Chapter 12
DEFEAT SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY

The Hebrews will allow fear to cause them to forget God’s involvement with them. Amazingly, after seeing the many miracles that God had worked in redeeming the Hebrews from Egypt, they forgot His Power. God worked eye-popping miracles in plague after plague to secure the release of the Hebrews from Pharaoh. God then led the Hebrews by a column of fire by night and a column of smoke by day. He parted the Red Sea to give the Hebrews passage through it on dry land. He sealed their escape by drowning the pursuing Egyptian army by releasing the walls of water back on them. He miraculously provided life-giving water in the wilderness. He demonstrated control and victory in pitched battle between the Hebrews and the Amalekites who were barring the forward advance of the Hebrews.

The Hebrews forgot about those miracles that God had worked on their behalf. Class, please note that not only was faith in God’s past demonstrations of His providential power forgotten, but God Himself was forgotten too. At their point of decision, the Hebrews never even looked to God or asked Him for directions. Instead, they looked only at the problem they faced and allowed fear to overwhelm them.

EXODUS 33

In this meeting between God and Moses, three requests are made in prayer, and a response from God is given for each. The three prayers follow consecutively in Exodus 33, and I want you to know all three prayers along with God’s response to each of them.

Prayer #1

Exodus 33:12 And Moses said unto the LORD,

See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

33:13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation [is] thy people.

33:14 And he said, My presence shall go [with thee], and I will give thee rest.

Moses prayer was: “Show me now thy way.” God’s response was: “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”

Does it seem to you that sometimes God answers your prayers like that? You say, “Show me something,” and He says something entirely different. You are baffled and wondering about what He said in response.

Prayer #2

Exodus 33:15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not [with me], carry us not hence.

33:16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? [is it] not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that [are] upon the face of the earth.

33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

The prayer is about how Moses is going to know that he and the people have found grace in God’s eyes. The answer is again baffling because God said that He will go with them and that He knows Moses by name. Moses still lacks certainty, but he does not give up.
He makes another request.

**Prayer #3**

Exodus 33:18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.
33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.
33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.
33:21 And the LORD said, Behold, [there is] a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:
33:22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:
33:23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Moses prayed strongly and was persistent. He asked, and got a strange answer; he asked again, and he got another strange answer. Those strange answers did not stop him. He shifted from requesting proofs to requesting a look at God's Glory. Look at what the Lord did. He agreed to grant Moses' last request! God proceeded to show Moses a glimpse of His Glory from the rear by establishing a process whereby Moses would be protected from a fatal glimpse of God’s face.

Moses is a strong, praying person. He is not going to be denied. He was puzzled by God’s first two answers. Those kinds of answers may stop us, but they did not stop Moses. Even though Moses is having a hard time with the first two responses from God, he keeps at it.

There is a model here for us to adopt. When you pray, and you do not get the answer you think you are supposed to get, or you get an answer you have a hard time understanding, that does not mean that you are supposed to stop there. You keep on plowing and pressing on. By wrestling with God, your faith will grow. Passivity and a fatalistic approach to life is not a faith walk. Faith is demonstrated by a confident approach to God. Certainly, you cannot be disrespectful, but you can keep approaching God. You can press God, and you can pursue God to get what you want.

You go after it. If you are absolutely certain that God is not distant, you will do that. If God is so distant that you think that there is too big of a gap between you and God, then you will become fatalistic. A fatalistic prayer is to shout over to God, “Oh, God, help me. . . .” When God does not answer that prayer then do not conclude thusly: “He is not helping me, so I guess He. . . .” That is not the faith approach. The faith approach is to go to God, get hold of His garment, hang on, and not be denied.

In the book of John the Phoenician woman provides a New Testament example of persistent prayer. She replied to Jesus that even the dogs get the crumbs from the table. That is strong praying because she argued her case in a way that showed that she was not to be denied. That kind of praying gets results.

Moses has given us a good example here. I want you to remember these three prayers and these responses. Look at the progression. Moses began with requesting information that would prove that he had understood and could trust God’s Word. The progression ended at a request to see God’s Glory.

God’s Word is God Himself. Thus He will not bow to human desires for proof that He will do what He said. In His prior actions, He had already shown His trustworthiness. Giving another proof of His veracity beyond His miraculously extracting the Hebrews from the overwhelming power of Pharaoh was in no way needed. God was not going to bow to proving His veracity again to human indul-
gence. However, the third request was not about God’s veracity being questioned but about His Own Personhood.

Moses had already seen the burning bush theophany. In that event, God had a conversation with Moses in which God had already told Moses that He was going to use Moses to bring the Hebrews out of Egypt to the Promised Land. When we question the veracity of God’s explicit statements, we cannot expect to get the results that we are requesting because those questions are not from belief.

Look at your own life, and check your prayers. Every one of us is a praying person; every one of us has been in dialog with God. You have expressed your cares and your needs to God, and He has responded. Many of us are saying, “Well, that could not have been God; that is the wrong response.” Or, “Why did He do what He did or not do what I asked?” You are puzzled. Do not let that stop you from praying. Just make sure that you are not questioning His veracity as expressed in His Word. If you are basing your prayers on His Word, then press on, grab hold of His garment, and do not be denied. Allowing yourself to be denied is a lack of faith.

Betty: I heard once that sometimes the answer from God could be no. God’s no is implicit in the silence that so often follows prayer. Now my question is, if it is the will of God that the answer is no through silence, and I keep on praying, how can I know that the answer is no? Do you understand the question?

V: I think I do.

Betty: Because we are supposed to continue to pray.

V: There is a lot of communication back and forth, so you pray and pray. Many of us pray for God to do something that He has already told us to do. We are not hearing all that God says. This is the only time that silence is God’s final answer. God’s Word may have already spoken to the issue. Do not expect Him to repeat Himself!

In some other times, silence is a test of your faith. If you pray, beseeching God, and He does not respond, that could very well be His testing your perseverance. Do not be fatalistic. If you know that God has not told you to do the thing that you are asking of Him (i.e. your prayer is a valid prayer), then do not take His silence for an answer.

Betty: Silence is not enough?

V: Silence is not enough when the prayer is valid because there is supposed to be some kind of an answer like with Moses. There is real dialog in prayer, similar to family dialog. It is the same principal that you would have with your child. No one would ignore the fervent and persistent request of one’s child. A yes or no would be appropriate, but silence is not. So, pursue an answer when there is silence. Let me caution you, however, that you may not be listening intently enough to detect the answer.

Even God’s no should contain some communication for you to understand His purpose. However, His no is sometimes a test as in the case of the Phoenician woman.

Exodus 34:6-9 against the intercession of Moses. Verses 6 and 7 are the revelation, and verses 8 and 9 are the intercession of Moses.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation].
34:8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.
34:9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

After Moses arrived at the assigned meeting place, God initiated the conversation by telling Moses His purpose concerning justice. Following that action by God, Moses’ prayer is his response to God.

First you have the revelation of God concerning justice, and then you have the prayer of intercession by Moses. On the other encounters, there was first a prayer by Moses and then the response by God. This is a reversal because the revelation of God initiates the dialog, and then Moses responds to God.

In this dialog, God discloses His heart and His intentions regarding justice. Moses receives the revelation from God, and then he responds according to the revelation. His prayer now is shaped by what God has said. God has said that He is a gracious God and forgives sin or iniquity. Moses hears God clearly, and so he responds to what he had heard God say about gracious and forgiving. So Moses prayed: “If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin and take us for thine inheritance.”

Notice how Moses included himself among those needing grace and forgiveness. Implicit in this request for forgiveness is the confession of sin. He is saying clearly here to God that “we are a stiff-necked people,” and he is saying, “Would you please forgive our sin.” This prayer of confession and need includes himself unlike what we sometimes do.

In a few lessons back, we had defined four groups of persons: God, the Moses group, the Aaron group, and the people group. The people group came up with an excuse. When we start excusing ourselves, God does not forgive. There has to be confession, and confession is built upon repentance. Repentance is agreeing with God. If you can agree with God, then you can see yourself as He sees you. If you cannot agree with God, then you see yourself from your own perspective, and that will generate excuses.

Most of the time, we all exalt ourselves because we think subconsciously that we are perfect. So, we cannot say, “forgive us of our iniquities.” If we do, it is with a subconscious reservation.

This is good stuff on prayer. Moses prays and God responds. I am not doing it justice by a long shot because there is a lot here, and I am just skimming over the top. This would make wonderful sermon material. You could preach on the three prayers of chapter 33 and then follow it up with this one right here.

Joe: I think it is kind of interesting that Moses also asked the Lord to go along in their midst. It is like Moses is asking God to look upon sin and stay in their midst.

V: Granting that request is only possible, you see, when they ask for forgiveness. If they were self-righteous, they would still be stiff-necked and unforgiven. In this case, God would not be in their midst but would be standing over against them.

However, in answer to Moses’ prayer of intercession, God provided a method of covering the sin and stiff-necks of the people. The Tabernacle, priest, and sacrificial system was how God provided for the temporary forgiveness of sin so that He could remain in their midst.

**EXODUS 34**

What follows is an after-deliverance
warning. Class, we have been delivered from the bondage and wages of sin. Thus this after-deliverance warning applies directly to us. Please understand it and heed it. Many of our ranks are falling into this temptation.

Exodus
34:10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou [art] shall see the work of the LORD: for it [is] a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

34:12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:
34:13 But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:
34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God:
34:15 Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and [one] call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;
34:16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.
34:17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Please note that Christians will also be drawn into whoring after the other gods in the land because they will be pilgrims in the land just like these Hebrews were pilgrims. The inhabitants and owners of the land, you see, are the ones who have all the false gods. God does not want you to be willing to be in yoke with these people. If you do, then you will love and appreciate them, and when they go astray, you will be tempted to go with them because of your unwillingness to break that bond of friendship. Your yielding to temptation will result in your giving your sons and daughters in marriage to them.

Beware! We are not to be unequally yoked! Light and darkness are not be yoked. Defying God’s warning on this has caused great suffering, grief, and tragedy for many unwary Christians. Many sons, daughters, and grandchildren have gone to hell because they have been trapped in ungodly religions because of marriages outside of our faith. If you love your children warn them. Do not allow your phileo (friendship) to extend to accepting unsaved people’s behavior. Love (agape) the unsaved people but hate their sin. Warn them of hell, but stay away from their ways. And above all, do not intermarry with them.

God commands the Hebrews to stay equally yoked within their faith, break down the altars of other religions, take heed unto themselves, and not go into any kind of image worship. The Hebrews have already been through the molten calf idolatry! They have shown their propensity for idolatrous absurdities.

We have shown the same propensities as the Hebrews. So, my dear brethren, do not be unequally yoked or tolerate other religions in your midst. It would be good to memorize verses Ex. 34:10, 12-17. I think that if you could just memorize and apply those verses, a great deal of heartache and loss of our children to hell would be avoided.

EXODUS 35

We have already talked about the willing heart in the building of the Tabernacle. At this point God mentions it again.

Exodus
35:21 And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, [and] they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.

Please notice that the heart stirred up the person and his spirit influenced his will. First there is the emotion of one’s heart. Emotion
resides in the soul, but it has influence on the will. The deciding factor on the will is the addition of the person’s spirit. When the soul and the spirit align, the will is moved as the product.1

I bring this up to show how the emotions initiate actions. These actions can be for good or bad. Thus, you should see how bad music, alcohol, drugs, environment, company, and entertainment can result in terrible decisions for people who lack enough spiritual maturity to withstand bad influences on the soul.

We will now go to Exodus 35:25-26, which deals with the connection of wisdom with work.

Exodus
35:25 And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, [both] of blue, and of purple, [and] of scarlet, and of fine linen.
35:26 And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' [hair].

Now, all work is not always wisdom. However, work towards God’s goal is wisdom. These women are working towards God’s goal of providing for the Tabernacle and clothes for the priests. Before worship according to God’s prescribed form can begin, the things that go into that worship have to be made. So there is a goal for the work.

Sacrifice and giving are manifest not only in the offerings of materials but also in the labor that must also be provided. Providing the materials and putting hands to the task of drafting the Tabernacle is leading to the nation’s worship of God. Wisdom must see the end goal of worship. Just blind offerings or blind work is not wisdom.

Here are two good verses about wisdom, and I think you can find some other statements about wisdom and do a good sermon or a good lesson on nothing but wisdom. You can point towards the good of work. Instead of viewing work as an oppressive thing, it should be seen as an expression of faith towards God’s goal.

Exodus
36:5 And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make.
36:6 And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.

Oscar: The people were giving from a willing, loving heart, completely unrestrained.

V: Yes, can you imagine a Baptist church trying to stop the people from giving?

The Hebrews are expressing love and gratitude to a gracious God. Notice that they are nomadic people, who have been self-centered, complaining, stiff-necked, and idolatrous up to this point. They have shown amazing aptitude for doing everything wrong! But at this point there are many willing hearts.

Applied to today, even the lowest common denominator of a church can be an unrestrained, carefree giver. Even the ones who danced naked around a molten calf can change into useful soldiers in God’s army. It seems incongruous to see how God can use the worst sinners for His greatest work. Over the long haul, it is the one who survives God’s chastening and turns to the work who is wise. Turning away from work as something detestable is unwise.

Please note that in the midst of much sin and faithlessness, the giving exceeded their needs. So Moses gave a commandment throughout the camp that the offering and work for the sanctuary be stopped.

1 How the body, soul, and spirit interact is discussed at length in the course on Romans.
Before we go to Exodus 40, I want to show you my daughter’s name in Chapter 38, verse 26.

My daughter is named Rebekah, but we call her Bekah. The word bekah is found in verse 26: “a bekah for every man.” The Bible says that a bekah is only half a shekel. I am going to tease her with that when she gets home from college.

EXODUS 38 AND 40

Remember how in a prior chapter, we saw how Aaron had really messed up bad in his idolatry. We identified all the categories in his great sin. Now look at what God says in verse 12.

Exodus 40:12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 40:13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 40:14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: 40:15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

I am amazed at the graciousness of God. When Aaron had committed such a great sin, God is still willing to use him. God says, “Bring Aaron and wash him and anoint him and put on him the garments of the priesthood, and bring his sons and do likewise with them. They are going to do this ministry unto me throughout their generations.” Our God is truly gracious.

Every one of us has betrayed God. As a result, some of us get into bondage and no-hope situations because it is hard to understand the depth of God’s gracious forgiveness. Even when we have betrayed Him and disappointed Him with the deepest, darkest, meanest, most treacherous behavior imaginable, God will still forgive us if we will repent! It even makes us nauseous to think about our betrayals. God will still use us; He will still use you! Can you repent and turn to God and ask Him? God will restore you just like He did with Aaron whom He called up before the entire congregation and said, “Wash him and anoint him, put the garments on him; he is going to minister unto me.” There is always hope with God!

We all have participated in the hope that God provides. You have hope now because your studying this course is evidence that you have hope! You are equipping to minister unto God. This class is part of your putting the garments on. This lesson is your being anointed. You are being robed, anointed, and commissioned by God to minister unto God. This message is not just to you. It is not a private message, not at all, and it is not a message just for the clergy. It is a message to be proclaimed to all Christians because, you see, every saved person who bears the name of Christ is a priest unto God. Every Christian is to be washed, anointed, robed, and commissioned to minister unto God for eternity!

NUMBERS 13 AND 14: FAILURE

The Sinai Peninsula has the the Red Sea surrounding three sides of it. The Hebrews leave Egypt by crossing the Red Sea into the western shores of the Sinai. Then God leads them south in order to avoid the Philistines. As they travel south, the murmurings, bitter water, and the battle with the tribe of Amalek occur. At Mount Sinai in the lower part of the peninsula (in my estimate), occurs Moses’ mountain experience and the molten calf incident.

From this point in which the tabernacle and priesthood have been established, the
Hebrews are going to be led on a direct path to the Promised Land. They are the same people, but they are now fully prepared by God to implement His Plan. So, the children of God turn north toward the land that God has appointed unto them.

When the Hebrews get close to Kadesh-Barnea, they are going to send some spies into the land of Canaan to see how to go in and take the land that has been promised to them. The spies are going to come back and give a devastating report.

There are two men who give good reports that are couched within God’s perspective, but the other ten give reports that are based on the human perspective of human limitations: “We cannot possibly defeat the inhabitants. Those people are giants. They are secure, and they are stronger than we are.” God is left completely out of their bad reports, and fear prevails over the people. The people leave Kadesh-Barnea, and they walk in circles in the Sinai wilderness until all the fearful adults die off.

Class, this is a picture of salvation! In our justification, we leave the land of bondage to sin. We cross the sea, baptism’s demarcation. We murmur and face the hardships of life in the wilderness. We fight a battle with Satan’s attempt to forestall our journey. We arrive in our freedom to the point in which we are ready to put our lives on the line in the full achievement of our goals. Carnal leaders instill their fear in us via their limited perspectives. So, we then plateau in our spiritual growth and achieve nothing for God. We spend the rest of our lives gathering manna and talking about our justification, baptism, worship in the Tabernacle, and manna. We just walk in circles and praise God for keeping us safe in our circles and wait until we grow old and die.

The Church is not taking any land. If the Church fights any battles, it is about maintaining its little circular path in the wilderness (the geography that no others want). The only severe battles that the Church is willing to fight are among each other. The Church’s testimony is one of impotence. It has quit serving God’s commission to go into all the world in evangelism. Now, it is content to have all the world come to the desert land in the Sinai and join the Church in circle-walking.

The Hebrews’ crossing of the Red Sea was considered baptism. Baptism is the marking of God’s people as a Holy People, a people cleansed and set aside for God’s exclusive use. From the point of baptism, God’s people are launched on a pilgrimage. That pilgrimage is sanctification! There are tests along the way following baptism.

War is not the first test. God led the Hebrews away from the short route that would have taken them right through Philistia. God said that the Hebrews were not ready for battle with the Philistines. He wanted to train them up by giving them some smaller tests. After the traveling tests with the provision of drinking water, God chose to take the Hebrews into their first battle with the Amalekites, a tribe that was much smaller than the Philistines. Plus, God also wanted to build some backbone in His people before they faced a large enemy.

These tests are faced by everybody because there is something for everybody to do, not just Moses and Aaron. Moses leads, but everybody walks along. Families have little ones to be cared for, baggage to carry, and chores to be done. There are many things to be done, and everybody must do their part. Some are sick, old, and crippled, but some are strong. The strong must help the sick get along down the road. There is much community effort here. Everybody plays a role; nobody is left behind.

In every large undertaking by a large group, there are some who will be dragged—kicking and screaming. In every meeting
there was whining and crying, but no one was left behind. There was a training process, and the leaders were being trained to be patient, to be thorough, to watch over others. The young dependent ones are being trained by example because they are going to assume those leadership roles. The differences in the tasks are suited to the abilities of the individuals. Some set up the tents and some took them down, some went out and fetched the food and water, and some distributed it.

Work was distributed over the group. Aaron’s tribe was in charge of the Tabernacle and all the processes of worship.

There is training, leading, discipline, and judging going on. As the nation moved along, there would be squabbles among the people, and the judges were called on to establish and maintain justice.

Coordinating the movements of a large group is no easy task. We think that the Christian life should be easy, right? We have been conditioned to think that the Christian should be able to just glide along the primrose path because we are beloved children of almighty God. The children of God do not sweat and labor and put up tents and take them down, do they? These mundane things are done for them by somebody else. Wrong! Everything in your life has to be taken care of by you in your pilgrimage of sanctification.

God will help you, but you have to do the work and fight the battles. God will provide the miracles when He decides that they are needed in His Plan. He made the sun to stand still for the Hebrews in battle. When Moses’ hands were up, Joshua and his warriors prevailed; when Moses’ hands were down, the enemy prevailed. God provided water out of a rock! God turned the bitter water into sweet water. Miracles are embedded in the trials of sanctification. They will be there for you in your pilgrimage, but you must still align your will with God and do the work which will require self-denial, sacrifice, and suffering.

Without the alignment with God and its accompanying work, there will be NO miracles!

After the Hebrews have gone through all this work of cooperation in the simple journey, they finally get to a point where they are going to be tested in battle. This test is beyond the murmurings and the trials of thirst. They are actually going to be tested in battle! It is in battle where you face death. People on both sides are going to die.

Every one of us likewise will be tested. You will face some terrifying things. You can cut and run back into the wilderness, but you will die alone without God’s miracles. You must fight to win for God. You may die, but you must die for God. You must force yourself to face the enemy in a fight to the death. Your desire for self preservation will be great, but you will know that turning your back on the enemy will invite death because you have no armor to protect your backside. In every battle, mental war over your will occurs in your mind.

God established a Covenant with His chosen people, His Laws were written, and His people were sanctified in a holy ceremony. All of that had been done. Then, there was the breaking of the Covenant by well-meaning people, the people who loved God and were grateful for His deliverance. God then established the Tabernacle, priests, and sacrificial process of worship to deal temporarily with the sin of breaking the covenant. But the pressing on of the journey continued toward the Promised Land. Trials and battles were faced in the journey, but finally the children of God arrived within striking distance of the Promised Land. All that remained was the taking of the Promised Land and living in it under the Kingship of God.

The taking of the land was to be a joint effort. The Hebrews would be in yoke with God in their pursuit of His promise to give it
to them. However, the Hebrews had to do what they had already been doing in their journey to this point. They had to prepare, cooperate, and actually fight the battle. Belief of God was all that was lacking. The lack of belief of God’s Word and in Who He is caused the entire nation to hesitate and fail.

Likewise, you will be tested on your journey many times. These tests will be preparing you to believe God’s Word and Who He is. All that you go through will be in preparation for progressively bigger battles that you must face. The preparation, leading the people behind you, continuous commitment, and the fighting must all be done. As you pursue the promise on the other side of death by fighting the enemy, God enables you to drive the enemies out from before you on this side of death. He does not drive them out while you stand back on the perimeter, and say, “Oh, God, drive them out, and I will occupy the land!” No, God does not do the work alone. Get your sword in your hand and enter the battle, and then God will drive them out through you! Get up off your duff and go, you warriors of God!

When you get to this point in your studies, you are supposed to be warriors. You are supposed to be ready and to have developed a trust in God because He has demonstrated Himself all through your process of sanctification. Now you are approaching the point of glorification. What happens to you if you just dump the final battle, stumble, and fall before you penetrate the Holy Land? You dishonor God by defying all your prior training to trust God. Glorification, you see, is going to come at the end of sanctification. Not reaching God’s goal for you reduces the rewards that God has for you. God has for you more than you can imagine. Unimaginable rewards are being held by God just for you, but you must penetrate. You must go all the way. In order to do so, you must give yourself as a sacrifice to God for His use in His blessing the people.

To be a warrior against Satan and against all the enemies of darkness, you must go forward in battle by trusting in God and His Word. If you do that, you will be victorious. Even if you get killed in the battle, you will be victorious. Wield the Sword of the Spirit and yield yourself to the guidance of the Spirit.

If the Hebrews had not given in to their fear, they would have penetrated right into the Holy Land. God would have fought their battle with them and given them an earned victory. The unique thing about God is that when He says that He will give it to you, He does not mean that you are to just sit down and wait for Him to do all the work. He will not go out there fight the battle, win the victory, and then invite you to come share in the spoils (except in the case of justification). Everything in sanctification is always an in-yoke-with-God enterprise. It is taking God’s burden on yourself. It may feel like you are walking up hill and carrying an overwhelmingly great weight. However, God is doing all the heavy lifting. If He took His hands away, the weight would smash you down into nothing. You contribute to the struggle your will and all your power and skill, and God provides the rest. He adds just enough to your maximum for you to achieve the impossible.

Now, if you go to church and listen to the majority, you may get these seeds of fear: “Oh there are giants in the land. Be careful. Our children will become a prey; they will eat our children.” Please turn to Numbers 14:1-4:

Numbers
14:1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.
14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!
14:3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?
14:4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

At the point of decision, the Hebrews let fear overcome them. They wanted to depose Moses and Aaron and elect a captain who would lead them back into Egypt.

They wanted to do the one thing that God could never bless. They wanted to return to the slavery from which God had turned the world upside down in order to free them. God had taken them out of Egypt, and He had made His Covenant with them. The whole world watched the journey of the Hebrews under the protection and blessings of God. Now, the Hebrews wanted to abort all connections with God and return to Egypt? I think that they were flirting with execution from God because His reputation for divine power, wisdom, and providence were at stake. Remember that God had threatened to kill them after Aaron’s molten bull incident.

Amazingly, the Hebrews’ second plea was, “Would to God we had died in the wilderness.” To this plea, God said, “Okay, I can give you that; you are going to die in the wilderness! You are going to walk in circles until your carcasses fall and rot in the wilderness.”

Numbers
14:31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.
14:32 But [as for] you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness.

Every one of us is facing tests and failures. No matter how bad we have failed, there is redemption available at repentance. You can repent like Aaron did, you can be freshly anointed like Aaron was, and you can go forward from where you are.

Accomplishing anything in ministry requires overcoming fear. It is up to you to cast fear out, to overcome fear with the love of God. Love Him so much that what they do to you matters less than disappointing God. Just go forward with all your might, and then God will manifest His great power, wisdom, and love to accomplish His plan through you.

Fear is what we are up against. Now we can yield to it and die in the wilderness. The Hebrews chose to yield to their fears, and God said, “Okay, I will take your children who were supposedly going to be eaten by the giants in the land, and I am going to use them to go in and take the Promised Land.” These are the choices that we can make—face your fears or yield to them. If you yield to your fears, you may cut and run back toward Egypt, or you can stay where you are and walk in circles for the rest of your life.

Where are you in your life? Have you come through the murmurs, or are you still murmuring? Have you come to the bitter waters and sweetened those up with the cross? Have you gotten to the initial battles? These are training battles because the big battles are still ahead. Have you come through some training battles? Are you still leading your people forward? Are you caring for the little ones and bringing them along? Are you being their example? Are you sending your spies out and listening to the spiritual spy when they come back? Who do you listen to? Do you listen to the majority? Or do you listen to the one who stands up and says, “We can do it.” The choices are yours.

The book of Exodus is a very good picture of the doctrine of salvation. It demonstrates salvation’s process in macrocosm of God’s redemption of the Hebrews.

That same demonstration now is individualized into your life, but it is also corporate in the church. The Exodus is an image of your
pilgrimage. You are to pursue God and press on past your fears and deprivations. Do not murmur, but do realize that when you are on manna, you have not achieved trustworthiness as a warrior for God but are just in the discipline and training stage.

When the Hebrews decided to go forward into the land, they did so by placing their fate in God’s Hands. In this way their fears were conquered, and God’s power was quickly manifested in His parting the Jordan River. When the Hebrews penetrated the land, they attacked in a series of three actions in a divide and conquer strategy.

However, the Hebrew warriors who overcame their fears failed in a different way. They failed to do “everything” that God told them to do, and that was to annihilate those people. This failure resulted in the inter-marriage of God’s children with the surviving pagans in the land. Then the Hebrews went whoring after other gods. That idolatry cost Israel dearly. God allowed other nations to conquer His beloved people so severely that Israel, the northern kingdom went completely out of existence. The southern kingdom, Judah, lasted about a century longer than her sister, but she too was eventually conquered and taken into captivity by Babylon. There is a terrible penalty for violating God’s rules because God establishes them as beneficent rules which are intended for our welfare.

Chapter Questions

1. Describe the revelation of God in Exodus 34:6-7 and the intercession of Moses in Exodus 34:8-9.
2. What is the message of Exodus 34:10-17?