

Title: “WAIT, O MY SOUL, THY MAKER’S WILL”
Text: Exodus 5:1-23
Subject: Divine Providence
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Tape # Exodus 42

Introduction:

How often God’s providence appears to contradict his promise! Though his determination is our salvation, he often appears determined to destroy. Though he has promised never to turn away from us to do us good, it often seems that he does us evil. In all such times, we would be wise to reason thus with our souls...

“Wait, O My Soul, Thy Maker's Will
 Tumult'ous passions all be still!
 Nor let a murm'ring thought arise;
 His ways are just, His counsels wise.

He in the thickest darkness dwells,
 Performs His work, the cause conceals;
 But though His methods are unknown,
 Judgment and truth support His throne.

In heav'n and earth, and air, and seas,
 He executes His firm decrees;
 And by His saints it stands confessed,
 That what he does is ever best.

Wait, then, my soul, submissive wait,
 Prostrate before His awful seat;
 And ‘midst the terrors of His rod,
 Trust in a wise and gracious God.”

Benjamin Beddome

In Exodus 5 we see a vivid picture of God’s providence appearing to contradict his promise. The Lord Jesus appeared to Moses in the bush, and said, “*I have seen the affliction of my people...And I am come down to deliver them...I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt*” (Exodus 3:7,8,10). Then, he

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promised Moses that the children of Israel would believe his message and that Pharaoh would let his people go, assuring him of success.

Armed with the promise of God, Moses went back to Israel with his brother, Aaron. They gathered together all the elders of Israel and delivered God’s message of deliverance to the children of Israel, the message of redemption and salvation by the hand of the Lord. — *“And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped”* (Exodus 4:31). Things were looking good. Moses’ was on his pastoral “honeymoon.” Everything seemed very promising. But that was all about to change.

In chapter 5, he and Aaron go in and tell Pharaoh God’s demands. This is a chapter full of instruction for our souls. May God the Holy Spirit teach us its lessons.

MEN WITH A MESSAGE

The first thing that is obvious is this: — God’s prophets are men sent of God with a message that must be delivered.

(Exodus 5:1) “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.”

The gospel preacher is a man. He is a man sent by God, called gifted, equipped, and sent by God himself. He is sent with a message, not a lesson, not a proposal, not an offer, but a message, a message that must be delivered. God’s prophets are watchman set upon the walls of Zion. And his message is the message of redemption, grace and salvation by Christ (Isaiah 52:4-10; Ezekiel 3:27).

(Isaiah 52:4-10) "For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. (5) Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day *is* blasphemed. (6) Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he

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that doth speak: behold, *it is* I. (7) How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! (8) Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. (9) Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. (10) The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

(Ezekiel 3:27) "But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house."

SOME BELIEVE NOT

We are, by the gospel we preach, to some a savor of life unto life, but to others a savor of death unto death. When we proclaim redemption by the blood of Christ, when we declare salvation accomplished by his outstretched, omnipotent arm of grace, some believe and some believe not. The gospel is, to those who believe, the power of God unto salvation. But to those who believe not, it is foolishness. And the message Moses and Aaron delivered was to Israel the power of God unto salvation. . — "*And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped*" (4:31). But to Pharaoh and the Egyptians it was foolishness. Look at Pharaoh's response in verse 2.

(Exodus 5:2) "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."

Pharaoh knew not the Lord! What a dreadful state. To know Christ is eternal life. Not to know him is death. Yet, it is this lack of knowledge in the fallen sons of Adam that is the cause of all the sin and contempt people have for him throughout the earth (Job 21:14-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

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(Job 21:14-15) "Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. (15) What *is* the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"

(1 Corinthians 2:7-8) "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (8) Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

I want you to notice how Moses describes the believer’s worship of God. In Exodus 4:23 the Lord Jesus calls it serving him. Here, Moses calls it keeping a feast. We worship our God and serve him as we feed upon Christ our Savior by faith (Psalm 63:5; Isaiah 25:6; John 6:51, 53-58).

(Psalms 63:5) "My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips."

(Isaiah 25:6) "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

(John 6:51) "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

(John 6:53-58) "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

The next thing we see here is the fact that the Lord God of heaven and earth, the triune Jehovah is distinctly and specially the God of his people, “*the God of the Hebrews.*”

(Exodus 5:3) “And they said, 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.”

He was the God over the Egyptians; but he is “*the God of the Hebrews.*” He had distinctly attached himself to them by covenant and by revelation. He is also distinguished as “*the God of the Hebrews*” to distinguish him from all the gods of the Egyptians.

So it is today. The Lord our God is unlike all the gods of men. He who is our God is God indeed, the only true and living God, holy and wise, gracious and good, faithful and true, sovereign and merciful. He is the God of his chosen, and “*delighteth in mercy!*” He has distinctly attached himself to us and us to him by sovereign, free grace. He is our God; and we are his people.

The word “*Hebrew*” is used synonymously with both Israelite and Jew. I cannot find anyone who can give a definite or specific meaning to the word translated “*Hebrew*” in the Scriptures. but it conveys the idea of “one from beyond,” or “one who passes over,” or “one who lives beyond.” That is a pretty good description of God’s people. Don’t you think? The child of God in this world is...

- One from beyond.
- One who passes over.
- One who lives beyond.

When the Lord Jesus Christ declares himself to be distinctly and peculiarly “*the God of the Hebrews,*” he is talking about Abraham’s spiritual descendants. The Word of God states this fact clearly, identifying Abraham’s seed and his children as God’s elect, those people scattered throughout the world, both Jew and Gentile “*the God of the Hebrews*” is determined to save, those to whom he gives the blessing of Abraham, the gift of life and faith in Christ by his Spirit (Galatians 3:7-9).

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(Galatians 3:7-9) “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (8) And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (9) So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

“*They which are of faith,*” and no one else, “*the same are the children of Abraham,*” whom the Holy Spirit calls “*the Israel of God*” (Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:3).

(Philippians 3:3) "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

A SLANDERED PEOPLE

Now, I want you to see that just as the children of Israel were falsely accused and slandered by Pharaoh, God’s people in this world are constantly falsely accused of evil and slandered by those who despise our God.

(Exodus 5:4-9) “And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. (5) And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. (6) And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, (7) Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. (8) And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God. (9) Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.”

Pharaoh knew that his accusation against God’s people was baseless and completely untrue. — “*They built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raames*” (Exodus 1:11). Yet, he said, “*they be idle!*” So it is to this day. God’s saints have many faults, faults we readily acknowledge and confess. But they are falsely accused of evil and slandered by people who know their

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accusations are false (Romans 3:8). It is often slanderously reported that we say, “*Let us do evil that good may come.*”

- Because we preach God’s total sovereignty in all things, we are accused of living licentiously.
- Because we preach salvation by grace alone, we are slandered as promoters of wickedness.
- Because we preach the believer’s complete freedom from the law, we are accused of being opposed to the law.

And those who would do us evil are often, if not most commonly, people who assert that they are our brethren (vv. 10-14).

(Exodus 5:10-14) “And the taskmasters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.” (11) Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. (12) So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. (13) And the taskmasters hastened *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw. (14) And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?”

Those taskmasters were Egyptians; but their officers were Israelites. They were like the publicans of our Lord’s day (Matthew 18:17). Painful as it is to put up with such people, we are wise to leave them alone. Never retaliate. Just wait (Isaiah 10:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:3-5; James 5:8).

(Isaiah 10:1) “Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed..”

(2 Thessalonians 3:1-2) “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you: (2) And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.”

(1 Corinthians 4:3-5) “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not

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mine own self. (4) For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. (5) Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

(James 5:8) "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

You may think it unreasonable for you to be expected to put up with such behavior, to bear it patiently, and not retaliate. But we have good reason to do so. — Our Master did (Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 2:21-24; John 15:21).

(Isaiah 53:7) "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

(1 Peter 2:21-24) "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

(John 15:21) "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

The fact is, "*we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22). But our tribulation here will soon be forgotten. John Trapp wrote, "Things commonly go backward with the saints before they come forward...Deliverance is at next door by...When things are at their worst, they will mend." (See Revelation 7: 13-17.)

(Revelation 7:13-17) "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? (14) And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said

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to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. (16) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. (17) For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

A FOOLISH MISTAKE

In verses 15-19 we see the officers of the children of Israel praying to Pharaoh.

(Exodus 5:15-19) "Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? (16) There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants *are* beaten; but the fault *is* in thine own people. (17) But he said, Ye *are* idle, ye *are* idle: therefore ye say, Let us go *and* do sacrifice to the LORD. (18) Go therefore now, *and* work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. (19) And the officers of the children of Israel did see *that* they *were* in evil *case*, after it was said, Ye shall not minish *ought* from your bricks of your daily task."

What a sad and foolish mistake they made! This was a presumptuous attempt to take the matter of their deliverance into their own hands. God had not performed his promise. So they decided to help him. Ignoring Moses and Aaron, God’s messengers, they hoped to reason with Pharaoh! Experience tells me that they probably decided that Moses and Aaron had been unreasonable, demanding too much, hard, unbending, unwilling to compromise. They were ready, in their foolish pride, to modify God’s Word, seeking compromise with the very man who was tormenting them!

Christ is our Deliverer. He is mighty to save. We will be wise, in all things, to wait upon him (Isaiah 63:1-5; Lamentations 3:25-33; Isaiah 40:31).

(Isaiah 63:1-5) "Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling

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in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

(Lamentations 3:25-33) "The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the soul *that* seeketh him. (26) *It is* good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. (27) *It is* good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. (28) He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne *it* upon him. (29) He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. (30) He giveth *his* cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach. (31) For the Lord will not cast off for ever: (32) But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. (33) For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

(Isaiah 40:31) "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint."

GOD BLAMED

Jacob blamed Simeon and Levi, saying, “*Ye have troubled me to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land...And I shall be destroyed*” (Genesis 34:30). In verses 20-21 we see the sons of Jacob blaming God’s messengers for their woe.

(Exodus 5:20-21) “And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: (21) And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour 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.”

What a heart-piercing accusation that must have been! Remember, Moses and Aaron were merely God’s messengers. They were really blaming God for their woe! In all things we ought to bow to our God. How sad it is when we blame him (Jonah 4:4-9).

(Jonah 4:4-9) "Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry? (5) So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. (6) And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made *it* to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. (7) But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. (8) And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is better for me to die than to live.* (9) And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even unto death.*"

Remember, these same people had believed God’s promise of deliverance, when they heard it. They bowed and worshipped before him (4:31). Here we see them, not only relinquishing their confidence, but also murmuring against God and blaming him and his messengers because their faith had brought them trouble. But we must not be too hard in our judgment concerning them. — Do we not act the same, do we not blame God, when in times of darkness and displeasing providences, we murmur and complain? God forgive our unbelief! May God the Holy Spirit ever give us faith and uphold us by his grace, enabling us to keep a steady eye on our blessed Savior, that like Abraham of old, we “*stagger not at the promise of God through unbelief,*” that we may ever be confident of his Word, his all-sufficient grace, and his salvation!

MERCY SOUGHT

How heart-broken Moses must have been! In verses 22-23, he goes to God in prayer, and unburdens his heavy heart to the Lord his God.

(Exodus 5:22-23) “And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said,

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Lord, wherefore hast thou *so* evil entreated this people? why *is* it *that* thou hast sent me? (23) For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.”

In all our troubles, in all our distresses, it is always right, wise and best to return to the Lord, putting him in remembrance of his promise and seeking his mercy.

What a blessed volume of instruction this portion of Holy Scripture is!

- The Lord sent Moses to deliver his people out of Egypt. He had heard their groanings, and graciously promised to deliver them.
- The people believed the Word of the Lord, bowed their heads and worshipped him, adoring his great goodness.
- But, then, the oppression and afflictions under which they had groaned, instead of lessening, began to increase.
- Soon, they became desperate, and charged God foolishly.
- Moses himself, who had talked with God at the bush, who had seen “*the good will of him that dwelt in the bush,*” and saw the miracles God performed to confirm his commission, appears to have been tainted with the same spirit of unbelief, and questioned the Lord God. — “*Moses said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.*”

What a picture we have in this chapter of our poor souls and our corrupt, depraved hearts! In all they experienced, the Lord God was pursuing nothing but good for his people. He was, even in their woes, performing his purpose of grace. The deliverance he had promised he was performing. There had been no alteration in his purpose, no amendment of his covenant, and no change in his love. The Lord God was performing his wise decrees in such a way as to make their emancipation the more blessed and glorious, and his distinguishing mercy, love and grace more striking.

But Israel could see nothing but their pain and trouble. They experienced disappointment after disappointment, frustration after frustration, and heartache after heartache. All about them was darkness and gloom. And they forgot all that God had promised.

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How is it with you? How is it with me? When the promises of God seem to clash with his providence, and according to our narrow view of things, seem to be impossible, how do we act? How do we respond? We are far too much like Israel, ever disposed, rather than believing God to take counsel with flesh and blood. How quickly unbelief engulfs us! The lusts we thought were completely subdued, break out afresh in full force. We find ourselves, like Peter, sinking in the tempestuous sea. Then, the hand of our omnipotent Savior is stretched out to catch us again and raise us up! Wondrous mercy! Yet, how soon it is forgotten!

Oh for grace, in the midst of dark providence, in trying times, to trust our ever gracious, ever faithful and true God and Savior! Oh for grace to hear his voice in the whirlwind and the storm! It is our blessedness to wait upon the Lord, to depend upon him, to believe him, to trust his promise, when everything seems to say, “He has forsaken us, he has forgotten to be gracious, his mercy is clean gone forever!”

We do not expect too much when we expect God to do what he has promised. Moses had been preaching that God had visited his people to deliver them. But, instead of being delivered from their furnace, the furnace just got hotter. Where else should he go, but to the throne of grace? I recognize that his faith was mixed with unbelief. Yet, he turned to God in faith. It is the crowning grace of faith, "*against hope to believe in hope;*" and amid the most desperate circumstances, to cling to Christ as a sure Friend, when, in his providence, it appears that he comes forth as a determined enemy. In such times, he truly honors God who can confidently say with Job, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*"

“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and will break
With blessings on your head.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;

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The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter.
And He will make it plain.”

William Cowper

“We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us” (Isaiah 59:11). — Such was the cry of God’s saints of old. And such is, and will be their cries until grace is consummated in glory. But our times of trouble and trial shall not last an hour, no not a moment beyond our Lord’s appointed time of trial. Then, deliverance will come. When he sees that our power is gone, he will show himself gracious. May he give us grace to trust him!

Amen.