

Week 4: “Brick Without Straw”

1. READ

Pastor Watley’s Scriptures: Exodus 5 : 1 – 9 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.’”

²And Pharaoh said, “Who *is* the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.”

³So they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days’ journey into the desert and sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.”

⁴Then the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor.” ⁵And Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor!”

⁶So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, ⁷“You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. ⁸And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.’ ⁹Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.”

Further Reading: Proverbs 3 : 1 - 6 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹My son, do not forget my law,
But let your heart keep my commands;

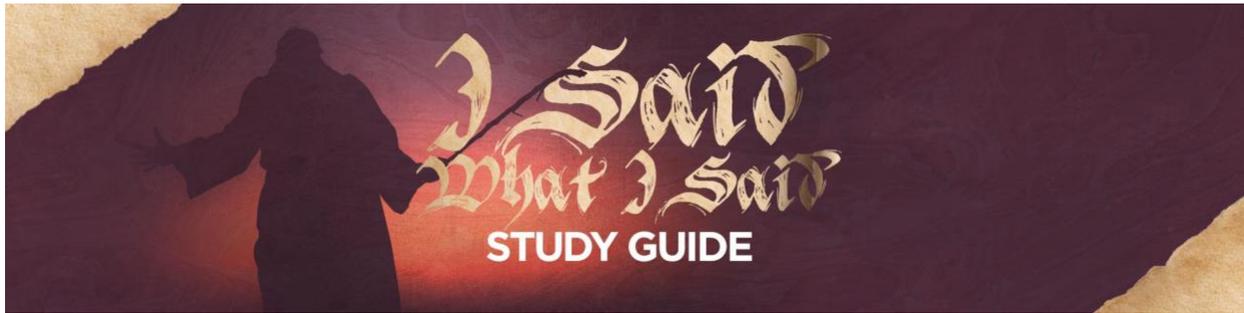
²For length of days and long life
And peace they will add to you.

³Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,

Write them on the tablet of your heart,
⁴And so find favor and high esteem
In the sight of God and man.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;

⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.



2. REFLECT

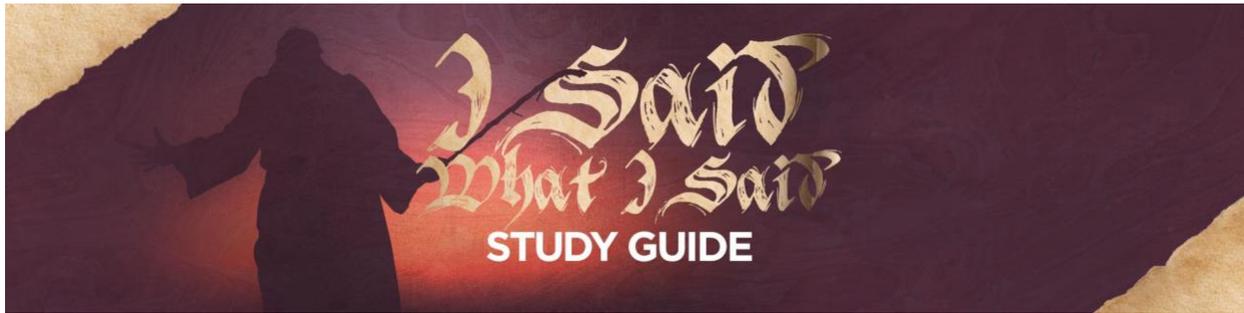
[Click the image to go to our YouTube page for more content!]



As we enter week four of Pastor Watley’s sermon series entitled “I Said What I Said,” we are delving deeper into the life, legacy, mission, and ministry of Moses. This week our Senior Pastor Rev. Matthew L. Watley reminded us of the various events leading up to one of the most prolific time periods in the life of Moses – the exodus from Egypt! As we study this tumultuous time in the life of Moses and the Israelites, it is easy to notice similarities in our own context.

Last week we learned that when God is trying to get our attention, He usually communicates in three ways: There is: 1) **Divine Interruption**, 2) **Divine Invitation**, and 3) **Divine Intervention**. However in our lesson for week four entitled “Brick Without Straw,” Pastor Watley also urges us to pay attention to God’s warnings. In our scripture for this week (Exodus 5:1-9), we find Pharaoh not taking God’s warnings seriously and suffering the consequences. When Moses and Aaron tell Pharaoh that the God of Israel said to let His people go, Pharaoh is “willfully ignorant” and responds by saying “I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.” As Pastor mentions, it is highly unlikely that Pharaoh would not know their God. And yet, he makes the conscious decision to reject their God and continue to systematically oppress the Israelites. In fact, he refuses to concede and tries to break their spirits even further.

In verse 7, Pharaoh tells the taskmasters of the Israelites: “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it.” Pharaoh not only requires the Israelites to stay in Egypt, but he takes away the vital material necessary for them to complete their task. In order to make brick, the Israelites needed straw to provide the structural integrity necessary as they were baking the mud. And yet, Pharaoh decided to further complicate



the process by removing the straw altogether, stating that they were “idle,” and they needed more to do. However, we know that his grievance was not with their productivity. Pharaoh’s heart was hardened towards God’s people. Thankfully, Moses was not afraid to make his requests known to God. He freely presented his complaints before God and God reminded him of the word He had already given him – *I am going to deliver you!*

God then shows Moses that His word never comes back void, by delivering the people out of Egypt. To do this, God sends several plagues to get his point across. Although each plague is unique and symbolic, we can also gain insight from the series of plagues as a whole. For one, the plagues were **repetitive**. The reality is, it should have only taken one plague for Pharaoh to realize that God was serious! And yet, Pharaoh continued to vehemently reject God’s warnings. But before we judge Pharaoh, it is important to examine our own lives to see the various ways we have failed to heed God’s warnings. How many times have we made the same mistakes?

But as Pastor Watley mentions, these plagues are also **miserable miracles**. Even though they are uncomfortable, these plagues often defy the laws of nature and time to get our attention. In addition to providing extraordinary miracles for our benefit, God also will go to extraordinary lengths to correct us and set us back on the right path. That is the sign of a great parent. In addition, that is a reminder of the **redemptive** nature of plagues. As the Egyptians experienced plague after plague, the Israelites also suffered alongside them. However by plague number four, God puts a hedge of protection around the Israelites. Although there was chaos all around them, God provided them with safety and solace in *Goshen* which literally means *a place of comfort and plenty*. This reminds us that we can run to God for comfort and plenty in the midst of chaos!

3. RESPOND

Introspective Questions

- What is this scripture saying to you?
- What has God shown you through this season of plagues that you refuse to ignore or deny another day?

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Pharaoh did not heed God’s warning?
- How would you have approached Pharaoh after he continued to deny your petitions and made your work harder?