

Goshen
Tribulations/Plagues of Egypt #4
Exodus 8:20-27

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely, he will save you from the fowler's snare and from deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by the day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

In this land of ours, we have the distinct privilege and honor of singing campfire songs about the United States of America that are too numerous to name. There's a song for grandfathers. There's a song for grandmothers. There's a song for fathers. There's a song for mothers. There's a song for sons. There's a song for daughters. There's a song for brothers. And there's a song for sisters. When it's Poppa Smurf's time to carry the tune in the bucket around the campfire, he might throw in a little ditty from Arlo Guthrie: "this land is your land. This land is my land. From California to the New York Island. From the Redwood Forest to the Gulfstream Waters. This land was made for you and me." When it's Preacher Dad's time to fill the bucket with a tune, he'd most likely go with a hymn: "God Bless America. Land that I love. Stand beside her and guide. Through the night with the light from above." When the bucket comes to Brother Bob, he'd throw in something a little different: "You're a grand old flag. You're a high-flying flag. And forever in peace may you wave. You're the emblem of the land I love. The home of the free and the brave." But not to be outdone, when Sassy Sissy gets her turn, she'd carry this one in her bucket: "Yankee Doodle went to town riding on a pony. Stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni."

Regardless of where they are on this earth, the longing of the people of God for a land from which they can make praises rise and petitions ascend to the floor of heaven is universal. You'll find those longings in the hearts of his people in North America and South America. You'll find them in Europe, Asia and Africa. You'll even find them in Australia and Antarctica. But church, I want to tell you this morning that's not only the will of the people of God all around this globe; it's also the will of God himself. You see, before there was a land from which to sing "my country tis of thee," there was a land God Promised to Abraham we know as Israel. Before there was a land we know as Israel, there was a place called Goshen. It wasn't the Promised Land. It was in Egypt. It wasn't even a place where the people of God were free to make sacrifices to Him. But it was the place where God's people dwelled during some of the greatest tribulations one could ever go through in life. And God dwelled there with them. Church, today I could walk you through the fourth plague and whip you into a frenzy while doing it. I could tell you about Egyptian flies. Or how Beelzebub — a name for the devil that literally means "the Lord of Flies" — deceives people all across the globe. I might even get a hallelujah or amen from it. But I'm not going to do that this morning. Instead, I'm going to walk you through the 4th plague and focus in on one single solitary word that occurs in the narrative: Goshen, the place of refuge and divine protection for the people of God in the midst of storms of tribulations. Here is why I choose to do that this morning: Goshen held the answers to what God was up to with regard to His people in the time of the Exodus. And it holds the answers now. In fact, I'm convinced that understanding what Goshen represents is the key to comprehending what God was up to in the past with his people, what he's up to now, and what he will be up to in the future. To show you what I mean, please turn with me to the narrative of the fourth plague. It's found in Exodus 8:20-30. Turn there with me.

²⁰ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the river and say to him, 'This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ²¹ If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies; even the ground will be covered with them. ²² "But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land. ²³ I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow." ²⁴ And the Lord did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials; throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies. ²⁵ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land." ²⁶ But Moses said, "That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the Lord our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? ²⁷ We must take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God, as he commands us."

1. A Place of Divine Protection

- **Favorite Past Time for Adolescent Males:** (1) It's not baseball. (2) It's building a fort in the woods to shield you from your parents and from your sister and her friends.

- **Main Idea of the Point:** Goshen was a place of refuge for Israel, literally. It was the divine shelter provided by God to spare and shield them from the worst plagues of Egypt. Similarly, Jesus is that place of refuge for us, literally. This Goshen/Jesus connection also helps us understand the future tribulation that will occur at the end of time and our place in it.
- **Textual Emphasis (v22)** – On this day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live.
- **Goshen From 4 to 10:** (1) As severity of plagues increased in Egypt (a type of world), those who lived in Goshen were spared. “No swarm of flies will be there” (Flies); “but not one animal belonging to Israelites in Goshen died (Livestock); “the only place it did not hail was Goshen, where Israelites were” (Hail); “yet the Israelites had light where they lived during the darkness of Egypt” (Darkness); “and when the Lord sees the blood of the lamb on the doorposts, he will pass over. No harm will befall you” (Passover)
- **App** – “God is our fortress, our ever-present help in a time of trouble.” That’s true in the past (land of Goshen); It’s true in the present (Knowing Jesus has spared you from tribulations that would have come had you not trusted in him); It’s true in the future – God’s people will be spared from the worst of the Great Tribulation the New Testament speaks of.

2. A Place of Personal Understanding

- **Aha Moments and Items You Bought From Lowes**– (1) Every single item you buy from Lowes has a manual of how to put them together; (2) Most every male considers it an egregious offense to read the manual; (3) How can you read a manual when you’ve got THE manual stored upstairs; (3) Until you actually spent six hours putting together a storage shelving in the laundry room and realize you’ve got it all backwards. That’s an Aha moment that you should have read the manual.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** In the land of Goshen, the Israelites began to have their why questions answered. For Goshen revealed to them what God was up to in their lives as the storm he spared them from raged all around them. The same is also true for us today. And will be in the future. And what a truth it is!
- **Textual Emphasis (v22 and v23):** “On this day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen” // “I will make a distinction between my people and your people.”
- **The Differently and Distinction Connection (Very Important):** (1) Differently – Hebrew word used here is “sever” – it means to be distinct, distinguished, set apart. That’s part of the answer as to what God is up to in the world. His plan since the beginning has not been unification of the world. It’s been quite the opposite. Right from beginning of time: Cain – separate from brothers and sisters. At Babel, he separated the nations. God made Abraham separate from Lot. Jacob from Esau...Joseph from his brothers. And Israel was separate from Egypt. (2) Distinction – Hebrew word used here means “to be distinguished by ransom.” - That’s interesting because the ransom hasn’t yet been no sacrifice; no ransom paid (not until the Passover); there’s been no crossing of the Red Sea; no 10 Commandments; no Tabernacle; no entry into the Promised Land; But as far as God was concerned, they were already a redeemed people.
- **App:** God’s purposes in the world is not for the world to sing in perfect harmony. His purpose in the world is to make a distinction between His people and the world that is perishing. And his distinction comes via ransom. Though it’s yet to happen here, God saw it as already finished.

3. A Place of Worlds Colliding

- **Groom Lake, NV and Roswell, NM** – (1) If you say mention these places, people pay attention; (2) Why? Alien sightings; (3) Those places are locked down like a vault to keep people like me out who wants to see something in our world than doesn’t belong in our world.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** Goshen was in the land of Egypt but the Israelites who lived there were not of the Land of Egypt. We are in the world but not of the world. Consequently, it is not possible to live for Jesus the way the world wants us to.
- **Textual Emphasis:** They were God’s chosen people. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. One set apart for a purpose. That purpose is worship. We are in the world but not of the world. We are also God’s chosen people. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. One set apart for a purpose. That purpose is worship.
- **Textual Emphasis (v25 and v26):** “Go and sacrifice to your God here in the land” // “That would not be right.”
- **Collision of Religious Understanding in These Two Sentences:** (1) Pharaoh willing to concede, finally, that the Israelites are allowed to worship there “God” as long as they stay in the land. It sounds good. It’s tempting. They could do it right there in Goshen even. But doing so would have meant worshipping Jesus by the world’s terms. (2) Moses says it “wouldn’t be right”: (a) Not just because God hasn’t commanded them to do that; (b) but Moses knows light, and darkness don’t mix. Which is exactly what happening when you are married to the world and insert Jesus into your plans. What do you think is going to happen to the Israelites when they sacrifice bulls and lambs, both of which the Egyptians, worshipped? Do you think they would let it pass? What would happen in the

Plague of Livestock had they remained when the Egyptians noticed their livestock was dead and the Israelites had theirs? They had already persecuted and enslaved them. Do you think they would leave them alone?

- **App:** Compromise with the world means you have nothing to offer the world. It's what churches look like now. It's how God's people act now. And it is devoid of spiritual life. We are a distinctive people. Set apart to worship.

4. A Place of Temporary Dwelling

- **Missing the Exit for Hotels and Staying in the Only One Left at the Next Exit:** (1) In route to Miami to catch a flight to Israel the next morning; (2) Missed the exit for hotels. So, I stayed at the only one I could close to the hotel at the next exit. It was only 70 bucks for the night. I was excited. (3) My friends with me? Not so much. There were gunshots at all hours. What there was not was a continental breakfast. We couldn't wait to leave.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** Goshen was a temporary dwelling place. But God wanted them out of that temporary place to go on a three-day journey to make a sacrifice in the wilderness. Jesus took a three-day journey too from death to resurrection to take us out of a temporary dwelling place and into an inheritance that can never perish)
- **Textual Emphasis (v27):** "we must make a 3-day journey into the wilderness to make a sacrifice as he commands us."
- **The Great Foreshadowing:** (1) God has already informed the Israelites they were a set apart and distinctive people. (2) This verse tells them how they are distinguished and set apart: through a sacrifice; one that will require a three-day journey to fully experience. (3) Jesus was buried on a Friday and raised on a Sunday. And that three-day experience makes the sacrifice sufficient for ransom. (4) But that's not all: it also makes it possible to leave the land of Egypt – where Goshen is – and enter the Promised Land. That's why we are bound for it. Hallelujah. Glory to God. Praise His Holy Name.
- **App:** I am bound for the Promised Land. I am bound for the Promised Land. Oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for the Promised Land.