

“The Lord will fight for you, you only need to be still.” We had finally gotten an audience with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and we said to him, ***“Let my people go so they may worship the Creator in the wilderness.”*** Pharaoh laughed at us. He wasn’t going to let his workforce go—we had made him the richest man in the world! He needed us to farm the fields, to care for his animals, and to do his great building projects. Instead of letting us go, he burdened us with even more work. Obviously we had too much free time if we could daydream about a vacation in the wilderness. The people were angry with us. Their lives had been really hard before and now they had just gotten worse. They turned on us, on me and Moses. Then Moses turned to the Creator in anger and said, ***“Why did you send me to do this?! Things have only gotten worse for the people!”*** But the Creator assured him that he would save the people from their slavery. But the people did not listen to Moses and these promises—their spirits were **broken** and they were enslaved. They wanted nothing more to do with us and these dreams of freedom. But the Lord told us we needed to persist and go back to Pharaoh and demand the freedom of the people. Moses said to the Creator, ***“The people won’t even listen to me! What makes you think Pharaoh will ever listen to me?!”*** The Creator responded, ***“Pharaoh will not listen to you.”*** The Lord said Pharaoh would harden his heart. He would **not** listen to us. He would **not** give in. But the Creator said Pharaoh would not be able to stop him—the Creator would stretch out his hand and deliver us from slavery in Egypt. And that is when the craziness started.

It all began with the Nile River turning into **blood**. The Nile was the lifesource and strength of all Egypt. Blood filled it and the life and strength of Egypt began to die. Next came the **frogs**. They were everywhere and in everything. Pharaoh was upset and said, ***“Take these frogs away and you can go!”*** But as soon as the frogs were gone, Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to let us go. Then came the **gnats**. The wise men of Egypt told Pharaoh, ***“This is the Creator’s hand at work!”*** But Pharaoh would not be moved. He saw himself and Egypt as a god. He believed nothing was more powerful than himself and Egypt. Then came the **flies**. They were everywhere, destroying the land. Pharaoh was clearly annoyed by them and said to us, ***“Worship your god, but you must stay in the land.”*** We told him this wouldn’t work—we needed to leave Egypt. He relented and said, ***“You can go, but do not go far! Just get the Creator to take these flies away!”*** But as soon as the Creator removed the flies, Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to let us go. Then Egypt’s domesticated **animals** began to die. But Pharaoh dug in his heels.

Then came the **diseases** on the people of Egypt. Painful disease that caused the Egyptians to beg Pharaoh to let us go. But he would not. Then came the **hail**. Storms of hailstones that absolutely obliterated the land. The crops were leveled and destroyed. Grain and crops had been how Egypt had built its great wealth. This was hitting very close to home and it got to Pharaoh. He said, ***“I have been wrong! Stop the hail and I will let you go!”*** But as soon as the hail stopped, Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to let us go. Then came the **locusts**. They ate whatever crops were left after the hail. Every green plant and tree in the land was devoured. Pharaoh was beside himself. He said, ***“Go! Egypt is ruined! I have sinned, forgive me!”*** But the moment the locusts were gone, he changed his mind and refused to let us go. Then came the **darkness**. For three days the whole land of Egypt was in darkness. Pharaoh said, ***“Go! Just leave your animals behind!”*** Pharaoh wanted to make sure we returned. But we told him this wouldn’t work. He was furious, and he said, ***“Get away from me, I will kill you if I ever see your face again!”***

Then came the tenth and final plague, the **Angel of Death**. The Creator had warned us that the firstborn **sons of Egypt** were going to be struck down. The Lord had already hunted Moses down and he had been saved from being a son of Egypt through the **blood** of circumcision. Now it was time for all of us to **die** as children of Egypt and be reborn as the Creator’s children. We commanded everyone to put the **blood** of a lamb on their door-frames. We urged them to accept and embrace death so that the Angel of Death would pass over them—death could not touch anything that was already dead. We urged the people to pack up and be ready to go at any minute. The 430 years we had been **sons of Egypt** was coming to an end. When Pharaoh awoke to find that the Angel of Death was at hand, taking his firstborn son from his grip, he called for us and said, ***“Leave! Take everyone and all your animals! Be gone!”*** The people of Egypt begged us to leave, offering us their wealth and riches if we would just leave their country. The Creator led the way out of Egypt, guiding us with a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night.

But when Pharaoh realized what it was like with our people gone, he changed his mind one last time. He yelled at his officials, ***“What have we done by letting them go?!”*** Egypt couldn’t function without us, without its slaves. So Pharaoh got his army of chariots and began to chase us down. We had camped alongside the Red Sea and were at a dead end. And when we looked behind us in the distance we saw the armies of Egypt charging down upon us at full speed. We were trapped. The army of Egypt was on one side and the impenetrable sea was on the other side. The people became angry and scared. They yelled at Moses, ***“Were there not enough graves in Egypt that you had to bring us out here into the wilderness to die?! It would have been better for us to be slaves in Egypt than to die out here!”*** But filled with great faith at what he had seen the Creator do so far, Moses responded, ***“Do not fear! Stand your ground and watch the Lord’s salvation! The Lord will fight for you, you only need to be still!”*** Then the Creator moved his pillar of cloud and fire in between us and the army. Moses raised his staff over the sea and a strong east wind began to blow. All night the wind blew, pushing back the waters of the sea and making a path through the sea. We walked through the waters of the sea and into freedom. We had **died** as children of Egypt and were being **reborn** through the waters as the Creator’s children. The chariots followed us but their wheels got stuck in the mud. Egypt’s army fell into a great panic, shouting, ***“The Lord is fighting against us!”*** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the waters crashed back into their place, drowning all the armies of Egypt.

“The Lord will fight for you, you only need to be still.” Israel’s family had tried to save themselves from starvation by moving to Egypt and it had only made them slaves for 400 years. Moses had then tried to lead a violent revolution to save them from that slavery and it had only made things worse. It was only when the people stopped trying to save themselves that they found the Creator’s salvation. Realizing they had **no power** in and of themselves, the people of Israel finally followed the Lord’s Word and they were saved by the Lord’s hand from slavery in Egypt.

“The Lord will fight for you, you only need to be still.” We cannot save ourselves. It is only by faithfully **letting go** and **trusting** in the Lord to fight for us that we can find salvation. We need to be still. We need to calm our anxious hearts. We need to stop worrying and fretting. We need to stop grabbing for control over everything around us. We must be still to hear and practice the Lord’s commands. Without stillness we cannot listen. Without stillness we cannot receive the Creator’s Word. **Anxiety, worry, and fear** are the great enemies of faith. They agitate us and cut us off from the Creator’s Word. And we live in a world of no stillness. Constant fear, anxiety, worry, busyness, agitation, and fretting are all **around** us and **within** us. We are slaves in an anxious world, we are slaves in our own anxieties. The only thing that can save us is the Creator himself. Christ Jesus is the only one who can set us free. So stop. Be still. Let go. Surrender yourself into the Lord’s hands. He alone is your salvation. He will make a path for you through the impossible. Listen to his Word and follow him. ***“The Lord will fight for you, you only need to be still.” Amen.***