

# Letting Go

## Exodus 3:17-22

### Dr. Paul Cannings

#### A. Surrender (v. 17):

1. Said – – What the Lord verbalizes to Moses is a message He plans to work to execute endlessly .
  - a) His time is perfect – 400 years have passed.
  
2. I will bring you – God will fulfill His promise to Abraham and facilitate all that needs to take place to get all the people out of Egypt.
  - a) God does not put us in a battle; He does not plan to fight.
  
3. Affliction of Egypt – God's description of what Israel experienced in Egypt is very descriptive. Their pain was physical humiliation, emotional duress, mental anguish, and a feeling of helplessness against a powerful enemy who was lawless (Exodus 2:23; 3:7).

#### B. Despite the Challenges (v. 18):

1. They will pay heed – All the people who provide Moses their undivided attention will gain a complete intellectual understanding of what the Lord told Moses to say, and with an understanding heart, they will comply.

a) Even though God said the Israelites would listen to Moses, it did not mean they were following him without some reservation (Ex. 14:12).

2. To what you say: Proclamation – What Moses proclaims to the people they will do. This did not occur immediately, but God knew it would happen. What God says through Moses, He has the power to execute.

3. The elders of Israel will come – Moses and Aaron are not alone. Moses and Aaron will be accompanied by all the elders. Pharaoh will experience a collective and unified group of leaders.

4. The elders of Israel will come – With the message vividly and explicitly clear, all the leadership will be completely resolved to complete what God has instructed Moses to do when they present themselves before Pharaoh.

5. And you will say to him – The message to Pharaoh is completely what God is instructing them to say. Even though the elders are present, Moses will be the spokesman, and he must verbalize to Pharaoh God's words.

6. The Lord the God of the Hebrews - The One who has all authority and power and sovereignly rules as the all-powerful God announces to the King of Egypt that His people already have a king who rules beyond Egypt because He established and rules the earth.

7. The Lord the God of the Hebrews - God is not intimidated by anyone. We can either submit to His authority and power or experience His might unleashed against whatever we may think we are.

a) According to God's instruction, the elders were to identify themselves as Hebrews rather than Israelites, thus using terminology Pharaoh would understand. They also were to speak in the name of Yahweh (because the demand was his, not theirs) in spite of the fact that this name might be completely new to Pharaoh, as it indeed proved to be (5:2). Moreover, they were to ask to leave Egypt. <sup>[1]</sup>

8. Has met with us – God did not speak to Moses through an angel. He spoke to Moses directly so there is no possible misinterpretation of God's message to the King of Egypt.

9. Let us go; Walked together – Even though the Lord is all-powerful and sovereign, He respects the king of Egypt's position by requesting that he allow the people to walk together out of the land of Egypt, uninterrupted, to worship the Lord God.

a) That is, the first request was for a few days' distance from Egypt for the purpose of the worship of the living God. Since this request would not be honored (v. 19), it is certain that the demand to be set free altogether would not be honored either. The fact that Israelites had to go somewhere else to sacrifice to the LORD may have been an implied slur on the land of Egypt. The wickedness of the Egyptians polluted the land and made it unsuitable for worshipping their God. The Israelites needed neutral soil to worship God in purity (7:16). <sup>[2]</sup>

10. Let us go; Walked together – God proves at the Red Sea He did not need the King of Egypt's permission to take His people out of Egypt; He is the Lord God.

a) God's first purpose in drawing us to Him is to worship Him (vs. 19; 22; 35:22-24).

11. Sacrifice; Offer - Even though the message to the king of Egypt is for the people of Israel to worship the Lord God, this is precisely what the Lord God intended. God's first purpose, upon their release, is for Israel to purpose in their hearts to offer sacrifices to Him continuously. .

a) But God was pleased to put it on that ground at first, in order that by the king's refusal of so small and so reasonable a request, the unyielding, tyrannical character of the Egyptian monarch might be the more strikingly displayed. As the worship of the Israelites consisted, according to the rites of their forefathers, in sacrificing sheep and oxen, which were deemed sacred in the eyes of the Egyptians, they could not celebrate any religious festival without giving offense to that people, and therefore must of necessity have crossed the border into the Arabian wilderness, which would have been a "three days' journey."<sup>[3]</sup>

12. Sacrifice; Offer - God will fight for us, but it is for us to live prostrate before Him continuously

13. The Lord our God - Worship must be centered on respecting the Lord's authority, power, and sovereign will or it is not worship at all.

a) Of course, God's name "Jehovah" had been known centuries ago (Gen. 4:26) and was familiar to the patriarchs (14:22; 15:1; 25:21-22; 28:13; 49:18). What Moses asked was, "What does Your name mean? What kind of a God are You?" God explained that the name Jehovah is a dynamic name, based on the Hebrew verb "to be" or "to become." He is the self-existent One who always was, always is, and always will be, the faithful and dependable God who calls Himself "I AM." Centuries later, Jesus would take the name "I AM" and complete it: "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35), "I am the light of the world" (8:12), "I am the true vine" (15:1), and so on.<sup>[4]</sup>

## C. Remember the Lord Fights Our Battles

### (vs. 19-20):

1. But I know – God has a complete knowledge of what the King of Egypt is going to do. No matter what Moses, the elders, or the people may experience, God is in control and has incorporated everything the King of Egypt will do when He executes His plan.
  
2. Will not permit you – The King of Egypt will not commit to creating an opportunity for the people of Israel to leave Egypt.
  - a) Even though God directs Moses to Pharaoh, God knows that this was going to be conflicting. Not every time does God direct us that everything is going to go smoothly without any conflict.
  
3. Go; walked together – The King of Egypt will not allow the nation of Israel to walk together out of Egypt.
  
4. I will stretch out – Despite the king of Egypt's decision, God, because of His authority and power, will exercise His sovereign will and successfully engineer a war between Himself and the king of Egypt by providing numerous plagues.
  - a) The image of an outstretched or mighty hand or arm is common in Egyptian inscriptions to describe the power of Pharaoh. It is used throughout the Exodus narratives to describe God's power over Pharaoh. See comment on \*Deut. 26:8. <sup>[5]</sup>
  
5. My hand – All the Lord God needs is Moses, Aaron, and the elders to talk with the King of Egypt. The Lord God will personally get involved in controlling and creating all

the needed results. This is a battle the Lord God will personally wage against the king of Egypt.

6. Miracles - The word “wonders” in Hebrew (*niphla’ot*) refers to things only God can do, things designed to inspire reverence in His worshipers and fear in His enemies. <sup>[6]</sup>

7. Strike – God has dedicated Himself to be completely engaged in intentionally and repetitively, by way of miracles, harm Egypt.

a) Thus will Yahweh bring *his* power into action and will strike (נכה) as in 2:12, 13) Egypt with a series of extraordinary deeds. The term נִפְלְאוֹת “extraordinary deeds” is a keyword in the theological rhetoric of the proof of Yahweh’s Presence (note its use in Ps 111:4, cited above). This will be done, moreover, not in territory identified with Yahweh, but בְּקִרְבוֹ “in its midst,” in Egypt’s “own backyard.” And the result of *this* display of power will be not just the desired permission; the Pharaoh will “hurl” or “drive” (piel שלח) them out in his eagerness to be rid of them *and* their God. It is a marvelous summary of the whole “plague” sequence. <sup>[7]</sup>

8. I shall do – The Lord God commits to continuously be obligated to faithfully create whatever actions necessary to force the king of Egypt to release His people.

9. After that he will let you go – The Lord God is confident that after He takes complete control and faithfully disrupts Egypt with numerous plagues, the king of Egypt will send His people out of Egypt to worship Him.

## D. He has Your Back (vs. 21-22):

1. I will grant this people favor – The Lord will totally, personally generously, and compassionately establish His blessings for the people of Israel. They will receive everything that is due to them based on all the hard labor they endured.
2. In the sight of the Egyptians – All the Lord God is going to generously provide all of Israel will be acquired in the presence of all those in Egypt. Everyone in Egypt will know about the generosity that was extended to Israel.
  - a) God knew that He was going to have His people build a tabernacle in the wilderness, so He had them collect what they would need for the tabernacle before they left Egypt—if He had not, they never could have built it.<sup>[8]</sup> (Exodus 35:22–24)
3. It shall be – The Lord God knows what will take place, and He is completely confident that everything He is saying will transpire no matter what the king of Egypt says or does.
4. When you go – The continuous process of Israel moving out of Egypt is guaranteed by the Lord God.
5. When you go – When God’s timing is perfect, no one, no matter the level of power or might, can stop us from experiencing all God has for us.
6. Empty – It seems like all of Israel would not leave Egypt without a gift.

7. But every woman shall ask – Every woman needs to be completely engaged before departing Egypt to petition the neighbors (this word implies a superior demanding something from a subordinate) for articles of silver articles of gold, and clothing.

a) God had promised Abraham that after Israel had served for 400 years, they would “come out with great possessions” (Gen. 15:14; see Ps. 105:37). Israel herself was to live by the same principle of providing gifts to a released slave (Dt. 15:12-15).

8. But every woman shall ask – God so powerfully impacted all of Egypt that it flipped the script so that the enslaved people became masters demanding payment for their work. The power of the Israelite King was greater than that of the king of Egypt, so the enslaved people are now the masters.

a) The command was not to **borrow** but to ask (ASV, RSV), a request which, under the circumstances, was a demand. Thus the Israelites received a recompense for their years of toil by ‘spoiling’ the Egyptians. [\[9\]](#)

9. You will put – They need to appoint their sons and daughters so that they wear all the articles of silver and gold. This is placed on them as if it is meant to be a permanent fixture.

10. You will plunder – Israel is to take the articles of silver and gold as if they belong to them.

11. You will plunder – God’s powerful deliverance reversed who controls Egypt so that the King of Kings now owns all things and leads the way. So, He can now direct the people of Egypt and determine how they are paid.



a) Finally, in this anticipatory section, the theme of the plundering of the Egyptians is introduced. It also functions as a description of Yahweh's triumph over Egypt and everything Egyptian, and it has been appended here by the compiler of this narrative, admittedly in a somewhat awkward manner (Fohrer, *Überlieferung*, 29–30, 82; Coats, *VT* 18 [1968] 450–451), to complete the introduction of major themes related to the proof of Yahweh's Presence.

12. You will plunder – The Lord's time is perfect; nothing can stop Him.

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[1] Stuart, D. K. (2006). [Exodus](#) (Vol. 2, p. 124). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

[2] Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). [Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary](#) (p. 93). T. Nelson Publishers.

[3] Brown, D., Fausset, A. R., & Jamieson, R. (n.d.). [A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Genesis–Deuteronomy: Vol. I](#) (p. 287). William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited.

[4] Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). [Be delivered](#) (p. 18). Chariot Victor Pub.

[5] Walton, J. H., & Matthews, V. H. (1997). [Genesis–Deuteronomy](#) (p. 89). InterVarsity Press.

[6] Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). [Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary](#) (p. 93). T. Nelson Publishers.

[7] Durham, J. I. (1987). [Exodus](#) (Vol. 3, p. 40). Word, Incorporated.

[8] Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). [Manners & customs of the Bible](#) (p. 103). Bridge-Logos Publishers.

[9] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#) (Ex 3:22). Moody Press.