



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

# BIBLE SURVEY

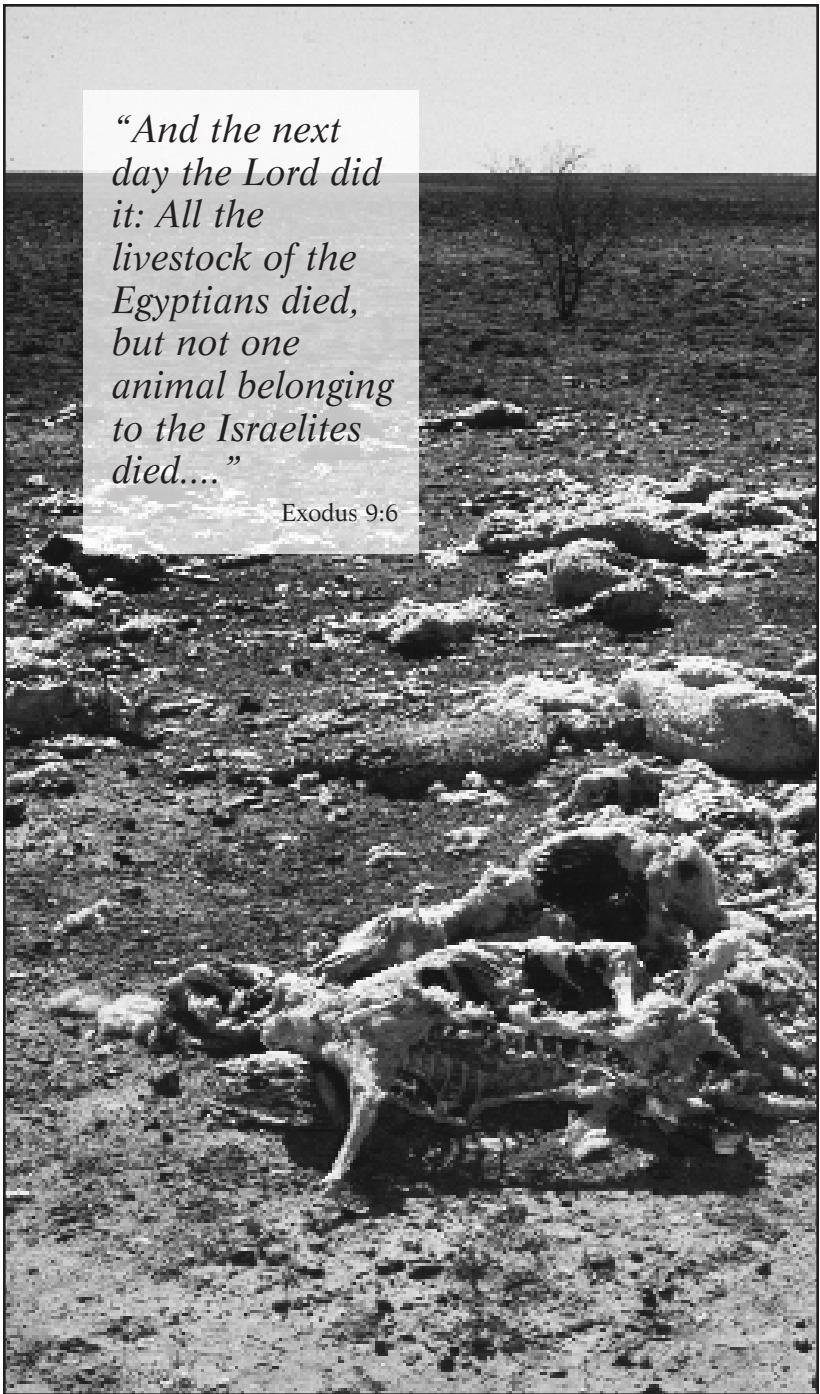
THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

**EXODUS**

Week 2

*“And the next day the Lord did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died....”*

Exodus 9:6



# Lord of the Flies ...and Livestock

DAY 8

Exodus 8:20–9:12

What ugly insects, little beasties or things that buzz in the night make your skin crawl?

1. What was different about the plague of gnats? (a) no warning, (b) no copy cats, (c) a sign of worse things to come. Why the difference?
2. What was different about the plague of flies? (a) God made a distinction between Egyptian and Hebrew, (b) the Hebrews used insect repellent, (c) Pharaoh asked for prayer, (d) Pharaoh's deceit was transparent.
3. Why was Pharaoh still so stubborn? (a) the plagues could be weathered, (b) Moses could be fooled, (c) Pharaoh's magicians would come through.
4. Where was the divine mercy and human responsibility in God's judgment (vs. 5-6; compare 19-21)?

1. What events might God be using to get through to your heart? Is it becoming soft and malleable or hard and stubborn?
2. Does God still spare some people, while afflicting others, or does he allow natural disasters to run their course (Ec 9:11)?

**“Confront Pharaoh as he goes to the water”** (8:20; also 7:14; 9:13). This phraseology—introducing the first, fourth and seventh plagues—may be the author's way of grouping the first nine plagues into three sets of three. The **flies** may well have been somewhat like the *Stomoxys calcitrans*, aggressive flies that are known to invade houses and stables to bite humans and livestock. These flies are carriers of anthrax, a deadly agent used in biological warfare that causes boils and black, burning abscesses. The **destruction of animal life** would also have a spiritual meaning, as a rebuke of the pagan bull-gods (Apis and Mnevis), the cow-god (Hathor) and the ram-god (Khnum) so prevalent in the Egyptian worship of that era.

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

into the Word

## LIVING

out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

## DAY 9

# Hail to the Chief!

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Exodus 9:13–10:29

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

What storm is most memorable in your life, and for what reason?

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**DIGGING**  
into the Word

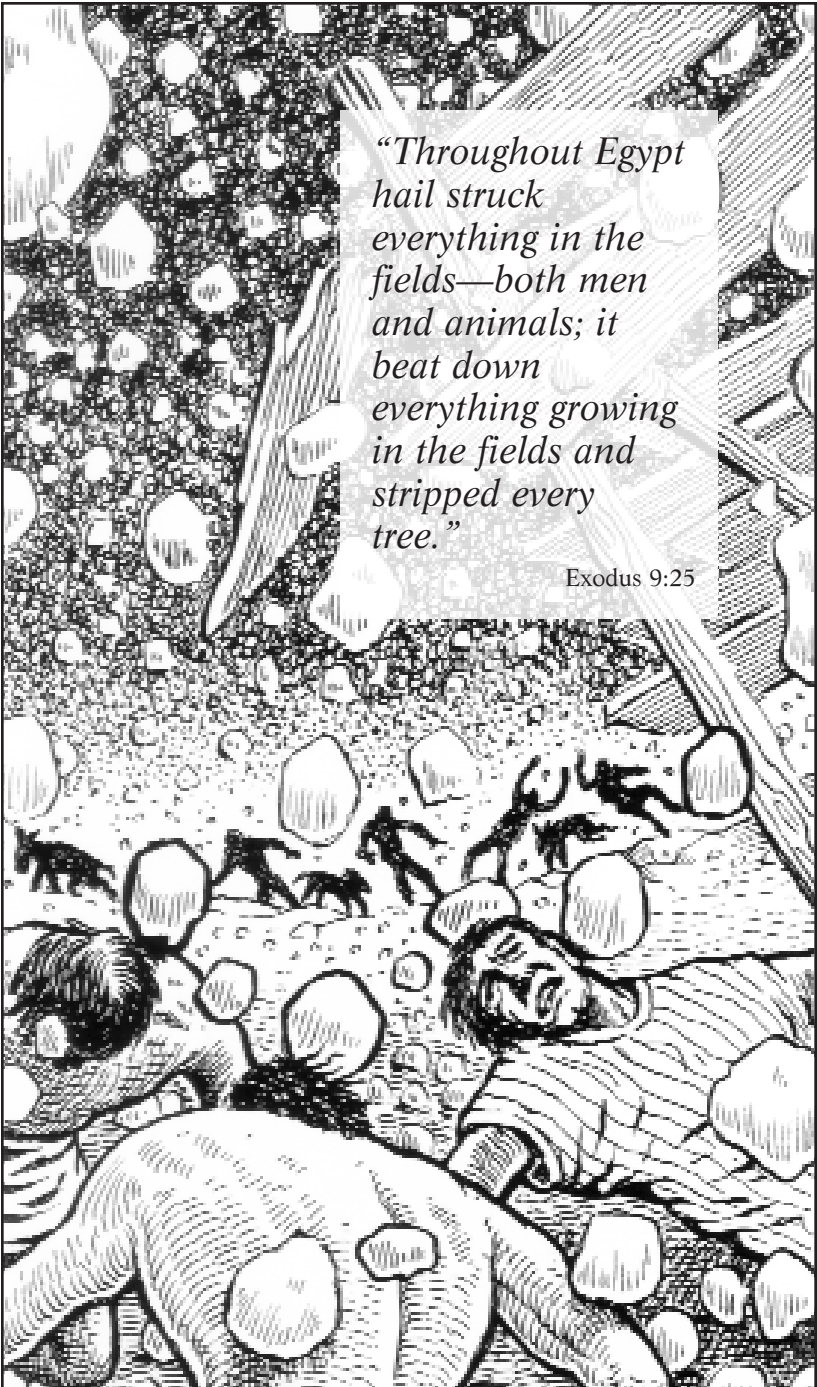
1. What was God's purpose in Moses' tougher talk (compare 5:2)?
  2. How would you describe Pharaoh now? (a) repentant, (b) good actor, (c) concerned, (d) scared, (e) in denial, (f) escape artist. What was wrong with Pharaoh's first confession of sin (8:27-30)?
  3. Who hardened Pharaoh's heart? Himself (9:34)—or the Lord (10:1, 20, 27; compare 8:32; 9:12)? Did it make a difference who the active agent was?
  4. Why did God keep removing the plagues, knowing that Pharaoh would change his mind again?
  5. What stalling tactics did Pharaoh use when he was about to let the Israelites go and worship (10:9-11, 24; compare 8:8, 25-28)?
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**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. What does it take to soften your heart? When do you submit to God's will? (a) a tinge of conscience, (b) when things unravel, (c) when you begin to suffer consequences, (d) when you are in over your head, (e) after you try everything else.
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**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*Exodus refers to God **hardening Pharaoh's heart**, as well as those times when Pharaoh did so himself. Of course, all that exists ultimately derives from the Creator God. So who initiated the hardening of Pharaoh's heart? Our 21st century world tends to see life decisions as either God's or human choice. Ancient Eastern culture saw God and humans as both having choices, and this worldview may be part of what Exodus has in mind regarding the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.*



*“Throughout Egypt  
hail struck  
everything in the  
fields—both men  
and animals; it  
beat down  
everything growing  
in the fields and  
stripped every  
tree.”*

Exodus 9:25

## DAY 10

# Roast Lamb, Lasting Ordinance

Exodus 11:1–12:30

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

If you had to prepare a last-minute feast on the eve of a road trip, what would it be?

1. How was this tenth plague different from the first nine? Which plagues make the same distinction (11:7) as this one (see 8:22-23; 9:4, 6; 9:26; 10:23)?
2. What “lasting ordinance” is called for here (12:14, 17, 24)? Describe it.
3. Why splash blood on the houses (11:7; 12:7, 13, 21-27)? (a) superstition—to ward off evil, (b) sign and seal of mercy—to indicate which households the angel of death should pass over, (c) symbolic—to show how one life would be given for another.
4. Who got killed from this tenth plague and why (11:1, 4-8; 12:12-13, 29-30)? Why was this last horrible judgment necessary? Why not just kill Pharaoh?

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Have you ignored warnings from the Lord to your own peril? Were they really from the Lord—or from some religionist?
2. What Exodus-like freedom have you celebrated?
3. What does the first Passover have in common with Holy Communion (Eucharist or Lord’s Supper)? What elements are different?

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

*The **death of a firstborn son** (11:5) hit harder than any other disaster, for all of a father’s hopes were wrapped up in that son—even more so for a king’s son. God the Father sacrificed his firstborn Son for the redemption of his people. Jesus was interpreted by the early church as a Passover lamb (12:21, 27; see 1Co 5:7). His blood provides the cover, redeeming us from death, much as did the blood of the lambs at the first Passover. This ordinance (12:14, 17, 24), still kept in a modified form by Orthodox Jews, is understood by Christians in light of the NT (see Mark 14:12-26 and parallels; Jn 1:29; 1Co 5:6-8; Heb 7:27; 9:22; 1Pe 1:19; 1Jn 1:7; Rev 5:6).*

# Make a Quick Exodus

DAY 11

Exodus 12:31–13:16

1. Have you ever worn out your welcome? Have you ever wanted a guest to make a quick exodus?
2. Where do you fall in the birth order of your family? (a) firstborn, (b) middle, (c) baby of the family? What special privilege and duty go with that position?

1. Why did the Israelites leave in haste? (a) they were bribed to get out of town, (b) their lease expired at exactly 430 years, (c) this time Pharaoh meant “Go or else!”
2. What does “consecrate” mean (Ex 13:2, 12-13, 15)? Why do you think the Lord wanted firstborn sons for himself? (a) they were rightfully his, (b) they were redeemed from the tenth plague, (c) all Israel was really God’s firstborn.
3. How were the Israelites to remember the great faithfulness of the Lord? (a) make Passover a lasting ordinance, (b) offer a child to the Lord.

1. Are you trusting God to deliver you—even from what seems like 430 years of slavery?
2. How do you “consecrate” a child, of whatever birth order, to the Lord? Should the child have a say in the matter?
3. Suppose you had to wear a picture of one great thing the Lord has done for you on your forehead or arm. What would be in that picture?

*Orthodox Jews take 13:9 and 13:16 literally by having Scripture verses written on parchment stuffed into small boxes called **phylacteries**, which are strapped onto their foreheads and arms.*

## OPENING

up to the Word

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on the Word

## The Long Way Around

Exodus 13:17–15:21

**OPENING**  
up to the Word

Which kind of journey or route have you been on recently? (a) fast lane of a highway, (b) winding scenic drive, (c) short cut to the top, (d) minefield, (e) bridge out—can't get there from here.

**DIGGING**  
into the Word

1. Without a map, how did God guide them? What is significant about the pillars of cloud and of fire (13:21-22; 14:24-25)?
2. God told Moses to “turn back” and camp by the sea. Why? (a) as a short-cut, (b) the Israelites got lost, (c) as a scenic route, (d) to trap Pharaoh, (e) to test Israel, (f) to work a miracle.
3. After their amazing release from Egypt, why did Israel doubt God's power to save?
4. The Egyptians drowned while Israel was delivered (14:13-31). What does this prove? (a) justice prevails eventually, (b) sin is punished and faith rewarded—always, (c) no matter how bad things look, God is in control, (d) chariots were not amphibious, (e) everyone will know God, either as Judge or Redeemer.

**LIVING**  
out the Word

1. Where are you on your journey of faith in Christ? (a) lost and asking for directions, (b) chased by enemies, (c) confused and doubting God's power, (d) walking by faith over a dry sea bed.
2. When caught between a rock and a hard place (as Israel was), how do you react?
3. If you're not yet safely on the other side, what could help you cross over?
4. If you were to write a song about your journey, what would the music be like? (a) the blues, (b) love song, (c) victory song, (d) fight song, (e) praise hymn.

**WINDOW**  
on the Word

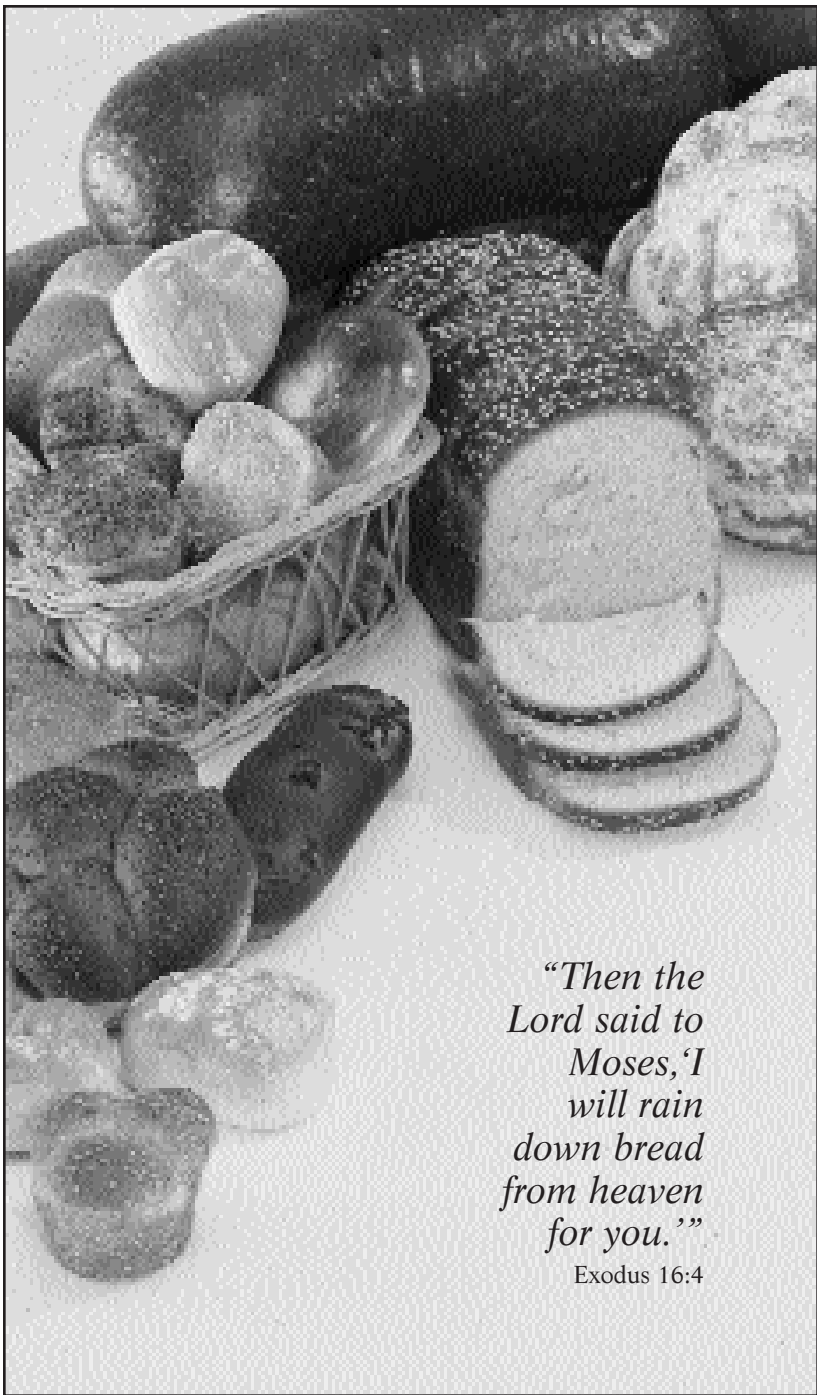
**The Red Sea.** *The site of the Israelite crossing has never been located precisely. The Hebrew Yam Suph means “Sea of Reeds,” traditionally equated with the Red Sea. In 1 Corinthians 10:2 Paul uses the passing through the Red Sea as a metaphor for baptism.*





*“The Egyptians pursued them,  
and all Pharaoh’s horses and  
chariots and horsemen followed  
them into the sea.”*

Exodus 14:23



*“Then the  
Lord said to  
Moses, ‘I  
will rain  
down bread  
from heaven  
for you.’”*

Exodus 16:4

# Daily Whatchamacallit

DAY 13

Exodus 15:22–16:35

What's your favorite drink? If you had to eat the same thing every day for a week, what one food would you choose? Would you eat something if you didn't know what it was? Under what circumstances?

**1.** How had the Israelites' attitude changed since their song of praise (15:1-21)? Who were they grumbling against (15:24; 16:2, 8; 17:3)?

**2.** Why just one day's supply, six days a week? (a) lack of refrigeration, (b) the omer-sized baskets were just right, (c) to prove God's faithfulness, (d) to show God's power over nature, (e) to instruct Israel about the Sabbath.

**1.** When do you listen most carefully to the Lord—in the desert, or at the oasis? Why is that?

**2.** Think about the contrast between the physical rest of the old covenant and the spiritual rest of the new. Ponder the physical manna that sustained Israel and the spiritual life freely given by Jesus, the Bread of life.

**Manna** (16:15, 31) means, literally "What is it?" Several attempts have been made to find natural explanations for this mystery food. But no natural substance fits all the biblical data (see also Nu 11:7-10). Manna was available year-round, with one notable exception: a double portion was available on the sixth day but nothing on the Sabbath. Whatever it was, manna was unknown to Israel at the time, nor was it experienced by future generations of Israelites. This life-sustaining "bread from heaven" became the prototype for understanding Jesus as "the Bread of Life" (Jn 6:31-35).

## OPENING

up to the Word

## DIGGING

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out the Word

## WINDOW

on the Word

*“As long as Moses held up  
his hands, the Israelites  
were winning, but whenever  
he lowered his hands, the  
Amalekites were winning.”*

Exodus 17:11



Artwork by Allan Monro

# Complaint Department

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DAY 14

Exodus 17:1–18:27

What do you complain about most? (a) family, (b) in-laws, (c) boss, (d) church, (e) the weather, (f) government?

1. What was the beef against Moses—and the Lord (17:2-4)? How did Moses respond? (a) he ignored it, (b) he got angry, (c) he prayed, (d) he listened, (e) he passed the buck to God.

2. What effect did the raised arms have in the Israelite war against the Amalekites and why?

3. What was the hot topic between Jethro and Moses (18:1-27)? (a) career success, (b) career woes, (c) Zipporah and the kids, (d) Pharaoh, (e) what God was doing in their midst, (f) prospective judges, (g) difficult cases.

4. Why was Moses about to burn out? What was Jethro's solution? (a) get a life, (b) take a break, (c) find good people, (d) set up a comprehensive management network.

1. Has any responsibility been wearing you out? (a) childcare, (b) an ill or aging parent, (c) settling family disputes, (d) making executive decisions. How could your load be lightened?

2. If you were Moses interviewing prospective judges, what would you ask?

***The Amalekites** (17:8) were a tribal people descended from Esau, living in the Negev Desert on the Sinai Peninsula and arch enemies of the descendants of Jacob. The Amalekites fought against not only Moses and Joshua, but also various judges, King Saul and King David. **Jethro** (18:1), a.k.a. Reuel (2:16-18) was a priest of Midian, where Moses spent 40 years herding sheep, learning to be a shepherd of God's people.*

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