

It is a little chilly this morning, so I turned on the heat for the first time this fall. O well ... that is what the old calendar does to us ... right? And it is Monday morning, and time to get into the Word. God bless you as you read through, meditate, and then pray.

TOMORROW

A Devotional prepared by Dr. Robert L. Morris

Posted on October 18, 2021

“‘Tomorrow,’ Pharaoh said.”

Exodus 8:10a; TNIV

While reading in Scripture recently, specifically in the Book of Exodus, I was focusing on the plagues in the land of Egypt just prior to the deliverance of the Israelites out of that 430-year captivity. I encountered a very strange entry in the 8th chapter of that Book. Three words arrested my attention. I stopped reading! I began thinking ... seriously thinking about those three words. “‘Tomorrow,’ Pharaoh said.”

In the more than 70 years of teaching and preaching the Word of God, I recall that time after time I hurriedly raced through the Ten Plagues of Egypt in order to get to what I thought to be the “more important material,” consisting in part at least, of following the Israelites through the desert, the Red Sea, and on to Sinai and the Law, the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, and finally into the Promised Land. Tracing through the plagues again, I stopped after reading the Today’s New International Version record. The New King James Version record is: “So he said, ‘Tomorrow’”. That arrested my inquisitive mind. I decided to read this in other translations and/or versions. The Holman Christian Standard Bible cites it as: “‘Tomorrow’ he answered.” The New American Standard Bible puts it this way: “‘Then he said, ‘Tomorrow.’” The Contemporary English Version states it: “‘Do it tomorrow!’ the king replied.”

Well, that was enough for me. I knew that the “Tomorrow” idea was declared to Moses by the Pharaoh of Egypt. Moses and Aaron had approached the Pharaoh with the plea that the Jewish people be free to leave Egypt, and worship the LORD God of Israel through the sacrifices of the lambs, as God had instructed them. His refusal resulted in a series of ten plagues inflicting the Egyptian people. This was the Pharaoh’s response to the second of those plagues.

“‘Do it tomorrow!’ the king replied.” Do “what” tomorrow? Every word in the Bible is vitally important for a clear understanding of what God has written! However, the “words” of Scripture must be read and understood within the context in which they appear. So, what is there about this “‘Do it tomorrow!’ the king replied”? We need to review the occasion of Moses facing the Pharaoh of Egypt.

The result of the Pharaoh’s “Do it tomorrow” was a continuing of the terrible, devastating plagues that fell on the land of Egypt. The Egyptian culture included a pantheon of gods. These were involved in all the aspects of Egyptian life. The number of deities, or gods, was large. The number changed at times. New ones appeared and some of the old ones disappeared from the culture. In the days of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, the Egyptian gods were grouped in what was known as “enneads.” At that time, enneads were groups of nine gods plus the king (Pharaoh. While he was a human being, he was simultaneously thought of as a “god.” The Egyptians believed that divine power was incarnated in the Pharaoh. He was considered the ultimate power in Egypt, and thought to be the greatest Egyptian god of all. The nine “gods” plus the Pharaoh make up the ennead of ten gods.

Are you catching where this is going? I know you do! Ten Egyptian gods ... ten Divine plagues each one designed to counter one of the ten Egyptian deities. The Pharaoh and the Egyptian people would pay a terrible price for those words spoken in response to the second plague: “Do it tomorrow!” Eight more plagues. Let’s look at the Egyptian deities and God’s plagues, designed to show to all the world that God meant what He said to the Pharaoh through Moses: “This is what the LORD says: ‘By this you shall know that I am the LORD.’” (Exodus 7:17; TNIV)

Here we have ten Egyptian gods and ten God-designed plagues for the purpose of delivering God’s people out of the Egyptian bondage. They also serve to demonstrate that the Lord God, Yahweh, the God of the Bible, represented by Moses before Pharaoh, is the ONLY Lord God over all the universe, and that is the heart of this Devotional.

Let’s look briefly at the ten Egyptian gods at the time of Moses and Aaron and the deliverance of God’s people from the Egyptian bondage. I am including here the ten plagues designed to prove that they are nothing more

than man-made idols, with no “personhood,” and no reality, as well as the Biblical record of how these affected the Pharaoh.

WHEN GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM EGYPT

Exodus 7:14 – 11:10

The Ten Deities of Egypt and The Ten Plagues sent by God

Hapi – god of the Nile, the water bearer. But God caused the water to change to blood; fish died, the river stank.

Heket – goddess of fertility, water, renewal. But God caused frogs to come from the Nile, affecting all Egyptians.

Geb – god of the earth, over the dust of the earth. But God caused the dust to become lice on man and beast.

Khepri – god of creation and movement of the sun. But God brought swarms of flies everywhere, corrupting everything.

Hathor – goddess of love Pestilence; and protection. But God brought a pestilence, resulting in the death of cattle and livestock.

Isis – goddess of medicine and peace. But God caused the furnace ashes to become boils on people and beast.

Nut – goddess of the sky and physical heavenly activity. But God brought destructive rain, thunder, and hail in the form of fire.

Seth – god of storms and atmospheric disorders. But God send locusts sent from the sky, resulting in plant destruction.

Ra – the sun god, bringing daily light and warmth. But God caused darkness to cover all Egypt; no sunlight for three days

Pharaoh – ultimate power god; believed to be Ra incarnate. But God brought the death of firstborn of people and animals, just as He said He would.

The finer details of the ten plagues are included in the Scripture cited above, Exodus 7:14-11:10. I trust you will read that passage and fix the issues in your mind. What is important at this point, is that in each of the plagues sent by the Lord God through His servants Moses and Aaron, the focus was on proving to the Pharaoh and the Egyptian people that their deity system was faulty to the point of being totally false, foolish, and utterly futile. The initial confrontation of Moses and the Pharaoh brings this into focus. The Lord told Moses to say to the Pharaoh concerning the forthcoming plagues: “By this you will know that I am the LORD.” (Exodus 7:17; TNIV) Yes! This is the key to this Devotional!

Obviously the Pharaoh was NOT a good “listener.” He replied to Moses’ instructions through several different responses.

1. His first attempt was to show that his “religious system” was as great or greater than that of the God of Israel. He had so-called “magicians” who had some kind of demonic power that enabled them to counterfeit the first two plagues sent by the Lord God.
2. Through the first two plagues, the Pharaoh was blatantly opposed to any consideration being given for the Israelites to leave Egypt. He continued to harden his heart against God.
3. When his so-called magicians could no longer compete with the power of God through Moses and Aaron, they gave up. It may appear that there is a tiny window of break-through after the second plague. Since he obviously didn’t like the frogs, the Pharaoh “seemingly” relented concerning total opposition to the Israelites leaving, and the Biblical record declares: “Do it tomorrow,’ the king replied.” (Exodus 8:10; TNIV) That was nothing but a delay tactic! My, how he would regret that foolish tactic! The Pharaoh continued his unwillingness to let the Israelites leave Egypt.
4. The Pharaoh kept hardening his heart against God. As the waves of destruction kept coming, the heart of Pharaoh became increasingly hardened against God. This continued to the point that the heathen magicians of Pharaoh’s reign could not compete with the power of God. There are some serious lessons that can be learned from these interchanges between Moses and Aaron on the part of the Israelites, and the Pharaoh of Egypt on the part the Egyptian Empire
5. As things grew more difficult for the Pharaoh and his people, he began to offer some compromises. (a) “Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land.” (Exodus 8:25; TNIV) (b) After Moses refused this compromise, the Pharaoh said “I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the wilderness, but you must not go very far.” (Exodus 8L28; TNIV) (c) After several more plagues, and in response to Moses’ word that every member of the families of the people of Israel were to go, the Pharaoh tried another compromise and said: “No! Have only the men go and worship the LORD, since that’s what you have been asking for.” (Exodus 10:11;

TNIV) Moses could not accept that compromise, and the result was the plague of locusts. (d) The Pharaoh's next compromise was "Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind." (Exodus 10:24; TNIV) Moses' very plain response is thrilling: "Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind." (Exodus 10:26; TNIV) I like that! But, let's look at the application to our day of those four compromises. Yes, we hear them, don't we? It is too easy to "play fast and loose with sin!" It is too easy to "look religious" when God is to be worshipped out of pure hearts with a single desire to glorify Him.

(a) Worship God while enjoying the so-called pleasures of sin! Don't miss out on many of life's enjoyable experiences ... they are not necessarily sinful! There are no "absolutes" when it comes to life's experiences! Enjoy the pleasures of sin. You evangelicals are too rigid and legalistic!

(b) Worship God, but stay close to the pleasantries of sinning. It is OK to take some breaks from some of life's experiences that "others" have designated as "sinful." Make up your own mind on these.

(c) Worship God, but let society teach and train your children. They must have the right to make up their own minds. Let us have them in those early years, and we will help them in their decisions.

(d) Worship God, but save your money. Keep it for yourself and your family. You earned it, so now enjoy it. Besides, it seems all the church asks for is our money.

At all costs, avoid these! There is absolutely no compromising with God. He gave His all, and He requires our all! Jesus Christ is still the ONLY "way, truth, and life." It is still true, and forever will be true, that NO ONE comes to God except through Jesus. No religious theory, plan, or organization can effect or provide for our redemption from sin. It is now, always, and forever through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Now, in conclusion, let's learn some lessons easily acquired through this great Old Testament account of how God provided for His people.

1. God has clearly established His intentions for His people. How these may be thought of by any person or groups of persons, and even those who believe in His mercy, grace, love, and presence in their lives, cannot change what He has already established and for which He has made full and adequate provision. Again, there is absolutely NO compromising nor bargaining with God.

2. God has made His intentions, plans, and methods known in a document we know as the Bible, the Word of God. The argument, "I just don't understand the Bible" is not acceptable. Read it carefully and prayerfully, seek the help of the Holy Spirit for understanding and enabling grace to follow God's will in obedience.

3. Moses made it clear, and even the Pharaoh acknowledged it. They were to sacrifice in the wilderness, and for this their flocks were necessary. As the sacrifice in the wilderness was through the shed blood of the lambs, the most wonderful truth of all, is that God has provided for our redemption through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus the Christ. (See John 1:29) Salvation from sin, a clean heart before God, living a redeemed life of victory over sin, enjoying His grace, love, mercy, peace, consolation, and promises. This is ours through the shed blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

God has made it very clear. It is TODAY, not TOMORROW! "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2)

Recall that great hymn of the Church? Sing it in thanksgiving to God for His powerful deliverance from sin, its guilt and its power. The lyrics for this hymn were written in 1912 by Civilla D. Martin, and at the same time the musical score was composed by W. Stillman Martin.

THE BLOOD WILL NEVER LOSE ITS POWER

1. The blood that Jesus shed for me, as my Redeemer upon the tree;
The blood that setteth the pris'ner free will never lose its pow'r.

CHORUS after each verse:

It will never lose its pow'r – it will never lose its pow'r.

The blood that cleanses from all sin will never lose its pow'r.

2. It gives us access to God on high; from far-off places it brings us nigh
To precious blessings that never die. It will never lose its pow'r.

3. It is a shelter for rich and poor; it is to heaven the open door.
The sinner's merit forever more. It will never lose its pow'r.

4. And when with all the blood-washed throng we sing in glory
redemption's song

We'll pass the glorious truth along; It has never lost its pow'r.