



Exodus 11:1-13:16: A Matter of Life & Death

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. 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 12:12-13 ESV

- The first nine plagues

THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES

PLAGUE	COMMAND	CONSEQUENCES	REPLICATED BY MAGICIANS	PHARAOH'S RESPONSE			GOSHEN SPARED
1. Blood	<i>Let my people go</i>	Fish die, Nile stinks	YES			Heart hardened	NO
2. Frogs	<i>Let my people go</i>	Infested all the land	YES	Relents	Reneges	Heart hardened	NO
3. Gnats		Infested all the land	NO			Heart hardened	NO
4. Flies	<i>Let my people go</i>	Infested all the land	NO	Relents	Reneges	Heart hardened	YES
5. Pestilence	<i>Let my people go</i>	Egyptian livestock die	NO			Heart hardened	YES
6. Boils		Sores on man & beast	NO			Heart hardened	NO
7. Hailstorm	<i>Let my people go</i>	Destruction of men, animals, and crops	NO			Heart hardened	YES
8. Locusts	<i>Let my people go</i>	Destruction of crops	NO	Relents	Reneges	Heart hardened	YES
9. Darkness		Impenetrable darkness	NO	Relents	Reneges	Heart hardened	YES

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“The function of the plagues goes back to the word of Pharaoh (5:2 NRSV): ‘I do not know the LORD.’...This emphasis on knowing the Lord lifts the plagues beyond the function of chastisement....The divine purpose is that Pharaoh and his people – to say nothing of the Israelites – will indeed acquire knowledge based on observation and confrontation, not on hearsay.” – Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch*

- Then why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?

- With the 6th plague...

...the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had spoken to Moses. – Exodus 9:12 ESV

*And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But **I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go...** Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'" – Exodus 4:21-23 ESV*

“...this time, it was God who hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Anywhere along the way, God could have miraculously moved in Pharaoh’s life and softened the hardened condition of his heart. But He continued to allow the king to display the natural evidence of his sinful disposition. Rather than intervene, God allowed Pharaoh’s inherent wickedness to take its normal course.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Exodus*

“For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. **But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power**, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” – Exodus 9:15-16 ESV

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. – Romans 9:14-18 ESV

- **The multifaceted power of God**

- He displays it in **retribution** as well as **redemption**

*Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore **God gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! – Romans 1:22-25 ESV*

- Man’s natural fallen state:
 - Darkness of mind
 - Hardness of heart
- Only God can...
 - ...enlighten the mind
 - ...and soften the heart

*I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation***

in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you... – Ephesians 1:16-18 ESV

- **When the lights go out in Egypt**

- Their sorry spiritual state was about to become **palpable**
- Their darkness would become all too real

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, **a darkness to be felt.**” – Exodus 10:21 ESV*

*...but all the people of **Israel had light** where they lived. – Exodus 10:23 ESV*

- **Idle threats from an idolatrous fool**

- Pharaoh vows to kill the messenger
- But God has plans for Pharaoh

*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. – Exodus 11:1 ESV*

- **Sobering threats from a sovereign God**

- The final plague will be the worst
 - It’s going to get **personal**
 - And the pain will be **permanent**
- But not for the Israelites
 - Remember what God promised Abraham

“Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.” But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.” – Genesis 15:13-14 ESV

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 handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.’” – Exodus 12:4-5 ESV

- Remember what God told Pharaoh
*“Thus says the Lord, **Israel is my firstborn son**, and I say to you, ‘Let my son go that he may serve me.’ If you refuse to let him go, behold, **I will kill your firstborn son.**” – Exodus 4:22-23 ESV*

- **A holy and holistic understanding of God**

- A passage like this makes us uncomfortable
 - God appears cruel and sadistic
 - He comes across as harsh and unjust

- But it actually portrays a balanced view of God
 - All facets of God’s character are on display
 - Judgment and forgiveness
 - Justice and mercy
 - Prosecution and grace
 - Condemnation and atonement
 - Retribution and redemption
 - And it all points to Jesus Christ

...**the firstborn among many brothers.** – Romans 8:29 ESV

...**the firstborn from the dead.** – Colossians 1:18 ESV

- This section is a foreshadowing of Jesus
 - ~ Egypt represents the world
 - It has been plunged into **darkness**
 - Darkness** represents sin
 - And all living in Egypt are **sinful**
 - But **a light will shine** in the darkness

“...*the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, **a light has shined.***” – Matthew 4:16 NLT

- ~ Matthew was quoting the prophet Isaiah
- ~ He was the light in the darkness

“*I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is **a light to reveal God to the nations,** and he is the glory of your people Israel!*” – Luke 2:30-32 NLT

*The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. **The light shines in the darkness,** and the darkness can never extinguish it.* – John 1:4-5 NLT

“***I am the light of the world.*** If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” – John 8:12 NLT

“While you have the light, **believe in the light,** that you may become sons of light.” – John 12:36 ESV

- **God’s gracious redemption of Israel**
Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb.” – Exodus 12:21 ESV

- The Israelites were just as sinful
 - o They had been guilty of unfaithfulness
 - o They had been idolatrous
 - o And they were worthy of death
- But God graciously “passed over” their sins

At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. – Exodus 12:29 ESV

- The darkness brought death
 - o Without the blood, death was inevitable
 - o Without faith, death was unavoidable
 - o God’s plan of salvation was available to all
 - o But the Egyptians didn’t fear the darkness enough

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.” – John 3:16-19 NLT

- **When the light dawned in Goshen**

The LORD said to Moses, ²“Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.” – Exodus 13:1 ESV

- God had spared all the Israelites’ firstborn
- He had graciously spared their lives
- He had provided substitutes
- Their sins had been paid for by another
- The Passover Lamb had died in their places

*Christ, **our Passover lamb**, has been sacrificed. – 1 Corinthians 5:7 ESV*

*“Behold, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!” – John 1:29 ESV*

*...you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of **a lamb without blemish or spot**. – 1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV*

- **Discussion questions**

- Share a moment from this last week where you were able to see the grace and mercy of God in a difficult situation?

- God “passed over” the Israelites, not because they deserved it but because of His grace and due to their faith. Why do we need to be reminded of this?
- Why is a well-balanced view of God’s multi-dimensional character essential?



BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2023 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

WEEK 6 – Exodus 13:17-17:16: World-Class Whiners

This lesson will cover the early stages of the exodus as the people cross the Red Sea on dry ground, witness the destruction of Pharaoh’s army, and their own deliverance to the safety of the wilderness. But it doesn’t take long before their shouts of joy turn to grumbling and complaining. The journey to the promised land has begun but they are surprised to find themselves facing shortages of food and water. This unexpected outcome produced second thoughts and the first wave of regret from God’s recently redeemed people. These passages juxtapose the providential provision of God with the disrespectful dissatisfaction of His people. This portion of their journey reveals their lack of faith and highlights God enduring and unwavering faithfulness.

- Read Exodus 13:17-17:16. What jumps out at you in these passages?
- Take time during the week to read through pages 133-172 in the Devotionary™ reading.
- Look closely at Exodus 13:17-22. There seems to be something fishy going on here. What jumps out at you in this passage that appears to be a bit off or unexpected? Why do you think God was up to?

Read Genesis 50:22-26. What is significant about Joseph’s request and Moses’ actions recorded in today’s passage? What does it communicate about both men’s faith in God’s promises?

- Read chapter 14 and take some time to consider how you would have reacted had you been among the millions of Israelites standing at the banks of the Red Sea with the army of Pharaoh bearing down on you.

What kinds of thoughts, questions, and feelings about Yahweh would have been going through your mind? Write them down here?

According to verses 10-12, what was the response of the Israelites to their predicament?

How would you have reacted to Moses' advice in verses 13-14?

- Moses told them to fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord. Consider how these three commands fleshed themselves out in the rest of the story. What caused their fear to cease?

How were they able to stand firm in the face of overwhelming adversity?

And in what way did they see the salvation of the Lord?

- For now, skip over the song recorded in chapter 15 and look at what happened next. Start at verse 19 of chapter 15. After their glorious deliverance across the Red Sea and the divinely ordained defeat of their enemy, what was the very next thing that happened to the Israelites?

According to chapter 16, what happened immediately after that?

Now look at chapter 17:1-7. What happened in this story?

What do all these events have in common and what do you think is their significance? What was God trying to teach Israel?

What is the primary lesson to be learned from the story in Exodus 17:8-16?