

Did Pharaoh Let Israel
Leave Egypt?

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

There continues to be uncertainty in the minds of some as to how Israel was finally able to leave Egypt where they were slaves. Let's see if the Bible allows us to come to a definite answer to this question.

Preamble

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression "Holy Ghost" used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 **[Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but o to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [\[God’s Son\]](#) might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [\[the glorified Christ\]](#) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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This is a question that has proven difficult to resolve as there are many Scriptures where God tells Moses that despite sending plagues upon Egypt, Pharaoh would not let Israel go free. And, there are many verses, where it is said Pharaoh let Israel go. So, how can we come to a definite conclusion as to whether Pharaoh finally let Israel leave Egypt or did Israel at the opportune moment, flee from Egypt i.e., they left without Pharaoh's permission?

Let's see what the Bible tells us about the matter.

In coming to a conclusion about what really happened we have to fully rely upon the Bible to give us our answer and refrain from attaching too much value to the writings of scholarly but unconverted men such as are found in bible commentaries, lexicons, and other books written by men about the Bible.

Let's examine carefully and fully all the verses relating to how Israel finally was able to leave Egypt.

Before the plagues started to come upon Egypt, Moses asked for Israel to go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice unto the Lord.

Exo 5:3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

God then demonstrated His power to Pharaoh by having Aaron's rod become a serpent. The Pharaoh's magician did the same thing, their rods turned into serpents but they were swallowed up by Aaron's rod.

Exo 7:8 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Exo 7:9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent.

Exo 7:10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Exo 7:11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Exo 7:12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

Exo 7:13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

After that incident, the plagues started to come upon Egypt.

God's Plan to Deliver Israel

Let's do a broad survey of Pharaoh's behavior whenever the plagues struck Egypt but first, let's go back to the very beginning when God told Moses how He would proceed to free Israel from Egypt.

Exo 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

Exo 7:2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

Exo 7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

Exo 7:4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.

Exo 7:5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

God's plan is to harden Pharaoh's heart (make him stubborn) so that He can multiply His signs and wonders (the progressively more destructive plagues that He will send) in the land of Egypt (Ex 7:3). But, God says that Pharaoh will not agree to let Israel go because of the plagues (the signs and wonders) (Ex 7:3-4).

God also says that Israel will leave Egypt because of His stretching out His hand over Egypt and Him bringing out the children of Israel from among them (last part of Ex 7:5). Israel's departure from Egypt will not be because of Pharaoh deciding to let them leave (Ex 7:5). But, let's continue our review before coming to a final conclusion.

Pharaoh's Reaction to the Plagues

As we go through the plagues that God sent upon Egypt we will notice a repetitive pattern of behavior on the part of the Pharaoh to each plague. He does not want to let Israel leave Egypt once the plague is removed from Egypt. Let's go through each of the plagues and note Pharaoh's reaction to them.

THE FIRST PLAGUE

In the first plague the water is turned into blood i.e., it becomes poisonous to the fish who will die and the water will stink so much the Egyptians will not want to drink it.

Exo 7:18 And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river.

This plague lasted 7 days (Ex 7:25).

What did Pharaoh then do?

Exo 7:21 And the fish that *was* in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the

river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

Exo 7:22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

Pharaoh's heart was hardened by God (Ex 7:3) and he did not let Israel leave Egypt.

THE SECOND PLAGUE

The second plague was one where a great number of frogs would leave the river and be found everywhere in the houses of the Egyptians.

Exo 8:3 And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs:

What did Pharaoh then do?

He asks for Moses to have God end the plague and tells him that if He does, he will then let the people go.

Exo 8:8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

Exo 8:9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only?

Moses then cried unto the Lord and the frogs died out of the houses, villages and fields.

Exo 8:12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

Exo 8:13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

What did Pharaoh then do?

Exo 8:15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

God says He is the one causing Pharaoh to harden his heart (Ex 7:3) so that He could then multiply signs and wonders (Ex 7:3) and so that He could bring out Israel out of the Land of Egypt (Ex 7:5).

THE THIRD PLAGUE

Exo 8:16 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.

Exo 8:19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

THE FOURTH PLAGUE

Exo 8:20 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Exo 8:21 Else, if thou wilt 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*.

What was Pharaoh's initial reaction?

Exo 8:25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

What was his final reaction?

Exo 8:30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD.

Exo 8:31 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.

Exo 8:32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

THE FIFTH PLAGUE

Exo 9:1 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Exo 9:2 For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still,

Exo 9:3 Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.

Exo 9:6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.

What was Pharaoh's reaction?

Exo 9:7 And Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

THE SIXTH PLAGUE

Exo 9:8 And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

Exo 9:9 And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

What was Pharaoh's reaction?

Exo 9:12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

THE SEVENTH PLAGUE

Exo 9:13 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Exo 9:14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

Exo 9:18 Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now.

Exo 9:24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

Exo 9:25 And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

Exo 9:26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail.

What was Pharaoh's initial reaction?

Exo 9:27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked.

Exo 9:28 Intreat the LORD (for *it is* enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

What was Pharaoh's final reaction?

Exo 9:34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

Exo 9:35 And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

THE EIGHT PLAGUE

Exo 10:4 Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast:

Exo 10:5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field:

Exo 10:6 And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

What was Pharaoh's servants' reaction?

Exo 10:7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?

They had had enough and wanted Israel gone from Egypt telling Pharaoh: ".....knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? " Do you still not realize that Egypt has been destroyed by the plagues that have already come upon it?

What was Pharaoh's reaction to his servants?

Exo 10:8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: *but* who *are* they that shall go?

Exo 10:9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD.

Exo 10:10 And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you.

Pharaoh warns Moses he had better accept his offer as if he didn't, evil

was before him i.e., Pharaoh was about to do something bad to Moses.

Exo 10:11 Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

And in Ex 10:11 Pharaoh adds they could also take the men as well as the children (Ex 10:10) but that was not what God through Moses wanted Pharaoh to do; their herds and flocks were also to leave with them so, the eight plague came upon Egypt. Pharaoh was getting impatient with Moses and Aaron; he was starting to have had enough of plagues and of their demands. The last part of Ex 10:11 tells us that Moses and Aaron were driven out of his presence; in other words, he threw them out.

Exo 10:13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night; *and* when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

Exo 10:14 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.

Exo 10:15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

What was Pharaoh's reaction to the plague?

Exo 10:16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.

Exo 10:17 Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

What did **God do to Pharaoh** once the plague stopped?

Exo 10:20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he

would not let the children of Israel go.

THE NINTH PLAGUE

This time, the 9th plague came upon Egypt without the Lord having Moses go to see Pharaoh to tell him He was sending another plague.

Exo 10:21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.

Exo 10:22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:

What was Pharaoh's initial reaction?

Exo 10:24 And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.

Exo 10:25 And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God.

Pharaoh again tried to make a deal with Moses that gave him less than what God wanted but Moses refused it: Israel could go but had to leave their flocks and herds in Egypt. Also by not allowing Israel to take their herds and flocks with them, it would be an inducement for Israel to come back to Egypt after having spent time in the desert worshipping God.

And what did God do to Pharaoh?

Exo 10:27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

And this time, Pharaoh was even angrier than the last time and told Moses to get out and be careful for him (Moses) not to see his (Pharaoh's) face again for if he does, he will die. He had completely run out of patience and could no longer tolerate Moses' demands.

Exo 10:28 And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, *see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die.*

Exo 10:29 And Moses said, **Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.**

Moses tells Pharaoh that he has spoken correctly; he will not again see his (Moses') face again. Basically, the time for Moses making requests of Pharaoh and of Pharaoh trying to make deals with him that did not give Moses what he wanted was over. There would be no more meetings or deal making.

THE TENTH PLAGUE

Exo 11:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

The Lord tells Moses that He will bring one last plague upon Pharaoh and Egypt after which, Pharaoh will let Israel leave Egypt; even, he will throw them all out of Egypt. Usually, Pharaoh tried to make some kind of deal with Moses that gave him less than what he wanted but after this last plague, Pharaoh's first reaction will be to let Israel leave Egypt with their families, flocks and herds but has happened so many times before, he will, after a while, change his mind and want Israel back in Egypt. That's why God told Moses, that Pharaoh would not hearken (listen) to him (Ex 11:9), that though his first reaction would be to let them leave he would not maintain his decision. This time Moses did not go to see Pharaoh to tell him that another plague from God was coming upon him and Egypt or what that plague would be.

Exo 11:9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

Exo 11:10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

The Heart of the Dilemma

Ex 11:1; 9-10 summarize well the difficulty we have in determining whether Pharaoh let Israel go out of Egypt or not.

In Ex 11:1, God tells Moses that after the final plague He will bring upon Pharaoh and Egypt that Pharaoh will let Israel go; even throw them out of Egypt altogether.

In Ex 11:9, God tells Moses that Pharaoh will not hearken unto him i.e., Pharaoh will not agree to let Israel go as he has been asking him to do. The reason why he will not let Israel go despite the severity of the plagues on Egypt is so that God each time will harden Pharaoh's heart in order to demonstrate his power, that it is mightier than Pharaoh's.

In other words, Pharaoh will let Israel go but he will change his mind after as he has been doing all along which will allow God to further demonstrate his power (the column of clouds and the column of fire; the opening of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's armies).

In Ex 11:10, the Bible says Moses and Aaron did all these wonders (the plagues) before Pharaoh but the Lord hardened his heart so that he would not let Israel go out of Egypt.

So, did Pharaoh let go Israel out of Egypt or not?

The Answer

After the 9th plague, Pharaoh refused to let Israel go as requested by Moses and he told him to never come back to see him or he would die. The time for bargaining and negotiations were over; he would not let Israel leave Egypt.

The 10th plague came unannounced upon Pharaoh and Egypt the night of the Passover. That night Pharaoh called for Moses wanting the plague to stop not knowing who and how many were to die. Moses had not told him what would be this latest plague and what would be its effect on Egypt. And as he had done several times before, Pharaoh changed his mind about letting Israel go when he was struck by the different plagues. Before, he would always want to make some deal where Moses would not fully get what he was asking as a means of ensuring Israel would come back to Egypt but this time, he was willing to give them everything Moses had asked for (Ex 12:31-32).

Exo 12:29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

Exo 12:30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

Exo 12:31 And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, *and* get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

Exo 12:32 Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

At that time, Pharaoh, finally did decide to let Israel leave Egypt with their children, their flocks and their herds without trying to make any deals that gave Moses less than what he wanted and leaving some of their possessions behind in Egypt as an inducement for them to come back after having worshipped God in the desert. These deals had been unacceptable to Moses and more plagues had come upon Egypt; however, Pharaoh's decision to finally let Israel go is not the reason why Moses went out of Egypt with Israel.

Moses never went back to see Pharaoh and was not aware of Pharaoh's latest change of mind if we go by what the Bible actually says.

God had told Moses that after the 10th plague, Pharaoh would not only let Israel go out of Egypt, he would throw them out altogether (Ex 11:1). Moses on God's instructions, on the morning of the 14th of Abib, on the day part of the Passover (the days start at the setting of the sun) at sun up, had Israel proceed to spoil the Egyptians (Ex 12:35). God gave them favor in the eyes of the Egyptians (Ex 12:36) so they would give them what they needed to travel.

Exo 12:35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

Exo 12:36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

At the beginning of the 15th of Abib, at twilight, Israel went out of Egypt.

Num 33:3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

Num 33:4 For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

Pharaoh finally decided to let Israel go as the Scriptures say; he let them go, that night, when the firstborn of men and beast in Egypt died. That is very true but that was not a final decision that was firm and which could not be changed, God knew he would change it, that's why He told Moses, Pharaoh would not listen to him. Moses never saw Pharaoh again (Ex 10:28-29) and he never knew of Pharaoh's decision if we go by what the Bible actually says. There is no indication whatsoever in the Bible that Moses ever knew of Pharaoh's decision to let Israel go during the night of the Passover.

Israel left Egypt because God told Moses that after the 10th plague Pharaoh would let Israel go and; that He, God, would give Israel favor in the eyes of the Egyptians (Ex 11:3; 12:36) so they could have what they needed to travel. Moses and Israel left Egypt on God's instructions (Ex 11:1; 9-10) not Pharaoh's whom Moses never saw again (Ex 10:28-29). God told Moses that following the 10th plague Pharaoh would let Israel go and so immediately on the day portion of the Passover, Israel spoiled the Egyptians and got ready to travel out of Egypt; they left in haste i.e., as fast as they could (Ex 12:39; see Deu 16:3 below) at the beginning of the 15th day at twilight when the 14th day had ended (Num33:3).

Deu 16:3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt **in haste**: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

And as happened several times before and as God had told Moses, Pharaoh would change his mind because He, God hardened his heart i.e., made him stubborn (Ex 14:4;8). God knew Pharaoh would change his mind and this is why Israel left in haste from Egypt before Pharaoh changed his mind as God knew he would. And so it is that when after a few days it was told him that Israel had left Egypt, he took off after Israel to bring them back to Egypt. He had changed his mind as God had said to Moses that he would. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex14:4) so that He would not let Israel go.

Exo 14:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Exo 14:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

Exo 14:3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They *are* entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

Exo 14:4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.

Exo 14:5 And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

Exo 14:6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him:

Exo 14:7 And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

Exo 14:8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

So, Pharaoh did make an initial decision to let Israel go from Egypt in the night that the angel of death passed over Egypt killing the firstborn of man and beast then, a few days after Israel's departure he had a change of heart (God hardened his heart; made him stubborn) (Ex 14:8) and he took off after Israel to bring it back to Egypt.

God said Pharaoh as a first reaction to the last plague would make the decision let Israel go and He also said that Pharaoh would not let Israel go because He would harden his heart.

Both statements are true as we have just seen. And, as we have just seen, Israel left Egypt because, God told Moses, Israel could do so after the 10th plague and that He would give Israel favor in the eyes of the Egyptians so that Israel could borrow from them what they needed to travel out of Egypt. Ultimately, Israel was brought out of Egypt by the strength of the hand of the LORD.

Exo 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, **By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:**

Israel did not leave Egypt because Pharaoh for a time decided to let them go.

Conclusion

The way the Scriptures are written, it makes it not an easy task to clearly see what actually happened so that Israel could leave Egypt.

It is true that Pharaoh for a time made the decision to let Israel leave Egypt and in that sense, He did let them go but it was not the reason why Israel finally left Egypt. Moses never saw Pharaoh again after his last meeting with him after the 9th plague and would not have known about Pharaoh's decision if we stick to what the Bible actually says and not make suppositions about how Moses could have come to know about Pharaoh's decision. There are no Bible verses that allow us to do that and any supposition that Pharaoh somehow made his decision known to Moses is totally unsupported by the Bible.

It is God who told Moses that Israel could leave Egypt after the 10th plague (Ex 11:1) and this is why Israel made preparations to leave Egypt on the day part of the Passover. No such action had been taken after any of the other plagues. It is only after God told Moses that after the 10th plague, Israel could leave Egypt that such preparations were made.

Pharaoh did for a time make the decision to let Israel go (Moses never knew of his decision) and then sought to get them back after God hardened his heart one last time. God had told Moses that Pharaoh would change his mind again and not want Israel to leave Egypt as he had done so many times before because He hardened his heart. God was in control all along; He brought Israel out of Egypt.

Moses instructed Israel to leave Egypt pursuant to God telling him to do so (Ex 11:1; Ex 12:35-36; Num 33:3-4) and God says it was by his power that Israel left Egypt (Ex 13:14). And it was.

Israel finally came fully out of Egypt when Pharaoh and his armies drowned in the Red Sea when they tried to follow Israel as it walked through the sea God had parted for them so they could escape the Egyptians. The water closed in on them and they all drowned.

God freed Israel from its slavery in Egypt.

God Hardening Pharaoh's Heart

One last thing that bears examination is the question of God hardening Pharaoh's heart or making him stubborn for the purpose of making it possible for Him to demonstrate His superior power.

There are many who try to explain away the idea that God would pur-

posefully intervene to make Pharaoh so stubborn that he would allow his country to be destroyed by the plagues which progressively increased in severity rather than let Israel leave Egypt. They believe that God is a being of infinite love who would never use His power in such a way as to harm human beings; He would only use it to do good to human beings and to them it does not make any sense that God would make Pharaoh stubborn and have him engage in a battle of will with Him that he was sure to lose.

However, God has intervened in the affairs of men in the past as needed to ensure His plan of salvation is carried out as written in the Holy Bible and as He has devised it. In OT times, He has intervened to give the physical nation of Israel victory over its enemies, to punish Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to punish ancient Israel when it sinned, and in the deluge to drown all of mankind except Noah and his family. In our own future, God will intervene massively in the affairs of men during the Day of the Lord causing the death of a very large number of individuals and very large scale destruction of the environment and of the great cities and nations of the world. In the Great White Throne Judgment, the wicked will die the second death in the Lake of Fire; their existence will be forever ended with no possibility of ever again being made alive by a resurrection from the dead.

God told Moses and Aaron how He would proceed to free Israel from Egypt. He would harden Pharaoh's heart so that despite all the miraculous plague that were to come upon his country and which would basically destroy it, Pharaoh would not let Israel go.

Exo 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

Exo 7:2 Thou shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

Exo 7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

Exo 7:4 But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments.

Israel would leave Egypt by the power of God and not as a result of Pharaoh for a time making the decision they could leave Egypt; a decision he did not maintain after the last plague any more than he had when the

other 9 plagues struck Egypt and this, because God hardened his heart.

Exo 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, **By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:**

