



Gospel Lessons from the Old Testament - Part 3

The Preparation of Moses

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Thank you. It's good to still be kicking and thanks for praying through all of that. I did contract COVID confirmed twice and yeah, and it beat me up. But I know many of you have been through it and we're grateful for God's grace in it. I'm grateful to quit shaving for two weeks, that was nice. Then it just gets too hard, right, guys? At some point it's like, forget it. It's going to be a hassle at this point. But yeah, keep praying, as some of you know who've been through this, it comes in waves and you think you're through it and then you're not through it and it beats you up on a variety of levels. I think I had a pretty moderate case, but thank you for praying and it's good to be here to open God's word.

I have enjoyed this study of Acts Chapter 7 that we're in the middle of. As I told you at the outset, there are three balls that we are juggling in looking at Steven responding to the same group of people, the Sanhedrin who condemned Christ to death and handed him over to the Romans, and also his pastor had been there, too, Peter, of course, hauled in before the court. Now Steven is here trying to respond to the accusation that he's blaspheming against God and he's blaspheming against Moses and against this place. Remember all that from Chapter 6, right there in verse 11. They instigated witnesses who are saying that.

So Steven starts this longest recorded response to that or any recorded response in Acts to that accusation. He's giving us, as a lot of people say, a history lesson, which it seems like it's obfuscating a lot of what is being accused. But there's a masterful response in ball number one in saying I'm giving you an answer to what you're saying regarding why Christians are not wrong. We're not wrong in following Christ. We're right in following Christ, even though it doesn't seem to fit clearly into your expectation of what God would do at this point.

Then, of course, there's an Old Testament story that we learn. As First Corinthians 10 says, we have a lot to learn from the lessons of the Old Testament saints, and we should learn them. We shouldn't minimize that. And then, of course, the Christological truths. How do these characters, whether it's Abraham that we started with or Joseph that we dealt with last time or today, Moses, how does that give us a sense of the fulfillment of God's work in Christ? Christ, the ultimate deliverer, the ultimate Abraham, the ultimate Joseph, the ultimate Moses.

So those are the things to keep in mind. But as I studied this passage this week, I thought what we really, I think, need to camp on today is what the contrast of how Stephen is so different than the Sanhedrin and has such a different response not only to the truth of what God is doing in redemptive history, but even what's happening here. The Sanhedrin and the Jewish leaders are angry and they're hostile and they're about to commit murder. They're about to stone this guy to death. We got Stephen here standing up for the truth, following the truth where it leads, responding rightly to biblical scriptures and then dying with courage and peace.



We recognize they're in two different places. They both claim to be right with God, but they are in two different demonstrations of that. They have expressions of that that are radically different. I thought that's such a good lesson for us to think through as we sit here today as Christians saying that we have a relationship with God. The Sanhedrin would say they have a relationship with God. Steven would say he has a relationship with God. Peter would say he has a relationship with God. But they are demonstrating that in such different ways. Not only as to how they deal with the truth of what the Bible said would happen, the coming of Christ and the Jewish leaders were rejecting that. But how they demonstrated their relationship with God. How they lived that, the fruit of all of that.

Put it this way, I was thinking of Proverbs Chapter 25 that speaks of our friendships. It says that if you're trusting in someone who's not trustworthy, then it's like having a wiggly tooth or, you know, a sprained ankle to modernize that. You need teeth to be reliable. If you're going to bite down on something you don't want wiggly teeth. You've got to trust on them, trust in them. You have to rely on them. If you stand up out of a chair, you don't want your ankles to fold underneath you. You need reliability. You need to trust this person.

In other words, you don't have much of a friendship with anyone if you don't trust them. The extent to which you trust them, I assume, you have at least the context for a good relationship. And for me to say, "Do you trust God this morning," if you're a confessing Christian, you say, "Of course I trust God." But I know some of you don't trust God very well. You trust him in some creedal way, some categorical way. But you don't trust him in a practical way, because I can see it by your life, and I see it in my own life as well. And that are the indicators that I don't really believe God. I don't trust God.

There are symptoms of that. Right? Even the anger of the Sanhedrin toward what God is doing, they don't like it. There are a lot of things in your life that you don't like. I recognize that those things are expressed in criticism, outbursts of anger, frustration, short temper. Then I look at the things that God says and you know that you say I believe categorically that God is there, that he's revealed himself, the truth of God's word is before me, I'm supposed to live as a Christian. And yet maybe it's a prayerless life. It's an anxious life. It's a worried life. It's a life of not even being drawn to his word this morning or yesterday or this week.

You don't have a close relationship with God. You say you do or you'd like to think you do but the evidence of that is in your life clearly defying that confession. And it's everywhere in between. Right? There is a spectrum here. Even that phrase we quoted last time, "If you draw near to God, he'll draw near to you," that there's a spectrum of where you are on that. Some of you are not anywhere close to where you'd like to be. You don't have trust in God the way that you ought to have trust in God and it's evident by your life. All I'm saying is the challenge of expressing that, I think it's not only illustrated in the distinction between the Sanhedrin and Stephen and the Sanhedrin and Peter, but it's also seen in the story that he's now shifting to, and that is of Moses and the enslaving Egyptians.

We've gone through two characters, Abraham and now lastly we had Joseph. Now I want to get you to look at this text with that very circuitous introduction and have you look at Acts



Chapter 7 verses 17 through 22, and to have us think through how this becomes a paradigm for many things that might challenge and test our Christian life, that we might leave here today with a little better understanding of where the target should be, the goal should be for me to improve this thing I claim to have, a relationship with God.

So take a look at your Bibles don't look at my face or my beard. Look at your Bibles. That's why we're here to study God's word, Compass Bible Church, and take a look at verse 17 of Acts Chapter 7. Glance back up to verse 11 of Chapter 6, you'll remember the accusation against Stephen and now he's going to enlist Moses, of course positively, as an example. You'll see there, if you glance through all of this, starting in verse 17, all these verses about Moses.

We're only are going to be able to deal with his life in three... We can't do it in one sermon, we could, I suppose, but we're going to do it in three sermons. So we have a little mini-series within a series. I don't remember how many sermons this is, eight or ten, whatever. And in the middle of this there are three. And nicely, it breaks down into 40-year segments if you know this, you've been a Sunday school. We've got Moses' life in the first 40 years and Moses' life in the second 40 years and Moses' life in the last 40 years.

First 40 years he grows up in Egypt, second 40 years he's working for his father-in-law in the desert. That's not a good season of life. And then the last 40 years, he's doing all the stuff in the exodus, the wilderness wanderings, the showdown with Pharaoh and leading the people right up to the front door of the Promised Land. So we're going to get those in three segments, but we're going deal with the first one, verses 17 to 22, and try and understand the preparation of Moses for this deliverance. I'll have no problem making somewhat you might claim are moralistic connections to how Moses is prepared for this and you ought to be prepared for some things that God wants to use in your life. We'll get to that.

But let's read it with commentary. And I'm in the COVID fog, as you can already tell. So I'll be giving more commentary, perhaps, than you are happy with. But let's read through the text together and allow me a little extra grace this morning.

Verse 17. "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham." I don't like that translation, "granted." He'd given the promise to him, right? He didn't fulfill it. Granted, it seems like it's fulfilled, it's not fulfilled yet. That was a whole point to the Abraham segment, right? He didn't fulfill it. He promised them a land, pulled them out of the Mesopotamian Babylonian crescent there. He brings him into a land where he's a sojourner. He doesn't get the land.

"The people increased and multiplied in Egypt." Now, my question, I suppose, for you, if you're thinking, a thinking Christian, you look at that and say, "the time of the promised drew near." The time of what? "The promise drew near." What part of the promise is going to be fulfilled? You've got to think back to the Abrahamic covenant, parts to the covenant. The covenant, first of all, is Abraham, "You don't have any kids, but you're going to have a big family come from you. You're going to have this big nation." So he doesn't have any kids and



we've got to grow the population. And then he says, "You're going to be brought to a land I'm going to put you in." So there's the land part of it. "I'm going to make your name great. You're going to a great person and renowned," and then, "You're going to bless the whole earth." Through somehow what I'm going to do through you, "All the nations of the earth will be blessed."

So these segments of the promise, my question is, which part of the promise is drawing near to be fulfilled? And you look at the passage and you go, "Well, they're increasing in number." Well, that's incremental. So I guess that's being fulfilled a little at a time, right? Are you following this? OK, that's true. But what part do you think he has in mind here? Well, the part is the conquest of the land, it would seem, because he's a sojourner. When are they going to own the land and settle the land and kick out these people who are killing their babies in Canaan and replace them with a righteous society, a much more righteous, at least relatively speaking? Well, that's going to happen when Joshua leads them in. So we're getting nearer to that.

So we had, you know, 2000 B.C, Abraham and the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, that whole period of time, and now we get to a place where 400 years later, we're going to raise up Moses, we're going to get out of Egypt, they're out of the Promised Land, and then they're going to settle in the Promised Land. So we're almost to the land part of the promise. So "As the time of the promise drew near," the fulfillment of that part, which God had promised to Abraham, "the people increased and multiplied." So it's incrementally growing in population. Right?

Now we're going to get to the land. Now what were the circumstances, verse 18, "until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph," probably the 18th dynasty in Egypt. They had a change of regime and leadership. The dynasties rolled over. And when you had that, it's not they didn't know the history of Egypt. Of course they knew Joseph because Joseph, you know, saved the country. I mean, they like to downplay it because he's an outsider, but the idea of remembering him, that wasn't the point. The point was, "We don't care," just like a lot of things in our country right now, we look back, we don't care about that. And if the country decides not to care about that, well then it doesn't matter and you have no advantage based on the past. So we're not going to favor you anymore and they didn't favor them anymore.

Matter of fact, the new pharaoh had to, verse 19, "deal shrewdly," which is one way to put it, treacherously, "with our race," which is a bad translation. I never liked that translation, "Genos" it means. There's only one race. You know that, right? One race of people. Do you realize that? The human race. But this ethnicity, the Israelites, "He dealt shrewdly with the Israelites and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive." Now, we just read it in the Daily Bible Reading in Exodus, the people began to grow.

Now, we got a lot of people in Israel. You are the political leadership. You see you have a foreign entity that grows and grows and grows and grows and grows and prospers. You're increasingly shrewdly, if you want to put it that way, subjugating them to the advantage of



your society. But they're so big. They're so strong. You have to say we've got a problem. If we get hit with an outside enemy here, we have a perhaps disloyal group within our ranks. We're going to have to limit them. So they start the infanticide of killing their infants. And you know this from the Bible story in Exodus Chapter 1. So they start killing the babies, which is horrific, like our society loves to do. And we have a horrible thing taking place. And you can see why they're crying out to God for a lot of things, the enslavement and the killing of their children, and so they were going to expose their babes. They feel better sometimes being passive in their killing, although our culture is very active in the killing of our infants.

Verse 20, "At this time Moses was born," which is a great line. It reminds me of Galatians 4:4 when God sends a deliverer, it is at the right time, at the proper time, at the "fullness of time" Christ was sent. Now this is the right time according to God, which again is going to speak to something I want to emphasize this morning, the providence of God, the sovereignty of God, the right time. God says now's the time. I'm going to change some things up here in redemptive history.

"And he was beautiful in God's sight." So, you know, how chubby do babies need to be for God? I mean, what does that mean? Do you think it has to do with how he looks? While in Exodus 1 there are statements about how Moses looks, and there's a lot of extra writings about, wow, Moses must have been this amazing looking baby, and this amazing looking person. All kinds of weird stories about all that. But I don't think that's really, if you think about it, what this means. The idea is, though he was an attractive child and it may have caught the attention of more than his parents, the idea is that God said, "This is it. My favor here, I found this person." There's much more, of course, because we know "Man looks at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart." We know that. So there's something deeper here about God saying this is the man, this is who I've chosen and God chooses who he chooses and he chooses Moses and says, "So this is it. My favor here. This is beautiful. It's right." This word has greater implications than just, you know, what the shape of his cheeks were.

"And he was brought up for three months in his father's house," and you know the story, right? They're supposed to be killing these children, but he's brought up in his own home. But then he's put out there in the bulrushes of the Nile, very carefully done. He's got two older siblings at this point that we know of, Miriam and Aaron, and they scheme this whole thing. Miriam, probably a preteen, Aaron three years older and they set the baby out there. The Pharaoh comes down. And if the dynasties are all right, this probably was Pharaoh's daughter who was infertile, did not have children, ends up finding this child. And all of this works out to where he ends up getting adopted, as it says here, and raised it says in verse 21. When he was out there in the Nile, "Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son," which is a crazy turn of events.

Again, much like the timing of Moses' birth, the circumstances of Moses' upbringing were incredible. Verse 22, "And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds." And that was how God set this up. The man who's going to write the first five books of the Bible was the best-educated person in all of Israel because he was adopted into the university system as the child of the Pharaoh, the adopted child of



Pharaoh and Pharaoh's daughter, and was perfectly positioned for this. So God in his providence set this all up.

Which, by the way, if you know your Bible and you think, "What about the burning bush? When the angel of the Lord comes to Moses and speaks and says, "Come and go talk to Pharaoh." What did he say about his speaking skills? Do you remember Sunday school grads? We say, "I'm good for that. I got an A in my rhetoric class or my speech class." No, he says, "I can't do it." He's an interesting Hebrew idiom. "I have uncircumcised lips." Right? I just can't talk. So who's right? God's right, of course, he could talk and that was an excuse. I would venture to say you probably shouldn't be using excuses with God when you want to get out of things. Which is, by the way, why God immediately says in that passage, well not immediately, but a couple of verses later, "The anger of the Lord burned against Moses." He didn't like that because, of course, he'd given him every advantage. God had prepared him and he didn't want to do it. So anyway, the truth was he was well prepared for what God had called him to do.

All right. Let's work through this and think through our own lives as we deal with this issue. Verse 17. "Time of the promise drew near." Abrahamic covenant: got to have the people, got to have the land, going to have greatness, going to bless the world in some way in the end. In many ways, the promise of God for the Church as we sit here in our own little Egypt called modern society, we have a similar kind of contrast and juxtaposition of problems. Jesus comes on the scene and the first time he uses the word church in Matthew 16, he says, "I'm going to build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." And so he's got this organization and gives all these parables about something starting small, like a seed, a mustard seed, and it grows big and all the birds dwell on the branches. He's growing this thing and much like they were growing and increasing in Egypt, that part of the promise of the Church promised to us is being fulfilled incrementally.

That's why we're all about numbers. And if you're down on numbers, you're wrong. You need to be all about numbers because God is all about numbers, because every number represents a person. That's why we care about church plantings. It's why we care about church growth. That's why we want to keep inviting people to church, that's why we want you to do evangelism, that's why we want you to do apologetics. That is what the church is about. It's about us growing this thing, making disciples of all the nations, planting churches, doing missions and seeing more and more people bow the knee to Jesus Christ. That's the point. If you don't like that, you're wrong. So you need to get right about that and you say I'm into that now because that's what the Bible says.

He's going to build his Church. And the point is we're pushing the borders of the Church and the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it. And so that's an incremental fulfillment. And we sit here, I hope, as we do, that's why we take attendance and keep track and figure out how much money we're going to spend on church planting because we want to see this growth. That's the goal. That's the point. And so we're all about that. We say, well, that's going on just like it was going on here. God is fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant in Egypt. God



is fulfilling the promise to the Church in Orange County and all over the world, more Christians being brought to Christ. That's the goal as hard as that is in Egypt.

He says a couple of chapters later, Matthew 19, speaking of, just to make some parallels, there's going to be a land. He says to these fishermen from Galilee, "When the Son of Man returns and sits on his glorious throne, you who follow me in this life will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." There's a picture of guys who are not in power to speak of by the world's standards who are going to be in massive power. They're going to "sit on twelve thrones, judging twelve tribes in Israel when the Son of Man comes and sits on his glorious throne." So there is a deliverer who is coming. We often think about Jesus already came, but he came to pay the price so that he could put this whole redemptive thing in motion and he's coming back to establish it. And so the deliverer will come.

In Egypt, the people were growing. So there's a promise fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. But then there's going to be a deliverer. We're going to go to the Promised Land. And that's the picture in the Church as well. We sit here today saying we're growing the church, growing the church, growing the church, but we're waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who's going to come back and transform the world. And as I often quote from the book of Revelation Chapter 11, "The kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever." So that's the hope. And I've said it ad infinitum. The Christian life is not about the "here and now." It's about the "then and there." We're looking forward to that fulfillment. And that's the promise. The promise is he's coming and he's going to establish his kingdom. It's going to be great. You're not going to sit on twelve folding chairs, you're going to sit on twelve thrones. It's going to be a big deal. Right? "And his glory is going to cover this earth." And that's what we're hoping in. That's the focus. That's what we're looking towards. And we rely all on that promise.

Now, the question is, and again I don't want to be too esoteric, but the question is, do you believe that? I mean, do you really believe that? I hope this is more than just, "I hope my kids don't get on drugs, so I'm going to drag them to church. And, you know, I guess it's great when I don't cuss as much and I go to church, and it's really cool when I can think about transcendent things so I go to church, and it's neat to read the history of the Bible and understand stuff my grandpa told me, I go to church." It is not about that. Right? This is about you believing there is a God. He has created you. You got a problem. He sent his Son to solve that problem. He's called you to a group of people who are about expanding the reach of the lordship of Christ. And he's coming to set up a kingdom and you're going to rule and reign with Christ. That is theology. That is what we're here for. That's what this is all about.

And you say that's what I'm all about and I believe that. And everything in my life, everything in my life comes back to my trust in that, that I believe it. And it changes everything about how I live. OK? Let me put it this way. Just like they had to believe that sitting in Egypt when they were slaves growing and seeing part of the fulfillment, but not all of the fulfillment, you need to do the same. Put it this, number one, "Patiently Wait for God's Promises." Wait for them, because we're living in an Egypt where the king does not know Joseph. Right? We live in a



world where the king does not know Jesus. Right? You live in a culture where the leaders do not care about the King of kings and Lord of lords. So you're living in Egypt and you have to say, I live in Egypt with this absolute assurance and confidence in what Jesus said was true.

And I'll just tie these together in a verse you know. How about this one? John Chapter 14 verses 1 through 3 when Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." You know these verses, right? "Believe me, believe God." Dude, he has promised you these things. "In my Father's house, many mansions," many places. I got a place, a kingdom and "a place for you" in it. "And if I go and prepare a place...", now I'm leaving now, bye. 2,000 years later, "I will come again and I will receive you unto myself, that where I am you will be also."

If all you had of the Bible were those three verses right there, it wouldn't be a lot, but it'd be enough for you to sit here and go, "OK, I get it, I am not freaking out. I live in Egypt. I don't like it. I don't like what's going on here. They don't follow our God. They don't follow our truth. They don't care about what I'm all about. But I believe what he said and therefore my heart is not troubled. I have absolute confidence in what he said."

Either you believe it or you don't. And I really believe that. I look out at you and with my COVID brain, I think to myself there are haves and have nots sitting here right now. You either are with me on this and you believe it or you're just stinking playing a game with church and God. It's one way or the other. Right? You cannot have a middle ground on this. You believe it or you don't believe it. It's either true or it's not true. And if it's true, I'm sorry, it's got to change the way that you think. It has to change the way you feel. It has to change the way that you stop worrying, you stop being anxious, you stop being prayerless, you stop being hopeless, you stop avoiding time with God. All of that doesn't make any sense if you believe his promises. Right? And I'm telling you this, everything that God has promised, it seems like his track record has been pretty darn good over the past history of reality. He's done well with all of this.

One passage with this, if I could just have you look at one cross reference, James Chapter 5, please. James Chapter 5. Look at verse 7 with me, please. This is what we need. I use the word patiently, if you wrote that down, patiently wait for God's promises. That sounds very passive and, of course, there's a lot of active things that we do in the middle of it all. But the keyword here, I just want you to see it, you've got to be patient. Some of you are not patient people. Time for us to be more patient. Verse 7, James 5:7, are you with me? "Be patient, therefore, brothers until the coming of the Lord." That, by the way, would be a good one. Put it right up on your kitchen sink. Put it right on your dashboard. That is a good summary of so much of what it is to live in Egypt. Right? And to say, OK, I'm going to be patient. "Be patient, therefore, brothers..." We're in this family. We're part of this thing "until the coming of the Lord."

You say, "Well, I don't like to wait." Well, neither do farmers, but they have to. "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it until he receives the early and the late rains." It does not all happen at once. "So also be patient." Now, here's what you



really need. Look at this great word. I love it. "Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." Well, it's sure taken a long time. It's not as though, and I often illustrate it this way, it's not like there's a train coming with your dad on it and it's a long ways across the country and taking so long to get here. That's not it. It's that dad is already in the house at the door. He's right outside the room. That's the picture.

Matter of fact, it's one of the things that should govern our attitude. Speaking of attitude, verse 9, "Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the judge is standing at the door." That's the picture. He could bust through this at any time. Right? Christ could be dispatched today. "Now, as an example of suffering and patient, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord," which I'm asking you to do. Grow this church, grow this thing called Christianity and get out there and do it, speak the truth, put up with the guff, put up with the push back, be willing to be called a Jesus freak, do these things. Right? Trust in God and do these things and be as long-suffering and as patient as those prophets were because they got into a lot of trouble for saying what they're saying. And you want to be quiet about it. You can't.

"Behold, we consider those blessed who remain steadfast." There's that great word, "Hypomeno." They remained under the pressure of hanging in there. Those Egyptians even if you think about them being so hard on those Israelites, we have to remain steadfast. Hang in there. "You've heard of the steadfastness of Job," I mean, how bad was it for Job, "and you've seen the purpose of the Lord and how the Lord is compassionate and merciful."

And so I just want to tell you today, if you really, really say you trust God, you believe God, and you feel like it'd be blasphemous to say, "Oh, I don't trust God." No, you trust God, OK. If you trust in God and you don't consider him a wobbly ankle or a loose tooth, you say, "No, I could depend on him." Well, that's going to change your attitude. It's going to change your attitude, it's going to change your grumbling, it's going to change your lack of patience. You're going to say, "I'm going to hang in there."

It's easy when it's easy, tweet that. It's easy when it's easy. But it's not always easy and for Job it wasn't easy. So patience is only really needed when it's hard. So whatever the difficulty is in you hanging in this world another year, going through another week, going through another decade, serving God, doing what's right, evangelizing, pushing forward in this thing called Christianity, we just got to be patient. "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord." Put that on your sticky note and stick it up somewhere where you can see it and say that is it, I have to trust his promise.

All right, back to our text. Acts Chapter 7 verse 19. "He," Pharaoh, "dealt shrewdly," this new 18th dynasty, whatever it was, I assume so, "our race was forced..., dealt shrewdly with our race," our genos, our group, our genetic group. "Forced our fathers to expose their infants so that they would not be kept alive." They want to kill our kids. "At this time Moses was born; he was beautiful in God's sight. He was brought up for three months in his father's house, and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son."



Look at the providence of God in that the right timing and how he got raised. All of that is the providence of God, the providence of God.

As I said, the difficulty in waiting and showing that I trust God in the midst of the difficulties is that none of it gets resolved when I want. When I got COVID, it's like I want it to go away. God, take it away. Of course, just to pray all those things. Hit your thumb with a hammer and it's like I just want the pain to go away. And when it prolongs there's the trouble, there's the tension and the problem.

And I guess there's a challenge and it's a distinction, and I want to make the distinction between you saying, "I believe God's promises and where there's going to all end well, there's this sense in which the pathway, is the pathway, right? Is this road the right one? Is the length of the road the right one? Why so long? In other words, why 400 years in Egypt? Why couldn't it be 200 years in Egypt? Why not 100 years in Egypt? Why not 10 years in Egypt? Why so long? Why so long?

Here's where you're going to have to trust not only the destination and that God is going to fulfill the destination, you're going to have to trust the pathway and the process, the providence of God's pathway. And that's going to be a different kind of challenge. Number two, let's put it this way, you need to "Fully Trust in God's Providence." There's a word we don't like to use as much as we used to. Providence. You have to know that, for instance, why did when God said, "Go tell Pharaoh to let my people go," so you can go into the Promised Land, ultimately, worship in the desert, in the wilderness. Why didn't he say, "Yes"? Matter of fact, we keep seeing not only was he a jerk, right? Pharaoh is a jerk, but then God keeps making him more and more jerky. "The Lord hardened his heart." The Lord hardened his heart. Why? What are you doing? Why are you prolonging this battle?

Well, you know how it all ends. And that ends with the ten plagues and the ten plagues end up being a manifestation of God's power, which is very rare in breaking natural law in the Bible, less than 100 times. But that happens there in a big rash with Moses. And then out of that becomes what we learn from Hebrews 2 the authentication of written revelation. So those miracles become the reason people can look at Moses' writings and say, "I know that's God's truth. It's not just one guy's best thoughts about God, it's God's thoughts on paper." And because of that, then people for the next, for us now, 3,400 years can read Genesis through Deuteronomy and go, that's the word of God.

So we know this, that all of that pain and all the protraction and all of the showdown and all of the mess and all of the death and all of the sickness and all the plagues and all the problems and all the diseases and all of the blood resulted in someone being able to quote Deuteronomy 6 and go, "I know what God says. I know what God is. I know how God acts." And so you can look at just that and it's an example. And you say, "Well, God could have done it some other way." Well, OK, great, I suppose. But God chose to do it this way and I can see the good product of it all.



It's just like Joseph being able to look at his brothers and say, "I know you meant it for evil," and it wasn't fun, it wasn't good, "but God meant it for good." That's called the providence of God, the sovereignty of God over those things. And you have to stand back and say either that's true or it's not true. Right? Either that's true or it's not true. It may be trite in your ears when you're suffering, but is it true or is it not true that "God works all things together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose?" Is that true or is that not true, that God works all things together for good, ALL things together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose?

If that's true, then it's true, then you need to act like it's true. Seriously, you need to act like it is true. And you and I don't act like it's true. And we like to say we have a good relationship with God. Well, I'm saying you don't trust God. That's what I'm trying to say to you. Right? Let me rebuke you. You don't trust God when you say I believe that, but I act like I don't believe it by my attitude and my actions and my words and my criticism, and my complaining and my hopelessness and my prayerlessness and my disobedience to God. If we believe it, then you're saying this. I know I got COVID in my case, for instance, because this is part of God's plan and there is a purpose in it and I trust it.

And I'm not just pie in the sky. "Well, you know what? Everything works out." I'm really believing the fact that everything works together for good. Right? Doesn't mean my good necessarily good. I'm not God. Right? And neither are you. It's God's good purpose and he's got a good purpose that he's going to work out through me. A lot of bad things happen to the Israelites under the Egyptian enslavement, but all of that was going to work together for good. Everything in it, all of that process was part of what God was doing.

And if you're such a kindergartner that you think that God doesn't use bad things for good, then I'm going to say, grow up. Seriously, grow up. I'm so tired of the 12-year-old theology in people's minds that, you know, if it's not kittens and butterflies, it can't be from God. Right? You understand every disaster in the world, everything. There's not a disaster that strikes a city, the Bible says, that is not decreed by God. These things are utilized by God for his good purposes. He is God. Either you believe that or you don't. If you don't believe it, then great. I don't even know why we're here. We're just a bunch of atoms floating around and banging into each other. And I don't know why we would even think of anything beyond, you know, our cosmology or our physiology.

But if there is a God and we are made in his image, then there's something beyond all of this. And we have to recognize that there is a God, he has revealed himself and here's what he says about himself. "I work everything out according to my plan," Ephesians 1, "work everything after the counsel of my will," even the stuff in your life that you don't like. Everything, everything. You either believe that or you don't. If you believe that then I'm going to say I'm going to trust fully in it. I trust in the providence of God to work me through all of these things, the detours.

Paul says in Acts 14, "Through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God." OK. Moses could have looked at those people had he had all the information, which he didn't yet,



"Hey, through many tribulations and ten plagues and a lot of wandering and a lot of death and a lot of funerals in the desert, we're going to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. That little paradigm of the big paradigm, he could have said that. All of these things we have to get through to get there. And all I'm saying is, what is it right now that you do not like in your life? And all I'm saying, you can complain, you can moan, you can whine, you can be immature or you can say, "I know that is part of it. Through many tribulations, I must enter the kingdom of God. This is part of the plan. I'm going to do as best I can. I'm going to pray for the good, I'm going to try to reform the bad. I'm trying to fix what's messed up. But that's part of the plan." That's going to change your attitude. That's called maturity. It's called Christian maturity. And that's what we need. See the detours. That's part of God's plan. Do you believe that?

Here's another passage about fear. And look at how this all comes together, I'm going to quote it for you, Luke Chapter 12. Luke 12:4 through 7. He says, "Friends, don't fear those who can kill the body." I've quoted this a couple of times during this last year. I'll tell you who to fear, "fear, the one after he has killed the body, has the authority to cast you into hell. Fear him." That makes perfect sense.

Then he says, "Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God?" As it's put elsewhere, there's not a bird that falls out of a tree dead "apart from your Father," which is a short-handed way to say the management and providence of God are involved in the death of that bird. Do you believe that?

As you shake your fist at God, when someone you love dies and you think, "Why? Why? Why? Why?" You have to realize all of this is part of God's management of all things. You believe that or you don't. You can fight reality and you can pretend that's not true, that there is no God. But there is a God and not even birds fall out of the sky. He says in this very next phrase, "Why...", which is an interesting English translation, but you know, it's like he says, "Why even the hairs on your head are all numbered." Process that for a second. That seems a little much, right? Well, does that matter? God are you going to treat me differently if I have this many hairs versus that many?

The point is this, you have no idea the detailed management of God in all things. You're trying to think of, "Yeah, I guess the way I was raised and where I went to school and who I married and kind of how I ended up in this job, those big things God planned. I can see that." And God's saying, do you even have a clue? The birds in your backyard don't die apart from the sovereign, providential plan of God. Matter of fact, the hairs on your head are all right on schedule in terms of what I have designed.

I mean, Isaiah 40 says every star in the sky is cataloged, he sends them forth, he calls them out by name. Right? And in the Arabian Peninsula in the dark and in a clear sky you can probably see about 5,000 stars with the naked eye. That's a lot. Of course, they say there are 100 billion stars out there. I couldn't name three kids, but he's got all these names. He says, I understand all. That's the God that you say you pray to and yet you've taken this God and you've brought him down here like he's some kind of therapist. And we don't think about him being the God who not only knows how many hairs on your head, designed how many hairs



on your head, and has determined how many hairs on your head and his walking you through a life where every single thing, including when you get sick, what happens to you, who dies around you, what jobs you lose, how much money is in your bank, all of those things, he is managing those. And I'm saying you have to fully trust that sovereign, providential plan. It's going to change your attitude.

You don't have to understand his plan. You just have to trust him. And there are a lot of people I don't understand, but I trust. Right? I mean, you may not understand me, I hope you trust me, but there's a difference there. We don't fully understand God, the transcendent, inscrutable wisdom of God, I get that, Romans 11 33, but I have to trust him. I don't have any reason not to.

All right, lastly. I mean, let's rush on to the end here. Verse 22. Back to our text. "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and his deeds." Well, of course. Christ is uniquely prepared, unlike anyone else, and there's only one deliverer, Christ. But all these other agents of deliverance were imperfect and yet critically important. Moses was prepared to do what God had called him to do, to write the first five books of the Bible, to stand up on a rock and speak clearly to hundreds of thousands of people. He was endowed with the right kind of wisdom and background and learning to adjudicate problems, to set up a law code, to do all the things that God had called him to do.

And we can see this throughout the Bible from beginning to end. God puts people through the preparation, providentially, and gives them opportunity, calls them stewards, and says utilize those opportunities and prepare yourself for what I'm going to use you to do. When Paul writes Timothy, he says, it's like God who looks at all these vessels in his house and he's got these vessels that are like tools. I always like to envision the tool chest in my garage and I pull out those drawers and I got those tools laid out. He says he's got these tools and he's picking these tools to do the jobs that he has for them to do. And those tools are prepared to do those jobs.

And I want to tell you that Moses was prepared. Let me even say this, I'm reading the words through Luke that were spoken by Steven and do you think Steven was prepared to stand before the highest court in the land? How did he know all this? He prepped. He prepared. He was prepared. He could look back and see God's providential opportunity for him to address the highest court in the Jewish land and to speak and to represent Christ and represent the Church. The Bible is filled with these examples, right? And you know what it's also filled with? Mistakes. And we're going to look at this next week when Moses does not want to respond rightly to God's call. "I can't do it." How many guys have said that when God has put them in those positions? I think a Mortdecai having to say to Esther, "Hey, Esther, Esther, Esther, Esther, you might be here for a time just like this." Can you think about God might have prepared you just for this time? Think, think, think.

Gideon. The angel of the Lord shows up, "Hey, Gideon. Midianites, you're going to be used to go and deliver them." "ME?" We get this whole pathetic fleece encounter where he has to prove it and God condescends to do that. But he's like, "Me? You should pick someone else."



Jeremiah. "You're going to go and be my spokesman here at the end of this period in Judah's history and I need you to speak clearly about the indictment of the problem and fix this problem. Do the best you can to prepare this remnant." And he goes, "Me? I'm too young. I don't know anything. They're not going to listen to me."

And all I'm telling you throughout the Bible, you see this example after example after example after example. God taps someone and says, get in here. And Stephen was prepared and Moses was prepared and Gideon was prepared and all these people were ready to go, even the imperfect ones. We can look at Sampson, we can look at so many examples of God using people to say you're going to be a deliverer in this situation. And I'll bet there have been people in your life that have stepped up and been deliverers in your life, agents of God's deliverance, and God had rightly prepared them for that. Someone led you to Christ, I trust, someone discipled you, someone mentored you. And all I'm telling you is it's time for you to think that way. I hope, and thankfully he did, that Moses was a good student when he sat there with the tutors in Egypt. I hope that you are being prepared right now and taking full advantage as a steward of the things that God is preparing you to do. And I mean that like for tomorrow and this week.

Number three, let's just close with this. We need to "Diligently Submit to God's Preparation," diligently submit to God's preparation. And that seems like a contrast of active and passive. Right? We submit to it. And there is that, but there's a diligent, active work in it. Some of you need to be in those Compass Bible Institute classes. I know where the semester is probably closed by now, but you know that, you feel that, you've got a brain and you can go to the next level of education in theological things because that's really ultimately the ultimate what matters in this world. And you need to be in Compass Bible Institute. You need to be sitting in those classes, you need to be writing those papers. You need to be studying those books.

Some of you know you need to step up into ministry and you haven't done it. You know you need a ministry post and it's there, and you know that that needs to be your responsibility. And those hassles and headaches of being a part of that, you need to do it. And I know you don't like it. Right? I get that. But you need to do it. And you need to say, I'm going to step up and do what it takes. You have to apply yourself and diligently say, I know there are things I can do today and tomorrow that will get me ready to be useful the next day.

We've got a bookstore here filled with books, Right? This is about you learning, even if you're not in the classroom to say, "I'm going to prepare myself to be useful to God in this world." And I'm just telling you, that's the stewardship of life. And we've got to get ready for that. Partners. The struggles that we're facing, whatever it is, to leverage that for good.

D.L. Moody was great with little pithy phrases. He had one that was helpful in this regard, he said. "The only preparation for tomorrow is the right use of today." The only preparation for tomorrow is the right use of today. And thankfully, when Moses was 16 and he was there hating some of his homework assignments, God was prepping him to be the one who would do something for his glory. And I'm just wanting you to use today, and I literally mean that, today. What can I do today? Maybe it's that book sitting on your nightstand and you haven't



touched it for two months. You say, I've got to do what I can to make sure that my mind and my heart and my life are ready. Maybe it's just doing business with this sermon and saying my attitude has been bad. I say I trust God, but I don't show it. And it's time for me to repent and see change.

But it all comes back to this: do you trust God's promises, do you really rely on his providence? If so, it's going to show and I pray for you that God would allow us to be the kind of healthy church we need to be. It comes down to decisions you and I are going to make this week, by God's grace, let's make some good ones.

Let's pray. God, help us in the midst of this challenging, trying, crazy time to see more importantly and more clearly the call that we have to be useful in your hands. Vessels for honor, as it's put there in Second Timothy, we want to be honorable. That's more than just living clean lives. It's being a clean vessel, a clean tool, to be useful, to do something helpful and good. God, we want to spend and be expended for the souls of people, we need to step up, we need to be willing because we believe you to say it's going to show in what I do, what I prioritize, even what I don't do, how I don't complain, how I don't sit back and worry and how I accept some of these twists and turns and detours and disappointments in my life and say it's OK, this is the plan. Power through that and leverage these things for fruitfulness in the kingdom. So give us that perspective, God. Made this study be helpful today.

In Jesus name. Amen.