

Sermon Notes Exodus 12:1-30. God saves 28/3/2021

Background. Moses has delivered the final warning from the Lord to Pharaoh (11:4-8) but again Pharaoh refuses to listen. Moses leaves Pharaoh in a fit of anger. The plagues had failed to convince Pharaoh, so seemingly Moses had failed in his mission and worse, the Lord Himself had failed! The Israelites were still slaves and freedom seemed even less possible. Yet Moses continued to trust God by bringing this final message to Pharaoh. The plagues demonstrated to the Israelites God's trustworthiness so they trusted Him to fulfill His promises 12:28.

Vv. 1-2. The final ACT OF God was to be remembered as a start of a new beginning for Israel. They would be saved and rescued from Egypt, from Pharaoh's control and consecrated as a nation holy to God.

The Passover Meal and ritual

Vv. 3-14. God will in this final terrible act show that He is the Lord of life and death and that rejecting Him and His word results in judgment. That this is a spiritual battle is shown by the phrase, 'I will bring judgement on all the gods of Egypt'. The judgment on the people of Egypt is also a judgment on the impotence and powerlessness of their gods. With the Lord Himself entering Egypt as absolute Lord and Judge the question is raised, **who can stand before Him? The concern now is not who can escape Pharaoh, but who can escape the Lord.** Sin and atonement are implied in the Passover narrative, **but the central focus is who can stand before the one true all-powerful God.**

Why the need for the death of the first born Egyptians?

1. 430 years of oppression
2. 9 plagues = opportunities to change and let the Israelites leave.
3. '*Many other people left with the Israelites*' (12:38) = shows that not all Egyptians (and others?) followed Pharaoh's persecution and oppression of the Israelites. Possibly these people were also spared the loss of their first born(?).
4. We are not given an explanation of why God brought such misery on the Egyptians but the Lord is depicted as acting justly.

The smearing of the blood of the sacrificial animal on the door emphasises a number of points.

1. God already knew where the Hebrews/Israelites were as they were previously saved from the effects of the other plagues.

2. The blood was to be an act of obedience trusting in God's mercy, a sacrifice that set them apart as God's people. The smeared blood was an act of atonement whereby the animal dies in the place of the firstborn (male?).

So, the animal atones for the sins of the people, and the smeared blood (along with the eating of the Passover meal) confirms their faithful obedience to God's word and therefore that they are set apart (made holy) to God.

Who can stand before God? Those whom He saves, who heed His word by responding in obedience, those whom He sets aside as His people.

The blood shed was the means by which God accomplished His rescue, both in judgement and in saving. God's just judgment was met by the death of the lamb and obedience to his word. (see the death of Jesus, Acts 2:23; 3:18; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8. And the depiction of Jesus as the 'lamb of God' Jn. 1:29; 32-33; Mk. 14:12-26).

The consecration of all the people was not just through the firstborn representative but also because from the Lord's perspective 'all Israel is my firstborn son' (Exod. 4:22).

Israel belongs to God as His 'offspring'- His family, His people, and so will be protected by God.

The unleavened bread (without yeast) emphasises the haste with which the people had to leave Egypt.

This 'Passover event' was to be celebrated both in Egypt as the **beginning of the people's walk with God** and from then on **annually in remembrance of God's rescue.** The theme of a new beginning associated with the Passover service is taken up by Paul as he calls Christians **to live a new life in Christ - 'For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. 5:7-8).** Paul adds to the symbolism of yeast with the idea of the pervasiveness of sin (yeast spreading throughout the bread). Note the contrast between the earlier recorded response of the Israelites to Moses bringing God's word (6:9) to this act of obedience (12:28).

Reflection/Response. How is our walk with Jesus our Passover lamb progressing? As we reflect on God's rescue plan for the world in Jesus Christ, how does this impact our response to Him of trust, thanks and praise? Reflect on the cost to God of achieving our forgiveness, our rescue from sin and death and our new eternal life.