

# EXODUS

## THE GOD WHO RESCUES

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### SESSION OBJECTIVE: EXODUS 11:1-12:13

To understand more about the final warning given to Pharaoh and the preparations for the final plague.

#### Read the Text:

The LORD said to Moses, “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. 2 Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.” 3 And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people. 4 So Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, 5 and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. 6 There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. 7 But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’ 8 And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. 9 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” 10 Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. 10 And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’S Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. (Exodus 11:1-12:13, ESV)

#### Study the Text:

### A Final Warning

Before the tenth plague, the LORD comes to Moses to tell him that this last plague will be the final nail in Pharaoh’s proverbial coffin: “Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here” (Ex. 11:1). As a result of this imminent mass exodus, God tells Moses precisely what this plague will entail. Below are a some key details of this passage.

#### THE PEOPLE’S FAVOR

Moses first goes and speaks “in the hearing of the people,” which is in specific reference to the people of Israel. They are to go to their Egyptian neighbors and ask for “silver and gold jewelry,” presumably in

preparation for their exodus out of Egypt. They will need resources to survive as they make their journey towards the promised land. Verse 3 indicates that by the LORD's intervention, the Egyptians responded positively, even "Pharaoh's servants." This indicates a growing chasm between the people of Egypt and Egypt's king. By this point, the kingdom had been ravaged by plague after plague, a brutal display of power against Egypt and her gods (see *Session 29* for more information), and the people had likely come to realize that Pharaoh was misguided in his stubbornness. That they seemingly gladly gave the Israelites their treasures makes sense; they were ready to see an end to the madness.

### ***EVERY FIRSTBORN***

Moses then declares what the final plague will entail to the Egyptian people, Pharaoh's servants, and presumably Pharaoh himself although they do not directly interact (Ex. 11:8). Moses declares that God Himself will visit Egypt "around midnight" and that "every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle" (Ex. 11:5). From the highest family of royalty to the cattle, the plague will strike at every firstborn in Egypt except for those who belong to Israel so that it will be clear that "the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel" (Ex. 11:7). Two questions that arise are, "Why not just kill Pharaoh? Why does God choose to kill the firstborn of every household in response to primarily Pharaoh's treachery?" While Pharaoh is the main antagonist of this portion of the story, he is hardly the only one complicit in the ill-treatment of Israel. Pharaoh gave orders over and over again that violated human life created in God's image, and there were many who carried those orders out. Moreover, most of, if not the entirety of the kingdom, knew what was happening. This was in every way a national sin and therefore received national judgment. This speaks to this importance of understanding that silence in the face of evil is complicity in evil to some extent.

### ***THE FINAL WORD***

Moses finishes his warning to the Egyptians and "went out from Pharaoh in hot anger" (Ex. 11:9). No reasons are given for why Moses would be angry after being told that the LORD was about to liberate him and his people. Perhaps Moses understood the depth of pain the kingdom of Egypt was about to feel in the loss of so many firstborn children, and Moses knew that it could have been avoided if Pharaoh had an ounce of humility? This is an interesting detail, regardless. Moses did not take pleasure in what was happening to Egypt. While he desired to see his people free, he did not enjoy the pain that Egypt would endure for such a reality.

## **Initial Preparations for the Passover**

Chapter 12 begins with the initial preparations for the upcoming Passover. The month in which the exodus took place would serve as "the first month of the year" for the people of God (Ex. 12:1). In preparation for the final plague, the people of God were to follow a specific set of instructions on "the tenth day" of that month (Ex. 12:2). Below is a breakdown of the key details for this monumental practice that was established.

### ***A LAMB FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD***

Usually the Passover lamb is viewed primarily through the lens of sacrifice, and while it is true that the lamb is sacrificed, it is for the purpose of a meal. Each household was commanded to take a lamb according to the amount each family is able to eat and kill the lamb at twilight. If a household was too small to consume an entire lamb, a neighboring family could share (Ex. 12:4). The "meal" aspect of Passover is an important detail because it prefigures the Lord's Supper, which takes place during a Passover meal centuries later in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is "the sacrificial lamb" that "takes away the sins of the world" (Jn. 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19),

and in the same way the lambs were consumed prior to the Passover in view of what God was going to do, we now “consume” the lamb through the bread and cup in the Lord’s Supper in view of what God has already done.

### ***THE BLOOD MATTERED, TOO***

The blood of the lamb was to be applied to the doorposts of every home for protection from the “judgments” of the LORD on Egypt (Ex. 12:12). The LORD said, “the blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt” (Ex. 12:13). Hence the name, “Passover.” The LORD, upon seeing the blood of the lamb that had been cooked and consumed on the doorposts of the people of God, would pass over them thus sparing their firstborn children. Again, this is a notable detail for Christians in the New Testament. In the same way that God passed over the houses that had the blood of the lamb on them, sparing them from judgment, so too are Christians spared from judgment when God sees the blood of Jesus Christ on the doorposts of our hearts (1 Cor. 5:7).

### ***THE RIGHT MANNER***

The instruction for how to do this seems confusing at first, but makes a lot of sense when you understand the need for haste. To roast the lamb in lieu of boiling it would have made for much quicker cooking and less cleanup. To boil the lamb with water required pots and utensils whereas roasting could simply be done over a fire that would eventually extinguish itself. Beyond that, the people were to eat with their belts fastened, sandals on their feet, and a staff in their hands (Ex. 12:11). This would ensure that once Pharaoh released them from captivity in the wake of the death of his firstborn, and the firstborn of Egypt, they would be immediately ready to leave with no delay. All of the instructions for the manner in which they are to prepare and eat the lamb hinge on the element of haste.

## **What About Now?**

As mentioned within the study, the elements of this passage largely correspond to the practice of the Lord’s Supper within a New Testament context. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. His blood covers us and protects us from the wrath and judgment of God against sin. He breaks the chains, not of Pharaoh but sin, that we might be free for eternity. In the same way the Israelites remembered the Passover by celebrating the Passover meal, we too remember the ultimate passover every time we eat the bread and drink the cup at the Lord’s table during communion. And Christians are to proclaim this message with the same kind of urgency that the Israelites were to maintain in the preparation of the meal, for “the time has come and the kingdom of God is already at hand” (Mk. 1:15).

## **Study Questions**

### **Day One**

1. Read Exodus 11:1-3. What did the LORD say to Moses? What did He ask Moses to do? How did He help Moses with this task?

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- 2. Read Exodus 11:4-6. What did Moses say to the people? Who would be affected by the tenth plague? What would the result be of this plague in Egypt?

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### Day Two

- 1. Read Exodus 11:7-9. What would happen to the people of Israel? How will the servants of Pharaoh respond? What did the LORD say to Moses concerning Pharaoh?

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- 2. Read Exodus 11:10. In your own words, summarize this verse.

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### Day Three

- 1. Read Exodus 12:1-2. What would be significant about the month in which Moses and Aaron found themselves?

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- 2. Read Exodus 12:3-6. What day was the congregation of Israel to act? What were they to do? Until when were they to keep it? What were they to do at twilight?

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### Day Four

- 1. Read Exodus 12:7-10. What were they commanded to do with the blood of the lamb? How were they to cook the lamb? What was significant about the method of cooking?

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- 2. Read Exodus 12:11-13. Why were they commanded to wear a belt, sandals, and a staff while preparing the lamb? What was God going to do? Why was this event called "The Passover?"

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### Discuss the Text!

## Week 24 Discussion: Complicity

That the inhabitants of Egypt face judgment for the crimes of Pharaoh indicates their complicity in the evil as well. God punishes the entire nation, not just the leader. Talk as a group about how this reality informs the way you live within your own nation. This is not a discussion about American political parties or specific American

leaders, but how the policies of various administrations *in any nation* can perpetuate evil and the ways in which Christians can become complicit in them.

1. Icebreaker: Do you think God ought to hold entire nations accountable for the sin of their leaders? Why or why not?
2. How important is it for Christians to understand the policies of their governing authorities?
3. How important is it for Christians to make their voices heard in social issues?
4. How do you balance standing against what is wrong and ministering to those who stand for the wrong things?
5. Is “the lesser of two evils” a viable option for a Christian living in a two-party nation?
6. How can the church provide wisdom on real-world issues without isolating pockets of people?

## Takeaways:

1. God gives a final warning to Egypt through Aaron and Moses about the imminent tenth plague.
2. God gives instructions to Israel for the Passover.