well thanks, I'm fine as it is, you know, I don't need this.

They will reject him. What is our response to the Lord when we are not pressurized by plagues? When there is opportunity, when there is freedom and as far as we know such a choice can be made cost free.

[13 : 55] Pharaoh made the mistake of thinking it would be cost free but friends, there is always a cost to the choice that we make. There is always a price to be paid and to be reckoned with depending on how we choose and we have to take responsibility for the choices that we make because the opportunity is set before us just as it is set before Pharaoh.

This is what the Lord wants. You can either do it or you can reject it but there is going to be consequences regardless one way or the other.

Notice how in Revelation, the last book of the Bible, notice how the unfolding judgments and plagues that we read about there, they don't actually soften or change the hearts of anyone but rather as people are visited with more and more of these plagues and we read how they nod their tongues for pain and they curse the God of heaven that set these judgments against them and it didn't actually make anyone think oh well, yeah, maybe we did deserve it and maybe we should have turned to the Lord.

We don't read of that. We just read of it. People becoming more and more hardened in their rebellion. We find this as the unfolding of the judgments in the plagues.

They don't soften anyone's heart but then as in Egypt conversion is not what the plagues are about. The judgments that we read about in Revelation it's not about converting people's souls by then rather by then the opportunity is gone.

[15 : 30] They are about demonstrating God's power over the false gods of this world and to show to man the intelligent hardness of his own heart because our heart is hard by nature.

and it doesn't matter what is done to us we will continue defiant and hard against all God's judgments until and unless he softens our heart by his great grace and mercy.

It is only the Lord who is able to turn us to the Lord. So we have this response to fail which is natural you might say that is literally the response of human nature following nature as well as naturally in the sense of obviously God's peaceable offer is rejected in the first instance you know when it is thought to be cost free.

Pharaoh thinks I can say no to this and I can get away with it. I can say what I like I can do what I like I can reject God and there's going to be no comeback. Friends there's always going to be comeback. Pharaoh doesn't know this yet but we who now live in gospel times we should have sufficient knowledge knowledge of what Christ has revealed or what the word of God reveals to know that there is always comeback and there is always consequence for every choice that we make.

So this is this offer of the Lord is rejected in the first instance complete with a how dare you set a tight backlash. It is as though Pharaoh were saying that to quote what Matthew Henry implies he says shall I that rule the Israel of God be ruled by the God of Israel.

[17 : 13] Proud men think themselves too great to stoop even to God himself as we see in our own day and age and sometimes in some parts of the church of course and some experience of this myself as well you get to the stage where if the word of God and the teaching of God contradicts the sins that men desire to indulge then they will brazenly say God and his word is wrong.

God is at fault. We will not stoop to God. We will not bow to his teaching. We want to do what we want and God must be wrong.

And for that said thank goodness we know better than the word of God is what has been said in general assemblies in the past. Now this is the state of the fallen condition of man.

Proud men think themselves too great to stoop even to God himself and the root cause is as old as the garden itself.

God must rule in all his creation but man will not be ruled. It is the oldest idolatry in the book. Remember what the serpent says that he shall be as gods.

[18 : 31] if you take that fruit thinking you will be as gods and up to a point it was true because they would know the difference between good and evil having chosen evil and likewise of course Pharaoh is regarded as a god in Egypt along with all the other multiplicity of gods.

He is literally he shall be as gods he is a god as far as he is concerned in Egypt. This is man's ancient idolatry. I will not submit to the claims of God.

I will be God myself he shall be as gods. That is what the devil holds out to you but it is a lie. You will know the difference between good and evil but you'll only know it by bitter experience.

You will not be as gods. You will not be equal with God. You will only be followed from the pristine condition in which mankind was created and that is the condition in which we are born and conceived.

By nature at enmity with God. God must rule but man refuses to be ruled. When there are no plagues or pressures left to himself he will choose to reject God.

[19 : 46] That's what Pharaoh does but that's not sit in judgment on Pharaoh. That's what natural man does in his ordinary condition. That is what every single one of us does.

Until such time as the Lord changes our hearts by his grace. It is only of God's mercies that we are not consumed as Lamentations tells us.

For they are new every morning and great. They stand free for us. So we see then moving on to verse 3. They said the God of the Hebrews have met with us.

Let us go we pray. These three days journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword. If you don't accept the title of the Lord God of Israel I don't know who Jehovah is.

I don't recognize Jehovah. Well he's the God of the Hebrews. You're a slave people. This is the one that they worship. They acknowledge you. They should be anyway. Let them go so that they don't stand to have punishment from this God that they have perhaps neglected to worship all these years.

[20 : 50] Lest he fall upon us with pestilence and that us can be double edged. It can mean either lest he fall upon us the Hebrews for having neglected him all these years or it can mean lest he fall upon us the Hebrews and the Egyptians if they prevent us from going to worship him.

Whatever way you cut it that which seeks to come between the Lord and his people has placed itself at enmity with God. And if we set ourselves at enmity with God it is not a good place to be.

Lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with a sword. We've got to go and sacrifice them. We've got to make our peace with our God. If you stop us then judgment is going to fall.

And the king of Egypt said unto them wherefore are ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their works get you to your burdens. This is Egypt potentially preventing the people from being reconciled to their God.

Pharaoh's enmity against God is quickly followed up by his enmity against God's people. And it is so often one and the same. And those who say no no we're not against you people it's just God's demands we don't like.

[22 : 07] As long as we're free to do whatever we like and you can worship what you love. You know it's often possible if you want to see about even sanctifying the Lord's day for example.

And people want to say oh that's all very well for you. You're Christians you know you want to do that that's fine. Why should we why should we if we're not Christians why should we have to stop doing things that we want to do one day of the week when you get to do what you want.

Because even if you take God out of the picture and even if you make it purely about a sociological idea there's one group of people do this one group of people do that we're all equal we all respect one another six days of the week the worldling gets to do things exactly as he wants.

One day of the week the Christian says well look we've fallen in line with you all these other six days of the week one day of the week you just be a wee bit restrained so we can follow our ways in this one day because this is important to us just like the world is important to you.

And even if you take God out of the picture and make it all simply at the level of people all simply a sociological concept one group of people this one group of people that we're all equal and it's not 50-50 it's not down the middle it's six days a week they get to do whatever they want one day of the week the Christians the Lord's people get to do what they want but no no no that's too much to get such is the enmity not simply against the Lord but even against the Lord's people because they represent the presence of God in the world that not even one such day can be given by way of even equality or even sort of respect for a different grouping of people equal people like us it's not 50-50 it's not three and a half days each six and one but no that's too much even if you take God out of the picture the enmity against God will simply be translated into enmity against his people that's what we have here if he will not listen to the Lord God of Israel it's the

[24:12] God of the Hebrews your people your slaves they need to go and worship and otherwise bad things might happen to them we don't care Pharaoh doesn't care his enmity against God is reflected in his enmity against God's people Satan presents the worship of God and the requisite rest from labor that that worship may be better done such as a day off in order to follow the Lord and the rest in his name as mere idleness and interference with what he desires to pursue all evidence to the contrary not with Stalin everybody knows that people need a day off everybody knows that the Israelites are not idle we can see in chapter 1 verse 11 they built the treasure cities Python and Ramesses they have been busy they are fatigued with work they are over works that testifies to their neighbors but says oh no you're idle you're idle they are not idle but they desire to worship their God but no that too is too much even for

Pharaoh the king of Egypt said unto them wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron let the people from their works get you unto your burdens behold the people of the land now are many and you make their rest from their burdens and Pharaoh commanded the same day the task masters of the people and their officers the task masters being Egyptians the officers being Hebrews he shall no more give the people straw to make brick as here to for let them go and gather straw for themselves Moses and Aaron are virtually lumped in with all the other slaves you know get you to your burdens as though you're Hebrews you're slaves just like all the rest despite their position as spokesman for the Israelite nation so you're just Israelites too off you go and labor too now on the one hand we have to recognize that what Pharaoh is asking is not an impossibility because the availability of straw or you know similar material in Egypt would be far greater than say in our own country but partly because of what some commentators have described as the ancient way in which the Egyptians did their harvesting they would take the sort of the carnals or the seeds at the top and just slice it with the sickle at the top and leave all the sort of straw standing so there would be a huge amount of straw just standing in the fields once they've got the actual harvest of the carnals at the top and they gather these handfuls rather than as tended to be the case in our country in elsewhere you'd slice the bottom and then stack up all the sheaves and then later on you'd thresh out the carnals from them and so on but they would slice off underneath and gather the kernels first and foremost so there's plenty of straw in the fields to begin with but the point of the matter is that as you clear these fields around where the bricks are being made or the different cities where it's required you have to go further and further afield to gather the straw and even if you didn't the fact of having to gather it means it's hugely time consuming compared to just having it supplied readily like was happening before it's going to slow down production so one way or another if the new conditions were actually met the people would be broken by labour and fatigue and if the new conditions went unmet then they would be broken by punishment it is a cruel and vindictive decree that this issue here it is designed to break the people it is designed to take away from them any thought of worship or sacrifice anywhere think well all we can do is just get by from day to day all we can do is slug it out under these slave conditions and it will make them bitter against the idea of sacrificing to god in the wilderness so the taskmasters to the people and the officers this is what falls out with them and as we mentioned you know previously in verse 15 we see that at least there is access to pharaoh the officers of the children of

Israel came and cried unto pharaoh saying wherefore do you stand us with thy servants pharaoh is at least available they had liberty to complain to him there's no law against petitioning him with their grievances though it is likely that one reason he received them was simply to identify Moses and Aaron as the source of their suffering and to taunt them again with the charge of idyllisks because they're actually almost broken by work and fatigue and all of this for what purpose what have they done have they gone and strike have they raised up an insurrection against pharaoh and his power have they sought to subvert the kingdom or the nation no they just said let us go three days journey into the wilderness when we may sacrifice to our god they have not at this stage said and by the way we're never coming back all they said is we want to go and sacrifice to our god and the egyptians don't automatically assume that they'll be gone forever though perhaps they realize that that might be the upshot of it but all they're asking for is an opportunity of religious liberty if they've got three days journey into the wilderness and maybe a couple of days during their sacrifices three days journey back again if they were to come back you're probably looking at ten days altogether ten days to go and make their sacrifices and if they were to come back again to come back again it's not a huge cost to the egyptian economy but for the price of that request all of this cruelty is meted out against them we see the ultimate source of such response because no heart of compassion no heart of humanity is going to unleash such cruelty on fellow human beings it is coming from the pit of hell it is coming from the darkness of the false god of this world so we read of course of how the israelites respond you're your idol your idol pharaoh tells them he says now this is why you say let us go and do sacrifice to the lord go now and work for there shall no straw be given you yet you shall deliver the tally of bricks and the officers of the children of israel would see that they were in evil cases after they said you shall not minish up from your bricks of your daily task and they met moises and aaron who stood in the way as they came forth from pharaoh and they said unto them the lord look upon you and judge because you have made our savour to be a horde in the eyes of pharaoh and in the eyes of the servants to put a sword in their hand to slay us all this time they've been trying to kill our children they've been trying to enslave us now you've given them an excuse now you've given our reason to try and absolutely kill us with labour the lord look on you and judge now this is a comparatively restrained revue it is appealing in one sense to the lord but in another sense of course it is cruelty against moises because he didn't ask for that response he didn't seek it but he himself doesn't blame them he knows the condition in which now they are living and of course this reads in our narrative as though it's all happening in one day it's not of course it would take two or three days for the for the new regime to kick in and we read of course and the taskmasters say to them in verse 14 wherefore have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today as you before so it's at least three days or more before they come and complain to fail and then they speak to moises and eric and say this is what you've done you've made our situation worse rather than better and moises doesn't know what's happening either moises returned unto the lord and said lord wherefore is thou evil it so evil entreated this people why is it that thou has sent me for since i came to fail to speak in thy name he had done evil to this people neither has thou delivered up thy people at all yeah that sounds kind of almost

like a wee bit kind of bowl against the lord he hasn't done as he said well up to that point it is technically and literally true the lord has said he was going to bring his people out of egypt and deliver them and i promised that so far he hasn't done it that's not the same as saying that he's not going to do it and we know as we read on through the story that in due course of course he does do it with a mighty hand and a stretch that arm but he hasn't done it yet and in the darkness and in the discouragement and the cruelty of that hour you can see why mooses thinks as he does but he does the right thing because he is being accused of having made the situation worse what does he do he goes to the lord psalm 109 we read in verses three and four they come past me about also with words of hatred and fought against me without a cause for my love they are my adversaries but i give myself unto prayer and this is what mooses is doing because he has sought to improve their condition their condition has actually got worse and now they hate him for it but he gives himself to pray he doesn't moan to them he doesn't moan to fail he goes to the lord that i give myself unto prayer and so it is of course it's right that he should do so but because the good hasn't happened right away there is the temptation to think it's not going to happen the lord is not going to fulfill his promise we know from the testimony of scripture and we know also from the evidence of history and from the testimony and lives of the lord's people down through the ages the lord always keeps his word i'll say that again the lord always keeps his word it will not always be at the moment that we would like him to do so it will not always be an instant when we would hope that god would act and it is true that ecclesiastes says in chapter 8 verse 11 because sentence against that evil work is not executed speedily therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil if evil isn't put down quickly and if justice isn't set up quickly people think it's not going to happen now what effect does that have it will make those who are good sorrowful it will make them perhaps either despair or in the best case scenario cry to the lord as mooses does here the israelites are just too broken to cry to the lord but mooses isn't he goes to the lord he returned to the lord and said lord whereforest thou so evil and trick of this people why is it that thou sent me for since i came to pharaoh to speak in thy name he hath done evil to this people neither has done it over thy people at all god's time of opportunity god's holding off notice what it does it causes those who are on the lord's side to him plead them all the more urgently to cling as it were to him like the synophonian woman to the feet of jesus pleading for her daughter she would not be thrust away despite all the discouragement she is more urgent in her attentions to jesus mooses is more urgent in his attentions to the lord because it hasn't happened right away but those who are proud and oppressing and arrogant they are reaffirmed in their arrogance reaffirmed in their enmity what the lord is doing is opening up a gulf he is putting what the politicians used to say clear blue water between his people on the one hand and those who are enmity with him on the other this is the situation this is what the lord is doing he is

allowing these different groupings of people to coalesce he is allowing them to take shape and take definite sides because there will come the point when as we read in revelation when he acts it will be too late then to change things he that is unjust revelation 22 verse 11 he that is unjust let him be unjust still and he which is filthy let him be filthy still and he that is righteous let him be righteous still and he that is holy let him be holy still there comes the point when those who are the lords will still be the lords no matter what comes against them and those who are enmity with the lord will still be enmity with the lord no matter how much opportunity they are given to repent god holds off his hand so that people can find as it were their conclusion without the pressure of plagues without the sense of judgment falling from the sky if you were free to choose if you really had the opportunity for your own heart to do whatever it wanted what would you do what side would you choose and why because that's what this lull is giving it is not diverting or changing the direction of god's coming wrath or judgment or plan of deliverance chapter 6 it still isn't happening chapter 7 it begins to happen but it's a long time coming if you're the one struggling with the burdens in egypt but it's coming we all know the story of exodus we all know about the 10 plagues you could probably number off some of them on your fingers you probably struggled to find all 10 but you get some of them and you know that the the fearful uh power of these plagues on the land of egypt you know how the darkness you know about the blood you know about the plague on the firstborn you know that it's coming but it's not coming yet but you know that it's coming but you know that it's coming and you know that another chapter will be filled in and then it starts and it is soon it is definite and you know the story that when it begins it will be relentless it will be devastating to the land of egypt it will separate out those who are the lords from those who are not because we begin to see as the plagues unfold and as one follows another that those egyptians who feared the word of the lord they took evasive action they brought their flocks and their herds undercover they obeyed the fearful wants of the lord at least for their own self-preservation but some wouldn't it separates out those who are the lords and those who fear the lord from those who are not and it will be final you would think of course that after one or two that would be enough that no pharaoh's heart keeps on being hardened sometimes the lord hardens it sometimes he hardens it himself sometimes we simply read that it was hardened there is no discrepancy between these three that is what it is by nature that is what he wants to do himself but that is also what the lord oversees to make sure that it does happen so that his glory will be seen against the false gods of egypt this jehovah and was so despised in the eyes of pharaoh because his people were despised in the land of egypt do not confuse the two do not think that god is confined or restricted simply by the nature of the people who love him or serve him or follow him this is the problem the world does it looks at the christians and they are a poor specimen we are a poor specimen we are very poor advertisements for the gospel of jesus christ we are often riddled with inconsistencies

[40 : 41] we are often defiled with sin we fail we fall we we let each other down we let the lord down and the world points the finger at us look at those christians can't be anything in the religion they follow otherwise they would be better people well friends it's not about us we're the ones who need the saving that's why the lord has come that's why he has come himself to be the perfect offering we could never be to live the perfect life we could never live to offer up the once and for all perfect sacrifice upon the cross we could never offer it's all about christ you don't judge the gospel by the christians who believe in it you don't judge the lord jehovah by the miserable hebrew slaves in egypt you judge him by what he does you judge him by himself you judge christianity by christ and you look to him and you see if you find any fault there you see if you find any unrighteousness you see if you find any lack of compassion you see if you don't see their god personified because his judgment is about to fall on egypt but it hasn't happened yet and when it does it will be relentless it will be devastating and it will separate out as we said those who are the lord's and those who are not it will be final egypt will be absolutely devastated by the end of it it is all of those things but it is not yet here we are at the end of chapter five and things look as black as they can possibly do still in the chapter six we'll see them still looking black because mooses goes back to the the children of the and says look the lord is going to bring you out and they just don't listen to him because of the soreness of their heart because they are grieved for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage it gets blacker before it gets lighter it gets darker before the dawn arises but the dawn will come the days start arise in our hearts the bright and morning star is there it is soon it is definite and when it comes it is final but it is not yet if your mind is still unclear as to where you should be or what you should do for the safety of your own soul god's mind is not unclear if your knowledge of when is incomplete it is it's absolutely certain and precise down to the last second he knows how long you've got you don't know i don't know but that's not the point the lord is not judging us for how much time the god is judging us for the fact of that the only means of salvation and deliverance is being set before us and if we will not receive it within the time then we would never do it if we were given a hundred thousand lifetimes or an eternity if you were given another life over again to live you wouldn't suddenly decide to receive christ if you don't decide to receive him within the lifetime you've been given it's not about how much time the ticking clock has still got it's about the fact that christ is freely offered to you there is a way to be saved there is only one way to be saved and as we read in ads 4 verse 12 neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved and that name is jesus and his name means savior and it is the only way to be delivered from the judgment that will fall and that is coming the plagues that we know of in egypt we can look at with a certain equanimity from a distance say well

that was then this is now you know we're not in ancient egypt so we're comparatively safe well if that's the case you read ahead to revelation and you look at the plagues that are going to fall then you look at the plagues and who they will fall on and you look at how men's hearts remain hard against the lord even then it is not about how much time you may have tick tock it is rather that the christ who is set before you and the way to be saved from the judgment that will fall but that has not not fallen yet end of chapter five and still nothing is happening but you and i both know it's going to happen turn the page and you read of it carry on and you find it it's as sure in egypt as it is in our lives and in the life of this world you know it's coming you know god doesn't lie but you know also that he has made a way of escape and that is in his son jesus christ there is no other way to be saved but there is that way and it is freely offered to you without plague without punishment without pressure whilst it is still the time to choose freely to do the right thing but to be saved by christ let us pray