

The Anger of God

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

Does God get angry? We know he does. Everyone has heard about the wrath of God. It's fair to say many people don't see what God has to be all that angry about. When they read the Scriptures about the wrath of God, they may shiver a little, but they really don't understand. They either think of God as a belligerent tyrant, or they don't believe he's all that angry.

Between the movies, *The Ten Commandments* and *The Prince of Egypt*, everybody knows how the death of the firstborn in Egypt was the means God used to finally force Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But, someone asked on one of our Internet forums why God had to kill the firstborn of Egypt just to get the Israelites out of there. After all, he's God, isn't he? Couldn't he have found a better way to do it? The kids hadn't done anything—had they? Well, no, they hadn't. It might be important to understand what actually happened. To understand what the basis of the anger of God might be.

The relevant Scriptures are in the beginning of the Book of Exodus. This is the story of how the children of Israel had gone down into Egypt, just a few of

them in number, and had increased in great numbers and finally were made slaves by the Egyptians.

Stronger people outnumbered the Egyptians

Exodus 1:7-9 states, "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." The specter of this—a group of people in the land who are beginning to outnumber you, and who are

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stronger than you, was frightening. They could easily lose control of the country. "Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land" (Exodus 1:10).

So they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. They made slaves of them. They forced them to build treasure

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An Opportunity . . .

We know the economy has been bad and has likely impacted you. At a time like this, your sacrifice to get the Gospel to more people is greatly appreciated. Every dollar CEM receives is used prudently, recognizing the sacrifice you've made. The Passover season is approaching. The Bible says that three seasons of the year we are to come before God with a gift: the Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles. Your gift is to be according to how God has blessed you (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). For your convenience, an envelope is enclosed for your Passover season gift. It is greatly needed and abundantly appreciated.

A Plan for Our Children

By Stacey Shoemaker

There is someone who is deeply invested in your child's spiritual development. He has analyzed her personality for strengths and weaknesses. He knows the intricacies of her relationships with family and friends and has studied every possible angle to win her over. He has a masterful plan for influencing your child's walk with God. That someone is Satan the Devil.

Right now a war is being waged for the hearts and minds of our young people (Ephesians 6). The last two decades have seen a flurry of sociological research about Christianity which has revealed changes that have been previously unseen in American history. As Forrest Barry, author of a blog entitled, *The Last Christian Generation?* states, "The percentage of [American] believers in the teen and early adult years has diminished greatly compared to previous generations. It is undeniable that there are ominous implications if this trend continues."

What can we do in the face of this onslaught? In Deuteronomy 6, God, our Great Commander, has given us a winning battle plan. We need only to implement it and trust Him. The instructions he gives us for winning this epic battle can be distilled down to just a few simple words: "Parents, talk to your children [about God]! Teach them the Bible."

Research supports the effectiveness of putting parents on

the front line of this conflict. While Christian churches are pouring unprecedented resources into elaborate children's ministries, the data shows that parents are two to three times more influential than even the best program for children (Search Institute). Church programming is probably more effective than ever in reaching youth, yet families are less involved in the spiritual training of their children than at any other time in history. As a result, Christianity is losing its young people at a record rate.

How can we prevent our children from falling victim to Satan's plans for them? Three activities double the odds of children remaining in the faith into adulthood: (1) faith conversations with mother, (2) faith conversations with father, (3) serving alongside their parents in a ministry project (Search Institute). Is it any surprise that these highly effective methods for instilling lasting faith in our children are reflective of God's instructions in Deuteronomy?

God's masterful plan for our children is family-centered. How do you know whether you are doing enough to direct your child's spiritual development? A quick test for parents is to determine: *What percentage of my child's spiritual training is organization-centered? What percentage is family-driven?* Unless we, as parents, are assuming responsibility for a significant portion of our children's

spiritual training, we are not fulfilling the biblical instructions in Deuteronomy 6. We cannot expect to win the battle against such a formidable foe if we disregard this mandate from our Commander.

So ask yourself: *How intentional am I regarding the spiritual development of my children?* Satan is very intentional. We can't afford not to be.

To help parents, YEA offers a systematic, fun program for five different age groups for you to teach your children the Bible at home. Go to www.borntowin.net and click on YEA *FREE* Sample Lessons. You can order these lessons online or you can call 1-888-BIBLE-44. CEM also offers additional *FREE* daily activities to do with your children for five different age groups. Click on YEA! Let's R.E.A.C.H.

In Memory

Christian Educational Ministries acknowledges with grateful appreciation a donation received in memory of Roland Magandy of Minot, North Dakota, who passed away at the end of February, 2011. Our prayers and sympathies are with his wife, Mona, and their family and friends in this time of loss.

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cities for Pharaoh. “But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel” (v. 12). It was the law of unintended consequences. For some reason, affliction makes people stronger, not weaker. “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor” (vv. 13-14).

Can you grasp the dehumanizing effect of this kind of slavery?

You know, for us, all these years later, this is just so many words on paper. I lack the power of description to impress upon your mind what this was like. To get a grip on it, you’d almost have to read a book like *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl. It’s a description of Nazi use of slave labor in World War II. Can you imagine what it’s like to sleep all night long on a board, to get up in the morning with every bone in your body aching, with your feet so sore you can hardly walk on them, bleeding, perhaps, from the previous day’s exertions? To get up and go on out to work on those sore feet with that aching body, knowing that you have to do it. Because if you don’t do it, they will kill you. And to do it on one half liter or so of thin soup, and a few grams of bread. To have to do this, in fear of death, changes people, terribly.

Remember, these people were not kept, as the Nazis did, for four, five, or seven years. These people were kept in slavery generation after generation after generation. The poorest of us live so well, we can’t grasp the degradation and death that is inseparable from this kind of slavery. We have no idea of the dehumanizing effect of it—not only on the slaves, but on the masters. It turns the slaves into animals, and the masters into monsters. We cannot grasp diminution of human life, even to the extent of infanticide.

“And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live” (vv. 15-16). It was Pharaoh’s intent to kill fully half the newborn babies among all the Israelites, and the boys in particular. The slaves weren’t human anyway, to the Egyptians. Note this well: Pharaoh was not merely killing the firstborn of the Israelites—harkening back to our original question of why did God take the life of the firstborn of the Egyptians—he was killing all of the boys.

“But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children

alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them” (vv. 17-19). I imagine in many cases, that was true. Some of the women were working in the field when the baby came.

All of the Egyptian people were involved in this atrocity

You may have overlooked this, even if you’ve read this before. “And Pharaoh charged all his people saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive” (v. 22). Have you ever noticed that all the Egyptians were involved in this atrocity? No one could say, “My hands are clean.” No one could say, “Well, I wasn’t involved in that.” All of them were in on it. Note well, also, that it wasn’t just the firstborn of the Israelites that died, it was all the males. And all the Egyptians were involved in it. They couldn’t have missed it, when people would grab a newborn Hebrew male child by the feet, swing him around, and fling him into the river to the crocodiles.

“And there was a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the

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flags by the river's brink" (Exodus 2:1-3). So, she obeyed the law in a way—all males had to be put in the river—and she did that. The baby was Moses.

"And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children" (vv. 4-6). If she had done what her father said, she would have thrown that baby in the water, right there. But she didn't. As a result of

her taking the child from the water, she saved the life, the very instrument, of God's judgment.

So, why should God get all that mad at the Egyptians? After all, they were just grabbing hundreds of little boy babies by the legs and giving them a heave into the river where they could get eaten by crocodiles. What's to get mad about? The fact that we don't understand the wrath of God is a measure of how cheap life has become for us. Consider a common medical practice that is perfectly legal today in our country—partial birth abortion. How does this differ from what Pharaoh wanted the Hebrew midwives to do? He wanted them to kill all the firstborn of Israel, as soon as they could see if it was a boy. They were to wack its head on the birthstool or on a rock and

kill it, just as soon as it was born, before it really got a foothold in life. How does this differ from partial birth abortion?

Can you understand why God, who can see all of the worst of this, might be angry? But why take it out on the children? Listen as Ronald Dart explains and makes clear the meaning behind all the plagues God brought upon Egypt, and why the firstborn had to die. To order a *FREE* CD of Ronald Dart's message, *The Anger of God*, just check the box on the enclosed card and return it to us.



Calendar of Events

Passover - CEM will commemorate the Christian Passover on Sunday, April 17, 2011 at 8:00 p.m., joining services planned by the Texas Fellowship at The Villa, 103 S. Dean St., Gladewater, Texas 75647. Due to unavailability of Internet at this location, the service will not be live-streamed. CEM will present the 2010 Christian Passover service to be accessed from our website, www.borntowin.net.

First Day of Unleavened Bread - CEM will join the Texas Fellowship to celebrate the Holy Day in worship services to be held at the Lindale Community Center, located just west of US Highway 69 on FM 16 in Lindale, Texas at 2:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 19th. This service will be live-streamed for the convenience of those who cannot make it, but would like to join us. Please join us in person, or online at www.borntowin.net.

Last Day of Unleavened Bread - CEM will join the Texas Fellowship for the second Holy Day service scheduled at the Quality Inn, 2843 N. NW Loop 323, Tyler, Texas 75702 (although this is subject to change) at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 25th. We are privileged to have Dr. David Antion as the guest speaker. This service will also be live-streamed. Please watch our website for any announcement about an alternate location or time.

2011 YEA Summer Camp - Camp dates are anticipated to be July 3-10. The deadline for applications is May 1, 2011. Some scholarship funds are available. We would love to see you there! Look on www.borntowin.net under Events for more information and to download an application.

*Christian
Educational
Ministries*

PO Box 560
Whitehouse, Texas 75791
phone: 1-888-BIBLE-44
fax: 903.839-9311
e-mail: adm@borntowin.net
website: www.borntowin.net

*That the man of God may be proficient
and equipped for every good work.*