

EXODUS

Today's Scripture Reading

Exodus 17:1-7

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All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.² Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?”³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”⁴ So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

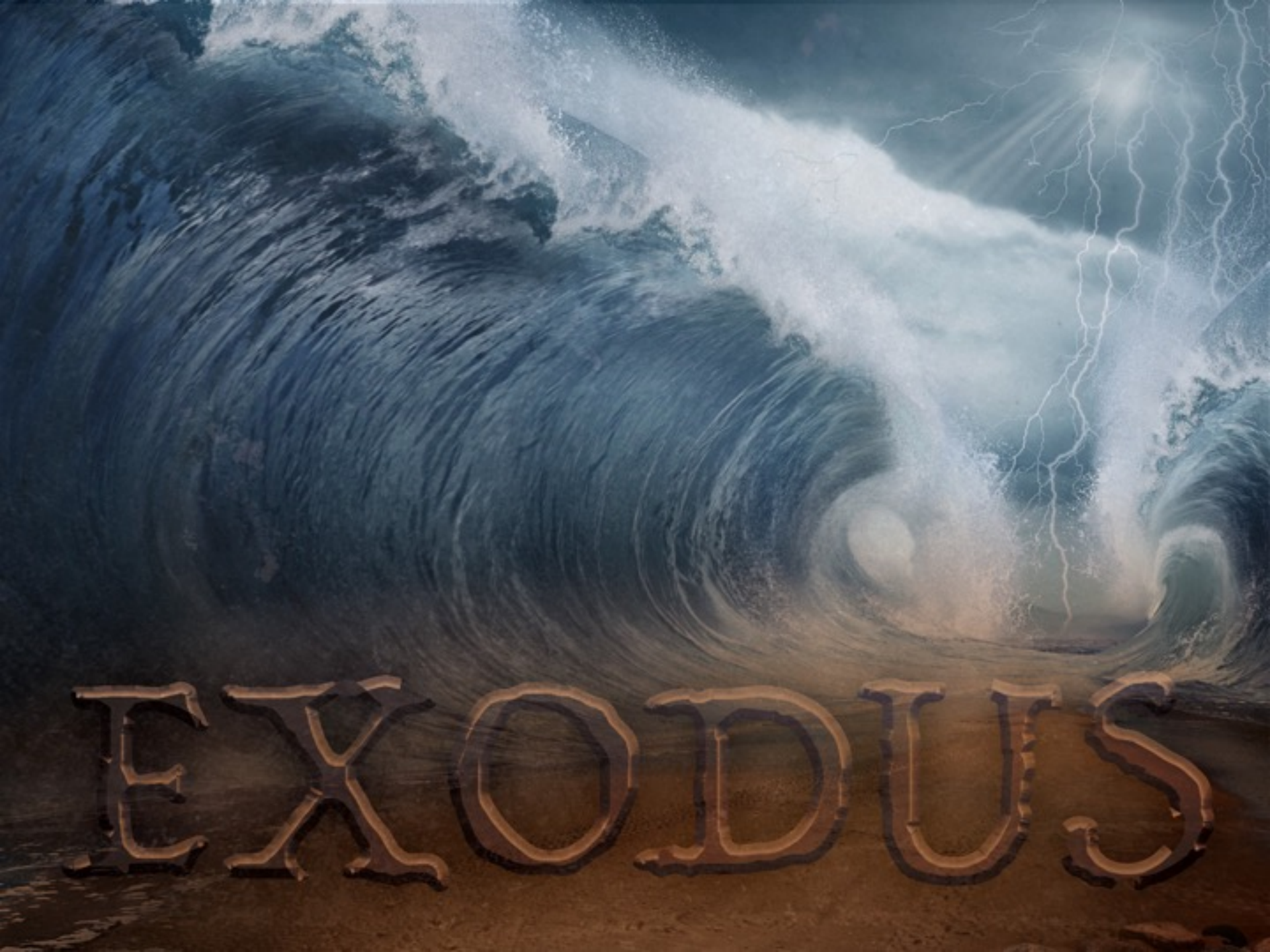
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⁵ And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

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- The people had a right to ask, had their hearts been righteous the question would have been well received. Which of us as a parent would scold our child for asking for a drink, food or other necessity?
- They ALL have been following the pillar/cloud to each place, NOT just Moses directing as he please or sees fit.
- They were following as “commanded” by the Lord, again not some power play by Moses
- Moses reminds people they are complaining against God, not Moses.
- Assumed the worst, assumed against the Fatherhood of God

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³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

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- Again, this is a dire, pressing issue, one of life and death not some luxury so we can understand their concern. The question raised in a healthy manner would have pleased the Father to answer.
- Grumbling is sin based on unbelief as we see God's anger expressed in the Psalms.

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PSALM 95: Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, ⁹ when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, **though they had seen my work.** ¹⁰ For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a **people who go astray** in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” ¹¹ Therefore swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.

- As always this seems like a heart issue not just a complaint as God says “they always go astray in their heart and have not known my ways.”
- What about their accusation about Moses wanting to kill them? Do we see what emotion does, how it neglects any sense of rational thinking?
- Why would Moses want to kill them?
- Another direct accusation against God, not even veiled well by the people.

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⁴ So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

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- What has he done to them, only good other than the first miscue when Pharaoh took straw away (which wasn't Moses fault but God's plan of action unfolding).
- Whereas the people complained against Moses, Moses cried out to God. We can assume Moses exercised faith here, trusting in the God he knows, a faithful God, not one conjured up by emotions. I say assume as if not God would have been equally displeased with Moses.

JOHN 10:32: Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” Seems like Moses was in this same situation.

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- Israel should have known;
- Moses was incapable of providing water (hence the accusation was really against God)
- They all have seen and followed the same pillar, an obvious miraculous sign God was leading.
- Water was a necessity and that need would not escape the Lords attention. So because He led them to a place without water, there must be a reason, one greater than what they were willing to look toward. He has proved faithful all along to provide. He had a plan and that was to see how Israel would react, once again in unbelief, or would they possibly catch on?

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⁵ And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

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“I will stand before you”

Wow, would this have been even better than the pillar or cloud? Imagine that sight for Moses and the elders! God standing before them and then, boom water is flowing out. One commentator suggested that this flowing, might have followed them the rest of their journey.

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“The Israelites’ inexcusable attitude becomes clear with Moses’ concluding statement to the entire story: “They tested the Lord saying, ‘Is the Lord among us or not?’ ” Had the people said something like, “Does the Lord intend for us to become weaker and weaker while we wait for him to supply us with water?” it would still have been an untrusting statement and evidence of lack of faith. But for the people actually to doubt God’s presence among them was outrageously unfaithful. His presence was obviously manifest at all times, as it was at that very time through the pillar of cloud/fire, so the people’s question must be seen as nothing other than a contempt of the Lord’s leadership over them.

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“It would be akin to asking a runner in the midst of running a marathon, “Do you intend to run in this race?” or asking a mother while she is in the kitchen working hard to get the family’s meal ready, “Are we going to have any dinner tonight?” It is an insult. It looks at the obvious and implies by snidely denying it that it is no good. Israel thus incurred God’s wrath and challenged God in a way he could not ignore.”

Stuart, D. K. (2006).

May I suggest a few things when dealing with what we see as unjust leadership.

- Check your heart. Ask God to reveal any issues that might be clouding your view of reality. Pride, dislike of the leader or leadership style, you could do a better job.
- Remember being a leader is HARD work and they need more grace as they balance more things than most of us have to.
- Ask yourself if there is a bigger purpose this leader or the Lord sees or knows, that you might not recognize.
- Lastly, if appropriate make an appeal.

- Israel in slavery over 400 years
- Gods says “I've heard your cry and will deliver”
- Sends M and A and although it was a rough road, Israel walks away with a 400 year plus lump sum payment
- Red Sea, pillar of fire/cloud, manna, quail

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- (L)eadership
- The Israelites saw circumstances and rushed to a conclusion about them prematurely.
- No water=we die, No water = God doesn't care, No water God is either impotent, unloving or unaware.
- They ignored what they had previously seen and heard.

- If foundation is firm, then circumstances, adversaries, doubts may banter you about but you will come back to the center that “God is Love” and all that that declaration infers. With practice and discernment we can develop a trusting heart.

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Let me give you 6 components to assist you in building
a firm foundation

A. Have the right, high view of our heavenly Father

Creator of Universe, knows all, is everywhere, opens the ground to destroy unbelievers. We need to fear God and not just the cleaned up version we like to talk about as a “holy reverence” but remember Isaiah's reaction when he fell face down saying “I am undone”. That is holy reverence I will buy into.

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B. Look for and acknowledge every answered prayer, God intervention.

- *Pay attention, look for Him and His deeds in daily living.*
- *Luke 17:10 Ten lepers healed, only 1, a Samaritan, a foreigner, came back.*
- *Remind yourself to come back and say thanks.*

C. Pray hard, pray with faith, pray scripturally. You will see God as He answers.

Remember the women, in scripture, who harassed the judge. What does the scripture tell us. That even though he was unjust, because of her persistence he gave her her request. Read some of the old guys writings, PLEASE. And see the confidence, boldness in prayer. Spurgeon, Mueller, Hudson Taylor. Although many times their prayer was very specific and God answered them in the exact way they asked, their was also a settled rest that they new whom they were praying to.

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D. Constantly ask “What are you trying to teach me Lord?” in the midst of trying circumstances

He is our father, remember how this whole thing started out? With Him walking with man and women talking in the garden. How cool. Do you think that plan has changed any, nope. He will speak to you if you listen. When I say Heavenly Father, what comes to mind? Is your mental portrait accurate? Is it defined by scripture or experience?

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E. Renew your mind with the perspective of Scripture.

I don't think we can emphasize this too much. The Bible says we are strangers and foreigners in this land. Jesus says the world will hate us as it hated Him because He and we are not of this world. Therefore our thinking needs to be from the world we are from, that world is a spiritual one that is in direct contrast to what we are fed daily by everything around us not Christian (and even some that purports to be Christian)

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F. "Did you pass the test? If not you will have to retake it!"

God is not asleep nor inactive, He is alive and at work in our lives for our good. Coincidence? Absolutely not. He holds time, space and circumstances in His hands. He dictates events deliberately

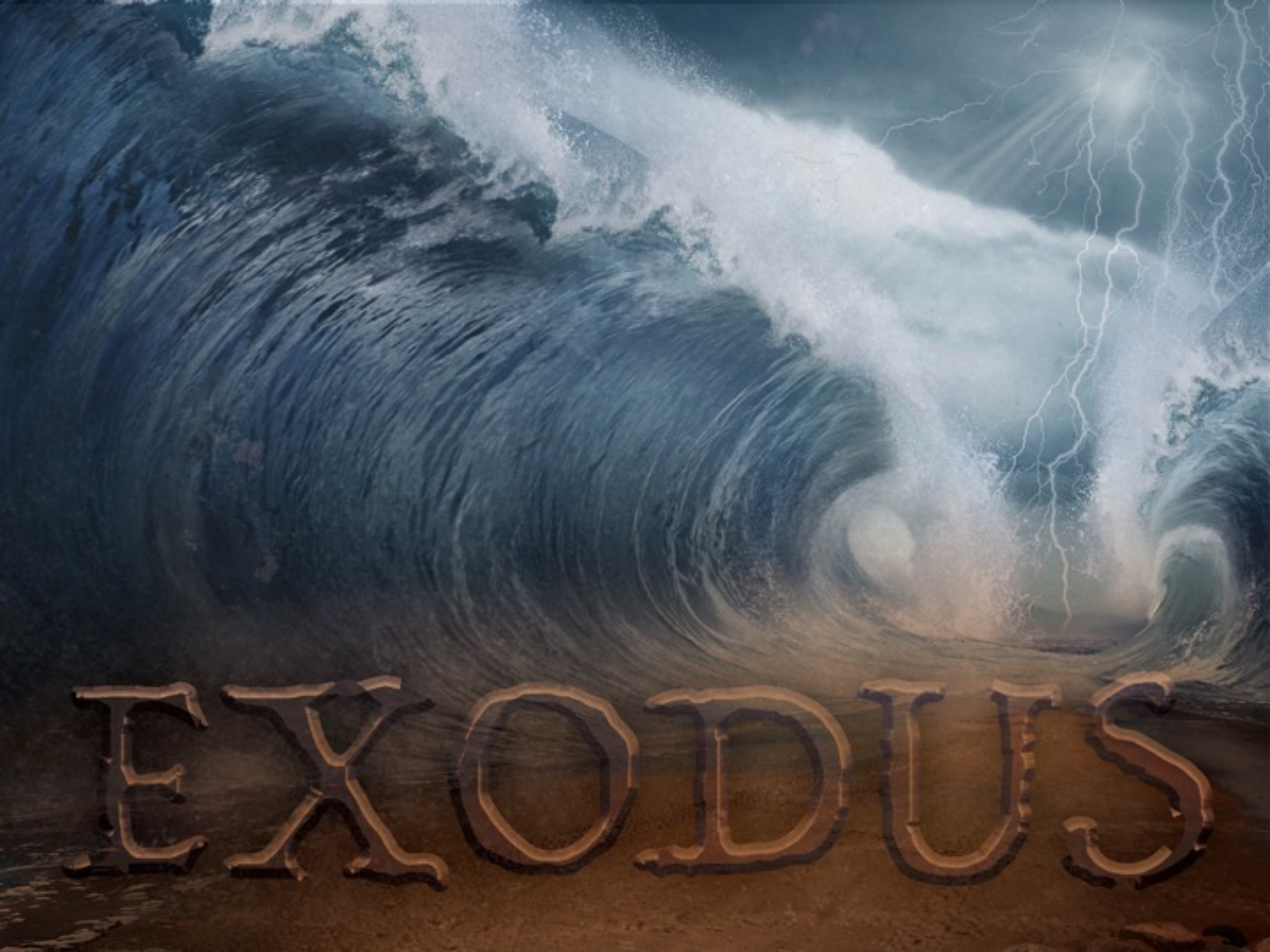
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APPLICATION:

And Moses cried unto the Lord. It is one of the most prominent traits of the character of Moses, that, at the occurrence of a difficulty, he always carries it straight to God.

- 2 things I would ask you to do in application this week:
 - Look for God, in nature, circumstances, your gifts, those around you, the negative you see. All have purpose for us.
 - Check your foundation. What does it rest on? If anything other than Christ and Christ alone, refresh yourself in His finished work.



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