

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MARCH 6 - 10, 2023

Welcome to the

Story

Lenten Series 2.26 - 3.26



MONDAY

Read **Exodus 11:9-10**

The Nation in Slavery

Over the past few weeks, we have been considering the well-known account of the children of Israel in Egypt, enslaved by a cruel Pharaoh who “*did not know Joseph*” (Exodus 1:8) and simply saw the rapidly expanding population of Israelites as a possible security threat to him and his country. He put them to work building “*store cities*” and “*made their lives bitter with hard labor*” (Exodus 1:14).

Pharaoh went further and sought to reduce the population by having all boy babies killed at birth (v. 16), but we know the story of how God ensured that baby Moses was spared this fate and later became a saviour of his people.

As we consider the various “types” in this story, pointing forward to truths we uncover later in the New Testament, it is important that we acknowledge the “slavery of sin.” That is not a popular word in our day, with even some religious leaders trying to whitewash what the Bible clearly teaches about men and women’s rebellion against God, and our inbuilt tendency to want to do things “my way”—which is almost always not “God’s way.”

The judgment which came upon Egypt, and on any household where blood had not been applied to the sides and tops of the doorframes,

is a stark reminder that God means what He says! It is not that He enjoys applying judgment, but His actions were “so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 11:9). God’s judgment always has a redemptive purpose, but we must never think that we will somehow be an exception and that God will overlook our particular sin against Him.

When judgment came in Egypt, it touched all the firstborn, “from the firstborn of Pharaoh ... to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon” (Exodus 12:29). God kept His word. This is a reminder that we, by fallen nature, are slaves to sin, which will result in judgment if we don’t address it. But the rest of this story is that GOD has done something about it, and all we need to do is accept that!

May we be reminded today that God’s commands are not “guidelines” but a constant reminder that God’s way is always better than ours, for He knows tomorrow!

QUESTIONS

What is one indicator that Pharaoh “*did not know Joseph*”? If God used Egypt to keep the Israelites together and racially pure, why did God subsequently punish Egypt for their actions?

PRAYERS

For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

Pray that the children served by NHH make good decisions when faced with challenging circumstances in their community, such as using drugs and joining gangs. Pray for God’s protection of Azusa families.

TUESDAY

Read **Exodus 12:1-11**

What the People Had To Do

We noted yesterday that, although God made a provision for the children of Israel to escape from their slavery in Egypt, it was still necessary for them to act in obedience first. This did not mean that they were responsible for their own salvation, nor are we today, since they could not determine that the angel of death would pass over their homes.

But in the same way that God requires our repentance for the blood of Jesus Christ to become effective in cleansing sins, ancient Israelites had to obediently and faithfully shed the blood of an animal “*without defect*” (Exodus 12:5) and apply that blood exactly as directed by the LORD through Moses. God provided very clear and detailed instructions so there could be no misunderstanding.

He does the same for us today, but sinful men and women seem to think they can “interpret” God’s commands to suit themselves! Note that our Bibles render the word “LORD” in this passage in all capital letters, which means the word in the original Hebrew means the “covenant-keeping God.” So God promises that “*when I see the blood, I will pass over you*” (Exodus 12:13), and we see that He definitely keeps His side of that covenant.

But the people had to keep their side of the covenant too. Can you imagine the faith it took as they crouched in their homes that night, listening to the cries of despair in neighboring Egyptian homes? Following God's commandments doesn't automatically make us into spiritual giants who never doubt, but it does put us in the place where God can bless us, protect us, and use us for His glory.

A great preacher once said, "Keep your obedience up to date"—a timely reminder to us that God's commandments are not His suggestions, but His requirements. Yes, He IS the Sovereign God who is the only One who can secure our salvation and our eternal destiny. But we must be active in carrying out absolutely everything He tells us to do.

May we start this day, live this day, and end this day acknowledging that God is on the throne of our lives, and it is a joy to walk in obedience to Him.

QUESTIONS

If we are saved by accepting Jesus' atoning sacrifice, why is it important that we walk in obedience? Why do you believe God used blood as a sign of passing over obedient Jews to spare them?

PRAYERS

For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

NHH teens were at winter camp in February. These teens and their mentors had a great time bonding, learning about God, and playing in the snow. Pray that the seeds planted at camp will grow.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Exodus 12:12-13**

What God Did

It may seem particularly harsh to us to read of the judgment that God meted out on Pharaoh and the Egyptian people, but we must never forget that the whole nation was involved in enslaving the children of Israel and dealing with them “*ruthlessly*,” according to Exodus 1:1-3 and 14.

Pharaoh himself had asked the arrogant question, “*Who is the LORD, that I should obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go*” (Exodus 5:2). As we have seen, God’s response to that was to enable Moses to work a series of miracles that resulted in plagues affecting the entire life of the Egyptians, yet on each occasion Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to release the slaves. Note that it was Pharaoh who hardened his heart first by applying harsher work requirements on the Israelites (Exodus 5:1-21) and refusing to listen to Moses, Aaron, and most importantly, to the LORD (Exodus 7:13).

After that, God “*gave him [Pharaoh] over*” (to use Paul’s terminology in Romans 1:24) to experience the consequences of his own sin and rebellion, which is exactly what the Lord does today if men and women wilfully choose to disobey His commandments. Sinful people always choose their own “*gods*” over the true God, since they feel that they

can control that situation for their own comfort and satisfaction. But in our passage, God promises, *“I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD”* (Exodus 12:12).

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us, *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left”* (Hebrews 10:26). So let us not follow the misguided crowd who may cry out, “Poor old Pharaoh!” He and his people received the just reward for rebellion against the God of the Israelites, who is the same God that we as Christian believers serve today.

Lord, may we live today knowing that You are God, our only God, and we place all our trust, troubles, and future in Your secure hands.

QUESTIONS

How does Pharaoh typify an unsaved person, one out of relationship with God? Was God at all “unfair” to Pharaoh in sending the plagues upon Egypt?

PRAYERS

For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

NHH is currently starting a mentorship program to serve NHH kids more comprehensively. The goal is to pair kids with a mentor to walk alongside them through life’s ups and downs. Pray for NHH leaders—for discernment and faithfulness—as they make decisions for this new program.

THURSDAY

Read **Exodus 12:13**

Why God Did It

The Israelites could never have known that what they were experiencing foreshadowed a much greater sacrifice of blood that was to follow hundreds of years later in Jerusalem. Realize that our biblical account is not only something from a history book, fascinating though that is, but it is also set down by God through Moses for us to read in the 21st century and thereby gain personal understanding of God's eternal purposes for Jew and Gentile.

God told the people that His program to save the lives of their firstborn children was “*the LORD’s Passover*” (Exodus 12:11)—He was looking forward in time to when Christ was going to be sacrificed as “*the Passover Lamb*” as Paul describes Him in 1 Corinthians 5:7. John the Baptist, Jesus’ blood relative, introduced the Messiah as “*The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29).

The blood of the lamb applied to the sides and tops of the doorframes by the Israelites shielded them from God’s judgment—a clear foreshadowing of Jesus’ blood shed for us through His sacrifice on the cross. It may seem a little strange to our sophisticated 21st century minds to think about the killing of an animal and the application of blood in the way the Israelites had to do, but throughout Scripture,

God used “picture language” to help ordinary people understand deep spiritual truths. Jesus used parables for the same purposes during His ministry.

So as we study the account of the Passover, be sure to look beyond the mere details of slaves preparing their getaway and see the “Big Picture” of God securing their freedom as a “type” of the freedom He later made available to you and me at a Passover event centuries later.

Lord, we thank You for Your Word that both shows us and reminds us that Your detailed plans today are consistent and purposeful of what will happen far into the future. May this strengthen our resolve that *“we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him”* (Romans 8:28).

QUESTIONS

Why do you think God focused upon each household’s firstborn male as the object of the final plague brought upon ancient Egypt? How does the description of Jesus as “the Lamb of God” relate to Passover imagery? What does the Israelites’ exodus represent in the life of every believer?

PRAYERS

For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

In December a former NHH sixteen-year-old boy was shot and killed in Azusa. The child was enrolled in this program during middle school. Many of the NHH teens knew him and were greatly impacted by his violent death. Please keep his loved ones in your prayers as they cope with this unimaginable loss.

FRIDAY

Read **Exodus 12:14**

Remember

As the Israelites participated in that first Passover, packing accordingly for the journey into the wilderness, God made it clear that this was not a once-off event to mark the start of the “Exodus.” The Passover was to become an annual Feast: *“For the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance”* (Exodus 12:14).

Although it excludes the shedding of blood, orthodox Jews still celebrate this feast today, following the strict guidelines in the book of Exodus. It occurs on the 15th day of the first month of the Jewish calendar, Nisan, which correlates to March/April.

The Christian significance of this event is that it prefigures what happened at another Passover, which we celebrate during Communion. Jesus and His disciples celebrated this feast the night before His crucifixion. He gave new meaning to it when He took the unleavened bread and told them it represented His body. He then took the wine and proclaimed, *“This is the blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”* (Matthew 26:28).

Our Lord was making it clear that the same covenant-keeping God who rescued the Israelites from slavery following the shedding of

a lamb's blood remains a covenant-keeping God, but presents His covenant to us in a new way by shedding His OWN blood to enable the forgiveness of sins. Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper, we remember that first Passover, but with relief and gratitude that we do so differently than ancient Jews who had to continually sacrifice animals to atone for their sins.

We have the amazing knowledge, spelled out so clearly by the writer to the Hebrews, that Christ “*offered FOR ALL TIME ONE sacrifice for sins ... [before] He sat down at the right hand of God*” (Hebrews 10:12 , emphasis added). The establishment of this new covenant is awash in God's grace and mercy; the Holy Spirit says, “*Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more*” (Hebrews 10:17). Praise God! May we be reminded constantly of the cost of Christ's sacrifice so that judgment may pass over us.

Lord, may we be reminded constantly of the sacrificial cost You made so that judgement may pass over us. We are so thankful for Your grace and Your mercy!

QUESTIONS

How did Jesus reinterpret and reinstate the Jewish Passover? What do the Jewish Passover and Christian Lord's Supper celebrations have in common?



PRAYERS

For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

NHH's hard-working staff offers comprehensive programs on a modest budget stretched with inflation-related increases to expenses. They have maintained a balanced budget for several years running, but seek prayer as they reach the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 2023. Pray for donations to outpace the budget deficit that NHH is running presently.



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