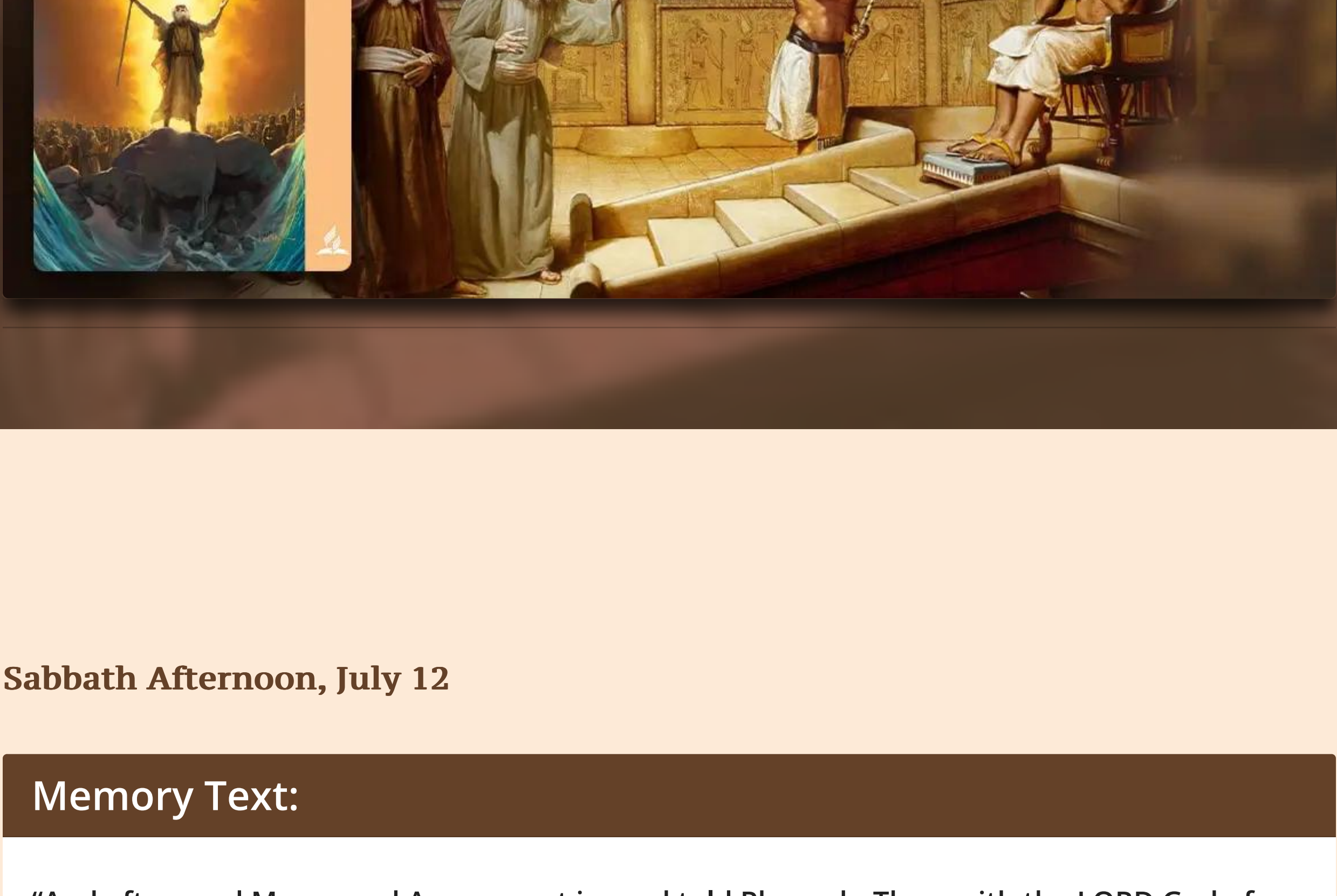


The Rough Start

Lesson 3, 3rd Quarter July 12-18, 2025.



Sabbath Afternoon, July 12

Memory Text:

“And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.” KJV — Exodus 5:1, 2

“The Hebrews had expected to obtain their freedom without any special trial of their faith or any real suffering or hardship. But they were not yet prepared for deliverance. They had little faith in God, and were unwilling patiently to endure their afflictions until He should see fit to work for them. Many were content to remain in bondage rather than meet the difficulties attending removal to a strange land; and the habits of some had become so much like those of the Egyptians that they preferred to dwell in Egypt. Therefore the Lord did not deliver them by the first manifestation of His power before Pharaoh. He overruled events more fully to develop the tyrannical spirit of the Egyptian king and also to reveal Himself to His people. Beholding His justice, His power, and His love, they would choose to leave Egypt and give themselves to His service. The task of Moses would have been much less difficult had not many of the Israelites become so corrupted that they were unwilling to leave Egypt.” PP 260.2

“Moses had been charged also with a message for the king. The two brothers entered the palace of the Pharaohs as ambassadors from the King of kings, and they spoke in His name: “Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness.” PP 257.2

“Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?” demanded the monarch; “I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go. PP 257.3

“Their answer was, ‘The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.’ PP 257.4

“Under the hand of God, nature ministers against the transgressors of God’s laws. She holds her destructive elements in her bosom till the time when they shall break forth to destroy man and purify the earth. When Pharaoh defied God through Moses and Aaron saying, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice...? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go,” nature expressed her sympathy with her injured Maker, and cooperated with God to avenge the insult to Jehovah. All Egypt was laid desolate because of the stubborn resistance of Pharaoh.—Letter 209, 1899.” 3MR 344.3

“And afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us; let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey to the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.’ The request of Moses and Aaron was very modest. They asked to go only three days’ journey. But Pharaoh haughtily refused this, and professed to be entirely ignorant of the God of Israel. But the Lord purposed to let Pharaoh know that his voice is to be obeyed; that he is above all, and will compel proud rulers to bow to his authority.”

“The king, thoroughly roused, suspected the Israelites of a design to revolt from his service. Disaffection was the result of idleness; he would see that no time was left them for dangerous scheming. And he at once adopted measures to tighten their bonds and crush out their independent spirit. The same day orders were issued that rendered their labor still more cruel and oppressive. The most common building material of that country was sun-dried brick; the walls of the finest edifices were made of this, and then faced with stone; and the manufacture of brick employed great numbers of the bondmen. Cut straw being intermixed with the clay, to hold it together, large quantities of straw were required for the work; the king now directed that no more straw be furnished; the laborers must find it for themselves, while the same amount of brick should be exacted.” PP 258.2

“These officers supposed that their oppression came from their taskmasters, and not from the king himself; and they went to him with their grievances. Their remonstrance was met by Pharaoh with a taunt: “Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.” They were ordered back to their work, with the declaration that their burdens were in no case to be lightened. Returning, they met Moses and Aaron, and cried out to them, ‘The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.’” PP 258.4

“This order produced great distress among the Israelites throughout the land. The Egyptian taskmasters had appointed Hebrew officers to oversee the work of the people, and these officers were responsible for the labor performed by those under their charge. When the requirement of the king was put in force, the people scattered themselves throughout the land, to gather stubble instead of straw; but they found it impossible to accomplish the usual amount of labor. For this failure the Hebrew officers were cruelly beaten. PP 258.3

“The elders of Israel endeavored to sustain the sinking faith of their brethren by repeating the promises made to their fathers, and the prophetic words of Joseph before his death, foretelling their deliverance from Egypt. Some would listen and believe. Others, looking at the circumstances that surrounded them, refused to hope. The Egyptians, being informed of what was reported among their bondmen, derided their expectations and scornfully denied the power of their God. They pointed to their situation as a nation of slaves, and tauntingly said, “If your God is just and merciful, and possesses power above that of the Egyptian gods, why does He not make you a free people?” They called attention to their own condition. They worshiped deities termed by the Israelites false gods, yet they were a rich and powerful nation. They declared that their gods had blessed them with prosperity, and had given them the Israelites as servants, and they gloried in their power to oppress and destroy the worshipers of Jehovah. Pharaoh himself boasted that the God of the Hebrews could not deliver them from his hand. PP 259.3

“Words like these destroyed the hopes of many of the Israelites. The case appeared to them very much as the Egyptians had represented. It was true that they were slaves, and must endure whatever their cruel taskmasters might choose to inflict. Their children had been hunted and slain, and their own lives were a burden. Yet they were worshiping the God of heaven. If Jehovah were indeed above all gods, surely He would not thus leave them in bondage to idolaters. But those who were true to God understood that it was because of Israel’s departure from Him—because of their disposition to marry with heathen nations, thus being led into idolatry—that the Lord had permitted them to become bondmen; and they confidently assured their brethren that He would soon break the yoke of the oppressor.” PP 260.1

“The Lord directed Moses to go again to the people and repeat the promise of deliverance, with a fresh assurance of divine favor. He went as he was commanded; but they would not listen. Says the Scripture, “They hearkened not ... for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.” Again the divine message came to Moses, “Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.” In discouragement he replied, “Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me?” He was told to take Aaron with him and go before Pharaoh, and again demand “that he send the children of Israel out of his land. PP 260.3

“He was informed that the monarch would not yield until God should visit judgments upon Egypt and bring out Israel by the signal manifestation of His power. Before the infliction of each plague, Moses was to describe its nature and effects, that the king might save himself from it if he chose. Every punishment rejected would be followed by one more severe, until his proud heart would be humbled, and he would acknowledge the Maker of heaven and earth as the true and living God. The Lord would give the Egyptians an opportunity to see how vain was the wisdom of their mighty men, how feeble the power of their gods, when opposed to the commands of Jehovah. He would punish the people of Egypt for their idolatry and silence their boasting of the blessings received from their senseless deities. God would glorify His own name, that other nations might hear of His power and tremble at His mighty acts, and that His people might be led to turn from their idolatry and render Him pure worship.” PP 263.1

When things go contrary to one’s will and way today, most Christians give credit to the Devil. Only when things go according to their liking do they give credit to God! Balaam, too, was happy when the way opened for him to go to Balak, but when the angel of the Lord blocked the road he was traveling on, then Balaam, became as mad as a dog and smote the ass.

No, nothing but you yourself can defeat God’s plans for you. Be it your friends or your enemies, be it beasts or kings, you will find them all unwittingly or wittingly working for your good rather than for your harm if you are doing God’s bidding. What a rich resource Heaven is! And who knows it!

Remember now, that whatever may stand in your way, be it the Red Sea or the River Jordan, be it a mountain or be it a desert, it shall become your very stepping stone.

“The Lord told Moses that the signs and wonders which he should show before Pharaoh would harden his heart, because he would not receive them, and God would multiply his signs. Every punishment which the king rejected would bring the next chastisement more close and severe, until the proud heart of the king would be humbled, and he should acknowledge the Maker of the heavens and the earth as the living and all-powerful God.” 3SG 204.1

“Again Moses and Aaron entered the lordly halls of the king of Egypt. There, surrounded by lofty columns and glittering adornments, by the rich paintings and sculptured images of heathen gods, before the monarch of the most powerful kingdom then in existence, stood the two representatives of the enslaved race, to repeat the command from God for Israel’s release.” PP 263.2

“And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.” KJV — Ezekiel 2:2-7

“And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.” KJV — Ezekiel 3:4-7

The condemnation of Rev. 3:14-18 against the Laodiceans, and the condemnation of Ezek. 2:1-7 and 3:4-7 against “the house of Israel,” being the same, each therefore is the complement of the other: the one being the Revelation of that of which the other is the prophecy.

“Moses was somewhat discouraged. In his despondency he inquired of the Lord, If the children of Israel, thine own circumcised people, will not hearken unto me, how then shall Pharaoh, who is uncircumcised, and an idolater, hear me?” “And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they.” 3SG 203.2

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