Exodus - Commentaries by Grandma Smith

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, Terrifying Hailstorm, A

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

The cows were all lying dead in the field one day, and their keepers were lying dead beside them. Whatever could have happened? Let me tell you the story. And since this is one of God's stories, we may be sure that it is true.

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was using the children of Israel as slaves to make bricks for his building projects. God told Pharaoh, "Let My people go!"

No! said Pharaoh. He wanted to keep them as slaves.

Perhaps you said "No" to God and to His Son Jesus yesterday when He reminded you again of your sins. Nothing bad happened, and you got up this morning healthy and well. So did the Egyptian people . . . for a while. But God sent them nine warnings before He sent the tenth one - death. Has He sent warnings to you?

One of those nine warnings was a furious storm of thunder, lightning and hail so huge and heavy it pounded everything flat, including people and animals. If the weather forecast warned you of a terrible storm like that, you would make sure that you and everything you owned were in a safe shelter. But this warning to Pharaoh was not from the weatherman; it was from God, and Pharaoh did not listen.

Do you listen to God? He never makes mistakes. His Word tells you over and over again that God will judge this sinful world. Do you have a safe shelter from that judgment?

Perhaps you don't know where to find shelter. That's why God gave us the Bible, and that's why we are telling you this story. Jesus, the Savior of sinners -Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again - Jesus, the Son of God, is the perfect and only shelter from that judgment which God has warned is coming against sin and sinners.

There were some Egyptians who feared God and listened, and they brought their livestock home. But I'm afraid that word "some" did not include very many. There was no escape from the pounding hail and fiery lightning for anyone or anything left outside. The fields were strewn with the dead bodies of people and animals.

Pharaoh cried out to Moses to ask God to stop the deadly storm. You notice that Pharaoh himself did not cry to God. He had to beg Moses to ask God to stop the storm. But God loves you, and He wants to hear a cry from your own heart, not just asking for peace and good health, but to cleanse you from all your sins by the precious blood of Jesus. Do you see that sin is the real deep-down problem in your life?

Moses stretched forth his hands toward heaven and the hailstorm stopped. This did not bring life again to the cows and keepers, and it did not teach Pharaoh his lesson-that God is true and He must be obeyed.

From the rest of the story in the Book of Exodus, it is plain that Pharaoh never learned. Will you listen and learn? You can never get past the power of God, and you can never guess the love of His heart until you come to Him through Jesus. You will find that "God is love" (1 John 4:16). What He will do for you is a million times better than stopping a hailstorm! In His mighty power, He will do far more than all you ask or think.

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and His children shall have a place of refuge" (Proverbs 14:26).

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, Millions of Frogs

Perhaps you have heard of Pharaoh, the great king of Egypt. He was keeping the children of Israel as slaves to make bricks for his projects. But God knew what Pharaoh was doing, and He sent Moses to tell him, "Let My people go!"

Pharaoh's answer was very bold against God. He said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" (Exodus 5:2).

Maybe you have said bold words like that. But everyone needs to listen to God. He says, "The wages of sin is death." God means what He says. And the only way you can escape the wages of your sins is to repent and believe what God says about a Substitute He has provided for you.

Pharaoh did not care what God said, so God spoke to him in ways that were not very pleasant. One of those ways was the plague of frogs.

The Nile River flowed through Egypt, and in its quieter spots there were large, green frogs, long-legged and slippery. Perhaps we like them in the river when they swell out their throats and sing. But God's purpose was intended to make Pharaoh obey His voice. God told Aaron to stretch out his rod over the river so that frogs would come up on the land. And they came! They came right into the Egyptians' houses and into their bedrooms and into their beds! Not just a few, but lots and lots of them - in the kitchens and in their mixing bowls and in the ovens! In fact, the frogs were jumping all over the people and their servants, till nobody could get a moment's peace.

Pharaoh's magicians couldn't make the frogs go away, and Pharaoh was terribly upset. He told Moses, "Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me."

“When?” asked Moses.

“Tomorrow!” answered Pharaoh.

God answered Moses’ prayer, and from then on the frogs stayed in the river. But the frogs already on land died in the bedrooms and kitchens and all over, and the people gathered them into heaps, and the land stank.

Do you think Pharaoh listened now and promised to let God’s people go? No, he didn’t. I suppose his workmen figured out some way to clean up the mess and then ordered the children of Israel to get back to work making bricks.

Do you hear the tender, loving voice of God speaking to you when troubles come? Will you refuse to listen to Him as Pharaoh did? There were more troubles for Pharaoh after that, and there will be in your life too, because God has promised, “The wages of sin is death.”

God finally sent death into every family of those Egyptian people, and there was a great and bitter cry. Why didn’t they listen at first? And why don’t you listen to God’s warnings? Even bad words you have said are sin and recorded by God Himself, and “the wages of sin is death.”

Is there any hope for you? Is there anyone willing to die in your place since you have sinned against God?

There is a wonderful promise in God’s Word which says, “Christ died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3). The work is done. The Savior died and rose again. But He is not everybody’s Savior, because there are so many who go their own way, with unbelieving hearts, and they blame God for the troubles He sends.

Won’t you thank Him for troubles that make you listen - and thank Him for the precious blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin? Pharaoh didn’t listen. Will you?

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, That Man Moses

There wasn’t very much about Egypt that Moses didn’t know. Not only was he very smart, he was a good speaker too. He was also in a very important position as the adopted son of the king’s daughter. It was enough to make any man proud of himself and sure of his future.

But there was something inside Moses’ heart that made him unhappy. There were people in Egypt who were having a rough time. They were working very hard as slaves and getting scoldings and beatings instead of pay. This specially bothered him because he knew who his real parents were - he knew that by birth he really was one of those slaves. It was as if they were his own brothers, and his good life in the palace could not make him forget that those slaves were really his people.

One day Moses went by himself to watch them working, but he saw more than that. He saw an Egyptian beating one of his own hard-working people, and that was not fair. Moses was a strong man himself, so he looked this way and that way to make sure no one was watching. Then he killed that Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

But you can never be sure. If you want to hide what you are doing, you had better not do it.

Moses went out again another day and saw a fight, but this time it was two of his own people who were fighting each other. This time he wanted to be a peacemaker so that they would be friends again. But the attacker was angry at Moses for breaking up the fight. Who made you a prince and a judge over us? he asked. Will you kill me like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

Now Moses knew that someone had seen what he had done to that Egyptian and that the king would hear about it. When Moses saw that he was in trouble, he quickly left Egypt and the good life that he had in the palace and went away to Midian to live. But his people were still slaves in Egypt, working under hard conditions as brick builders for the king.

God had a great work for Moses to do, but he was not ready for it yet. And God had a great surprise for those poor, hard-working slaves, but they were not ready for it either.

Don’t be angry if God keeps you waiting. He wants you to be ready for His blessing. You may ask, “Ready? How can I be ready?” You are ready when you will let God have His way. He loves you and wants to save you from your sins right now, through the precious blood of His dear Son. Are you ready to let Him save you? or do you want to argue with Him first?

Moses was already a saved man, but his riches and education and strength did not make him ready to be used by God to save his people from slavery. It is God who is wise and strong and loving, not Moses or you or me. Are you ready to be used by Him to help others?

While Moses was living elsewhere, he learned what God wanted him to know. After many years, God sent him back again to Egypt, and he did deliver his people from slavery. Have you and I learned that God is always right?

“As for God, His way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried [proven]” (Psalm 18:30).

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 1, Big Sister

It is very important to be a big sister, especially when you have a secret like Miriam had. It doesn’t matter if I tell you her secret now, but it mattered a lot then.

Her secret was that there was a new baby brother in her home, and everybody knew that King Pharaoh had ordered that all Hebrew baby boys should be thrown into the Nile River. The Hebrews were the king’s slaves, and he was afraid the Hebrew boys would grow up to be too strong for him. He was afraid there would be so many of them that they would fight against him and win their freedom.

People without God and without Christ are often afraid and try all sorts of ways to make sure that nobody and nothing will be too strong for them. But it was Isaiah who said, “The Lord . . . is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2). I’m sure the king did not know anything about the Lord or he would not have made such a wicked command because he was afraid.

The Hebrew midwives who helped the mothers having new babies knew the king’s command, but they didn’t listen to him; they saved the baby boys alive. That was brave, wasn’t it?

After three months, Miriam’s baby brother must have become rather noisy, and so his mother did a very surprising thing. She put him in the Nile River herself, but not the way the king intended. She took a big basket made of bulrushes and waterproofed it with tar. Then she carefully laid her baby boy in it, covered him up and set the basket afloat among the tall weeds by the river. Big sister Miriam watched from a distance to see what would happen to him.

That was the time that King Pharaoh’s daughter, the princess, came down to the river to bathe, and her servants walked along by the riverbank. When she saw the basket among the weeds, she sent her maid to get it. When the princess opened the basket, the baby cried, and his cries melted her heart.

“This is one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. She knew her father’s command about the Hebrew baby boys, but she felt sorry for the little crying baby and decided she wanted that baby for herself. But she was going to have a problem very soon -how would she feed the baby?

Before she had time to wonder, Miriam ran to the princess and asked if she should call a Hebrew nurse to feed the baby for her. “Go,” said the princess. Miriam probably ran all the way home and burst into the house to tell her mother the good news. Mother was ready to run faster than Miriam did and to hold out her arms gladly to her very own baby.

“Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages,” said the princess.

The princess may not have known who the nurse really was, but there was no need to hide the baby anymore. This Hebrew baby boy lived because the princess had saved him, and nobody could argue with that.

We don’t know what name his parents gave the baby, but the princess called him “Moses.” And that was his name from then on, and he lived for 120 years.

When Moses was old enough to walk by himself, that brave mother took him to the palace of the princess and left him there. It was a hard thing to do, but do you know something? It is more important to belong to God because the Lord Jesus has saved you than it is to belong to anybody on earth. His mother went home and put away his little things, but she knew that little Moses was God’s good gift, and God never changes His mind about gifts. Both the parents were not afraid of the king’s commandment.

As Moses grew up, he was given a good education, and he could talk about important matters with anybody. But he never forgot that he was a Hebrew, and it showed up in his life. We’ll tell you about it in the next story.

This story about the baby Moses is a story of doing what God says, no matter what anybody else says. You can find what God wants you to do by reading His book, the Bible. And if you aren’t brave enough to do what God says, ask Him for the courage, and He will give it to you. It takes courage to obey Him even today!

“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 3, Waters of Marah, The

Have you had a good drink today? No matter what you like best to drink, the main part of it is water. There are dozens of ways to get the water our bodies need, and everyone needs it every day, no matter where you live. Even thousands of years ago, everybody needed water to drink every day.

What is all this water made of ? Maybe it’s a surprise to you to learn that it’s made of hydrogen and oxygen, and neither of these is wet to begin with. Hydrogen is a gas that makes balloons go up, and oxygen is a gas that comes from green plants in sunshine. Who ever thought of putting those two together and making clear, wet stuff for us to drink? God did! And you can’t live long without it!

There were about two million people walking across the desert, more than three thousand years ago. They were gloriously happy and free, because God had just brought them through the Red Sea on dry land and had drowned all their enemies when they tried to follow them! They felt as if all their troubles were past, and now the day was a good day.

As they walked, they got very thirsty, but there was nothing to drink that first day, and that made them not quite so happy. There was no water on the second day either. Finally on the third day they saw water sparkling in the distance. Water at last! Stoop down and drink!

Oh, but it was horrible stuff . . . bitter! We can’t drink this water! And then they got angry. Whose idea was it to bring us here? Moses, it’s your fault! What are we going to drink?

I think each of us can understand their unhappiness at this point. Have you wanted something, like right now, and what you found was no good? If you looked around, you could probably find somebody to blame. And you could scowl and make a big fuss about it, and maybe you could find others who shared the disappointment with you.

Does God care about your problem? Oh yes! Remember, He sent His only Son to die for you. Is there any greater proof of His love than this? Tell Him your problem, and let His perfect wisdom, not yours, give you the answer.

Those two million people had a real setback, but they went to the wrong person about it. They should have told God their problem. Remember, He is the God who made hydrogen and oxygen when He created the world, and it was God who put them together to make water

for us.

Moses cried to God, and the answer was not what anyone would have expected. . . God showed him a tree! Now how could a tree solve the problem of the undrinkable water?

Are you remembering that God has also shown you and me a tree - the only way to solve our sin problem? The Lord Jesus was nailed to a tree made into the shape of a cross. God has shown us that the wonderful Savior who died on that cross has taken the sins of every believer on Himself, and those sins are gone forever!

Moses cast that tree into the water of Marah, and the water was made sweet! How wonderful for all of those terribly thirsty travelers. Where did the bitterness go? That is God's secret. It is enough for us to know that God knows how to deal with every problem, and He loves and cares.

The story does not end there. God has better secrets than you ever thought of asking for. The next place they came to was Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. His blessings are for those who trust Him and wait patiently for Him.

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Think About God's Word!

1. What does God use to make water?

2. What have you "needed" very badly but not gotten when you wanted it? What did Absalom do in 2 Samuel 14:28-32 when he didn't get what he wanted?

Project: How does Psalm 37 tell us to respond when we are being mistreated and not getting what we "deserve"?

God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 2, God Is Light

It is good of God to give us sunlight, which finds its way into every little crack. It is very hard to find blinds or curtains dark enough to shut it out.

"God is light" (1 John 1:5), and He always was light, even before the sun was created. On the first day He said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), and there was light, even though the sun was not made until the fourth day.

Here is a story of three days when God sent darkness into the land of Egypt where His people were slaves.

"Let My people go!" was God's message to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. No! said Pharaoh. However, he was fearful enough of God to release them a little bit, but God wanted him to release them totally - with no return.

I wonder if you know the God who wants the same for you - total release from the power of Satan. He wants to save you. . . not a little bit. . . but all the way home to heaven.

Perhaps you would like to stay under the power of sin and Satan a little longer. Maybe you would rather be saved some other day. But are you having troubles in your life? hurts and bumps? sickness? loss of money? people who don't treat you right? bad news? things that don't turn out right? God is sending troubles to make you listen. Why? Because He loves you, and He does not want you to live in darkness but to enjoy the light of life.

God sent darkness into the land of Egypt, thick darkness that they could even feel! Darkness so dark that people were afraid to move. Candles? No indeed. When God sends darkness, nobody can make even the tiniest spark of light. When God sends outer darkness, there is no light at all and no possibility of making any.

But God's people had light in their homes! It was God's light, and I really cannot explain it. We Christians have light in our homes too, if we love and obey God's Word. It is light that cheers our hearts and shows us the way to go. Our "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

King Pharaoh sent for Moses and told him, I will let you all go, even your children, but your cattle must stay behind. But their cattle were important for sacrifices to God, and their freedom would not be total if they could not serve Him with sacrifices.

Did you know that God requires a sacrifice for sin today too? Not a cow or a sheep, because those sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again. Our God has sent His only begotten Son as the sacrifice for sin, once for all. Our Jesus shed His precious blood just once, and this is forever. God can never accept any other sacrifice to take away sin.

When Jesus, the Son of God, was on the cross, there was darkness over all the land for three hours. God in all His holiness turned away from the sacrifice who was bearing our sins. Never will we Christians feel darkness like that. It was like the darkness of hell, for God is not there. Jesus did not deserve this; we did - for our sins! We who know Jesus as our Savior are children of the day, not of night nor of darkness. Our future home will be in heaven where God lives. There is no need of the sun nor the moon, and there is no night there. But without God, it is the blackness of darkness forever.

Moses would have nothing to do with King Pharaoh's halfway offer of leaving the cattle behind. No, he said, we won't leave a hoof behind!

Good answer! Good for Moses and for you and me too. We want to belong to Jesus totally - for big things and little things. Don't leave anything in the land of slavery. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

God lifted the darkness in Egypt after three days, but Pharaoh still would not let God’s people go. So God brought one more disaster - death - and death is the end of opportunity.

Maybe there is something hurting you today. God sent it because He loves you and He wants you to listen. Will you choose the God who is light? or the blackness of darkness without Him forever?

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