



The Seventh Plague of Egypt, John Martin, 1823

About the artist and painting: The English Romantic painter John Martin was no stranger to death and despair. Out of the 13 children born to his mother and father, John was one of only 6 that survived childhood. He grew up in poverty, the son of a farm laborer. In 1813, John lost his grandmother, mother, father, and youngest son all in the same year. Despite his popular appeal to English society, he was never really celebrated much less even accepted by the art community. Yet he was somewhat of a revolutionary by choosing to paint very fantastic, biblical scenes and landscapes. One can't help but think John looked to the extraordinary aspects of the bible to deal with the harsh realities of life in a broken world.

His 1823 work, *The Seventh Plague of Egypt*, helps to capture the deliverance theme so prevalent in the Book of Exodus. In the painting you have these mighty structures of Pharaoh's palace, city, and pyramids all displayed in their grandeur. In Moses' day this represented to God's people Pharaoh's power and oppression towards them as he ruthlessly made their lives harsh. Yet God is breaking into these circumstances, "showing up" to bring about His deliverance. In this painting, over and above the Egyptian structures is something more magnificent, the storm of God: thunder, hail, and fire being poured down upon the oppressor and persecutor of His people. And your eye is drawn to the man standing on the left side of the painting, Moses, with outstretched arms looking to the LORD and His deliverance.

The purpose of Exodus:

“The original purpose of Exodus was theological, to teach God’s people about himself and their relationship to him.” - Peter Enns, NIVAC, 25.

“Exodus is about a man, Moses. He is central to the narrative in a way in which no single character, not even Abraham, dominates Genesis...Exodus is about a nation, Israel, moving from slavery in Egypt into freedom...but ultimately Exodus is about God, about the God of the covenant who has instituted a new relationship between himself and those whom he has called to be his people.”
- John Mackay, Exodus, 9.

“The whole story of Exodus is a covenant narrative. The God who pledged himself to Abraham and his descendants remained the faithful God. He had made promises and intended to honor them, and when his moment came, honor them he did...in a word, Exodus cannot be described simply as the book of the holiness of the Lord, nor simply as the book of the presence of the Lord, but as the book of the holy God present in all his holiness at the heart of his people’s life, their provident savior and friend, who makes provision whereby they, in all their unworthiness, may live safely with him.” - Alec Motyer, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Exodus*, 20, 23.

The setting for Exodus 1:1-2:25 is Israel in Egypt. The opening section sets the stage for the rest of the book by describing: the connection to the narrative of Genesis (Ex. 1:1–7), the oppression that has arisen under a new pharaoh (1:8–22), the preservation of Moses at birth (2:1–10) and later in Midian (2:11–22), and the declaration of God’s intimate knowledge of Israel’s suffering and God’s faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham and his descendants (2:23–25).

Exodus is a journey in two parts.

Part One: Egypt Exodus 1-15 Aug. 7th – Oct. 30th

Part Two: Sinai Exodus 16-18 Nov. 6th – Nov. 20th

Pause for Advent: Nov. 27th – Dec. 18th

Part Two Cont. Sinai Exodus 19 - 39 Jan. 8th – June 25th

Pause for Missions Sunday: February 5th

Pause for DNOW: February 19th

Resources for further study:

Exodus: A Mentors Commentary by John Mackay

Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture
(Volume 2) (The New American Commentary) by Douglas Stuart

October 9, 2022

THE LORD'S PASSOVER

Exodus 12:1-17 ESV

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. 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. 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. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 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. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 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. 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.

“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever.”

Scriptures for further study:

1 Corinthians 5:7

1 Peter 1:18-19

Ephesians 2:1-10

1 John 1:5-10

BIG IDEA: The Passover and the Cross of Christ remind us of the depth of our sin and the soaring height of God's holiness and His amazing grace. Therefore, God calls us to renew our trust in Him as our Deliverer.

OUTLINE

1. Life & Death and Judgment & Salvation (12:12-13)
2. The New Beginning for God's People (12:1-2, 14-17)
3. Gospel Reminders and Applications:
 - a. The Depth of our Sin and the Height of God's Holiness
 - b. God's Amazing Grace and Our Freedom

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

““The exodus of God's people out of Egypt is the greatest redemptive event in the OT.”

- D.A. Carson

“Christians may learn about Christ through the book of Exodus in many ways. First, on a large scale, the way in which Israel was delivered from the hardship of slavery in Egypt to the promised land of divine blessing presents a major metaphor for God's saving work throughout history...the pattern of divine victory over enemies, the establishment of the divine dwelling place and the abundance of blessings find their greatest fulfillment in Christ's first and second advents.”

- Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible, p.98.

“Church, if I had to summarize the book of Exodus in a phrase it would be this: The LORD is Our Deliverer! The central message of this book is about looking in faith to a God who not only rules and reigns over creation but enters into our struggles, difficulties, and oppressive circumstances to fight for us and to deliver us as He sees fit for our good and His glory.”

- Dr. Bill Pardue

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. In our sin and brokenness, we think we can be our own savior. In what ways does this play out in your life? To what do you turn when life gets difficult? Let us ask God to reveal the idols in our lives that get in the way of our worship and faith in God.
2. Do you find it more difficult to admit the depth of your sin nature or do you find it more difficult to accept God’s love for you in Christ? Why?
3. In what parts of our passage do we see God’s holiness? In what parts of our passage do you see God’s grace and mercy? What does this teach you about God?
4. Discuss how the themes of life and death, judgment and salvation play out in the final plague and the Passover. Why do you think the Lord wanted to make “a distinction between Egypt and Israel” (11:7)? Why is Passover called the “LORD’s Passover” (12:11)?
5. In what way was the institution of the Passover meal in Exodus 12:1-2 a sign of a new beginning for the Israelites? Why does God command His people to have a “memorial day” (Exodus 12:14) to celebrate the Passover meal? Discuss the similarities of the Sacrament of Communion with the Passover and how Jesus commanded us to remember His sacrifice.

PRAISE TO JESUS- Take time to praise God for providing for our salvation through the Lamb of God, Jesus. As Romans 5:8 reminds us, “God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Share your praise with your family or friends this week..

REPENTANCE THROUGH JESUS- How did God the Holy Spirit convict you from this passage of your sin? Ask the Spirit to give you a heart of repentance to repent specifically of the ways that you try to save yourself instead of trusting in Jesus.

CONSECRATION FOR JESUS- Ask the Spirit to enable you to abide in Him this week and to renew your faith so that you “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

1. The final plague and first Passover meal that we read about in Exodus 11-12 brings up some tough issues and topics such as death, God's punishment of sin, and the use of blood. You will want to pray about how deep to go into these depending on the age and stage of your children. The main takeaway from our passage is the fact that the death and resurrection of Jesus provided a way of forgiveness and deliverance for all who trust in Him.

2. Ask your children what God instructed the Israelite families to put on their door frames in Exodus 12:7. Talk with them about how the Israelites were told to put blood from their Passover lamb on their doorposts.

3. Ask your children what the name "Passover" comes from in Exodus 12:11. Make sure to talk about how it comes from God passing over the houses that had the blood on them.

4. Ask your children why they think God commanded the Israelites to have a Passover meal each year. You will want to talk with them about the importance of remembering God's mighty work of salvation and deliverance. Also talk about how we so often forget about what God has done and what God has promised to do for His people.
 - a. Talk with them about how God wants us to remember Christ's sacrificial death and victorious resurrection. Jesus told us to specifically remember His sacrificial death through the sacrament of Communion in which we remember His body that He gave for us and His blood that He shed for our forgiveness.

5. Ask your children if they know what a substitute is. Perhaps they have had a substitute teacher at school or have been on a sports team in which a player was substituted for another player.
 - a. Read John 1:29 and ask your children what title John the Baptist gives Jesus. Talk with them about His title of "Lamb of God" and how He was our substitute for our sins.
 - b. Read 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 and ask them what title Christ is given in verse 7. Talk with them about how Jesus is our Passover Lamb and through His death we may have forgiveness and deliverance from our sins.

FOR STUDENTS

1. If someone asked you what the Passover was about, what would you say?
2. Imagine that you were an Israelite who had grown up as a slave in Egypt and had little knowledge of God. What would your thoughts have been about Moses's instructions to slay the lamb and sprinkle the blood? And what do you think your thoughts would have been the next morning after the destroyer came through Egypt?
3. Reflect on the idea that God's people are redeemed from slavery, for slavery. How should this shape your view of yourself as a member of God's redeemed people?
4. The sign that the Israelites were putting their faith in the blood of the Lamb was physically visible on the doorposts of their houses. What sign is there in your life that the blood of Christ has been applied to you? Is it internal and invisible or external and obvious?

**Selected questions borrowed and adapted from *The Lamb of God* by Nancy Guthrie and *Exodus for You* by Tim Chester

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1 Many people mistakenly think the Old Testament is no longer relevant, or that the New Testament is the only thing we need to read. But all of the Bible is the word of God, and the Old Testament still speaks powerfully. In fact, notice how the story of the Exodus serves as a beautiful pattern of the gospel: that we are in bondage to sin and in captivity to death, but God delivers us and frees us by the blood of Christ and brings us to a new eternal home. Learn to see all the Bible as God's word and read it with the intention to see Jesus Christ on every page.

2. It is absolutely true that God is a God of love. But it is equally true that God is holy and that He judges all mankind for our sin. Our passage vividly illustrates that divine judgment. Rather than dismiss this aspect of God, as some erringly do, we must instead embrace the truth of God's judgment and endeavor in all sincerity to repent of our sins and seek the mercy and forgiveness that He provides and offers to us.

3. The shedding of the blood of the lamb and the sprinkling of that blood on the doorways of people's homes in order to avert death and punishment is a powerful picture and clear reminder of the need to have our lives and hearts covered with the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Our passage here in Exodus speaks of that blood as having three purposes: protection/shelter, cleansing, and substitution. In the same way, Jesus's blood offers us protection from God's judgment, cleansing from our sin, and substitution of His life for ours. This, my friends, is the very heart of the gospel. We must ponder these truths for ourselves. And I urge you to believe and to make sure that you have the blood of Christ covering your life!