

Message #21

Exodus 12:29-42

When God purposes to do something, no one can stop God. No force, no power, no nation, no person can stop God. God has all power and authority and He can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants to whomever He wants at any moment. Never is that more evident than when we come to this section of Scripture.

We come now to the final plague. Of all of the plagues, this one is the most destructive plague. It doesn't take long and it doesn't last long, but it is devastating and it does accomplish exactly what God wanted it to accomplish. It is a death plague and it is a plague that generates the emancipation of Israel.

This final plague is so special that a specific meal called the Passover meal was to be eaten. Now most people who talk about the Passover call it the Jewish Passover. But the fact is this is the Lord's Passover (12:11, 14, 27, 42). This is a pass over that is supposed to focus on God.

GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL WAS TO TAKE ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT AND HE SENT A FINAL PLAGUE AGAINST EGYPT THAT ACCOMPLISHED HIS SOVEREIGN WILL AND THIS DELIVERANCE WAS TO BE REMEMBERED BY A MEAL THAT REFLECTED ON THE SHED BLOOD OF A SACRIFICIAL LAMB.

At least 17 times in chapter 12, the noun LORD (YHWH) is used (12:1, 11, 12, 14, 23, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 36, 41, 43, 48, 50, 51). We may recall that this is the noun for God that establishes not only that He is in a covenant relationship with Israel, but also that He is the Sovereign I AM God who can do whatever He wants. **This name for God truly does establish His sovereignty.**

People would be very wise to listen to the Word of God and respond to it. This text breaks down nicely into three parts:

PART #1 – God sends the final plague. **12:29-30**

After the Jews had held their Passover feast and put the blood on the door, they sat in their homes waiting for God to move and at midnight God moved. Only two verses explain the horror and devastating consequences of the plague.

First, in verse 29, it is clear that at midnight the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. The language indicates this all happened to everyone at the same time. This tells us something about the Omnipresence of God and the Omnipotence of God. He certainly is able to assess every home at the same moment to determine if the blood of the Lamb was on the door posts. In one instant this plague hit and it was a plague that came directly from the LORD, Himself.

Second, “all” the firstborn in the land died. From the great political leader Pharaoh to the prisoner who was locked up in a dungeon to the cattle. All the firstborn died. From the greatest to the least, death hit everyone and the only potential for escape was the blood on the door.

We may remember that the first Pharaoh in this book of Exodus caused the death of all Israelite baby boys. The reason was because he was trying to prevent this nation from becoming great. Now Pharaoh’s children and grandchildren were running the Egyptian world and this plague hit the entire Egyptian world. This is not the Israelites taking revenge on the Egyptians for the horrible things she did, this is God taking revenge on the Egyptians. God, Himself, is pouring out this righteous judgment.

Death is no respecter of persons. No one knows when it will hit and no one knows how it will hit. But if the Lord tarries, death will track everyone down and the only hope one has at that moment is to be covered by the blood of the sacrificial Lamb. **The only hope we have for deliverance when death comes knocking at our door is to be protected by the blood of Jesus Christ.**

Now **verse 30** paints an interesting picture for us. Apparently, as all the firstborn were dying, they were not making much noise. Most of them just quietly died in their sleep, which is a gracious way to go.

We may remember that weeks earlier Moses was told by God to go to Pharaoh and look him in the face and tell him that God was going to “kill” his firstborn son (Ex. 4:23). So this was not a major surprise. Pharaoh and his servants and all the Egyptians had heard about this pending plague, so probably they got up in the night, not because they heard noises, but to check up on the firstborn children. It is normal for parents to look in on their children during the night and it would certainly be expected if one were under some death threat.

When the parents looked at the firstborn and saw that the firstborn was dead, **Verse 30** says there was a “great cry in Egypt.”

Ironically, this is the very same word that was used when Israel cried out in their Egyptian bondage (3:7, 9). What an amazing reversal of things. Now the Egyptians are crying out.

Notice at the end of the verse we read, “for there was no home where there was not someone dead.” This does not even include the animals. The animals represented more than just pets to these Egyptians. They were their gods and their means of economic support. So first the people look at their families and their firstborn is dead and then they go outside to check up on their cattle and the firstborn is dead. So not only are family members dead, but so are their “gods.” All Egyptian families had experienced the ravages of this plague.

There is no home or family on this earth that has not been touched by the death of someone they love. The only comforting thought that one may have in thinking about this reality is that the person was a believer in Jesus Christ and the blood washed his sins away.

PART #2 – Pharaoh orders the Israelites out of Egypt. 12:31-36

In Exodus 11:1-8, God told Moses exactly what He was going to do and exactly what Pharaoh and the Egyptians were going to do.

When now it is finally time for Israel to leave Egypt, they will leave, as Douglas Stuart said, freely, rapidly and wealthy (*Exodus*, p. 293).

The Egyptians gave their full support to Israel's Exodus and gave them so much money that it financed their entire 40-year existence on their way to the Promised Land. God had actually told Abraham that when Israel would leave Egypt, they would leave with many possessions having been slaves (Gen. 15:14). **This teaches us a very important principle about Biblical prophecy; it is always literally and precisely fulfilled in the exact way God's Word predicts. God's prophecies are never to be interpreted symbolically or metaphorically, but literally.**

There are four main facts revealed:

Fact #1 - Pharaoh actually wants and supports Israel's departure. **12:31-32**

There are six historical realities revealed in these two verses:

(Reality #1) - Pharaoh calls for Moses and Aaron at night . **12:31a**

There was no more dragging feet on this point. He wanted the Israelites gone right now.

(Reality #2) - Pharaoh tells them to get up and get out of Egypt. **12:31b**

This is exactly what God said Pharaoh would do—(Ex. 11:1). God said not only would he let them go, he would drive them out of the land.

(Reality #3) - Pharaoh tells them to take all of Israel with him. **12:31c**

No more negotiating or finagling; Pharaoh wanted everything connected to Israel—men, women, children and animals—out of the land.

(Reality #4) - Pharaoh tells him to go worship the LORD. **12:31d**

This would be the equivalent to the Muslims telling the Christians to please go worship your God. Instead of trying to prevent it or stop it, they support it.

(Reality #5) - Pharaoh tells him to take his flocks and herds with him. **12:32a**

God is so sovereign that He even oversees the animals.

(Reality #6) - Pharaoh tells him to bless him also. **12:32b**

The last time that a Pharaoh had been blessed by an Israelite was when Joseph was Prime Minister of Egypt (Gen. 47:7, 10). Since that time, the Egyptians had become proud and arrogant against Israel. But that all changed.

It is obvious that Pharaoh knew that Moses was connected to the true God. He knew that Moses could pray on his behalf and he asked him to do it. Before, he asked Moses to pray and remove plagues, but now he asks Moses to pray for him.

Wise are political leaders who recognize the importance of Israel.

Fact #2 - The Egyptians pressured the Israelites to get out of Egypt. **12:33**

Their motive is simple; if we don't, we will be dead. Their motive is that if we don't let Israel out of our land, there will be more fatal consequences. They wanted Israel out of the land as fast as she could go. Now the fact is God had never said they would all be dead, but there was an emotional and rational frenzy that was taking place and these people realized they were up against the true God.

Fact #3 - The Israelites quickly start leaving Egypt. **12:34**

They did not even make any normal food preparations or clothing preparations. The language here describes the fact that they are grabbing their food and bowls and wrapping it in clothing and heading out. They did not have elaborate wardrobes but were moving out as fast as they could.

This reminds me of the time when the Tribulation will be underway and the Antichrist will sit in the Temple of Jerusalem and demand to be worshipped. Jesus said to the Jews when you see that happen, get out fast.

Fact #4 - the Israelites are leaving with a considerable amount of wealth. **12:35-36**

Again, this is exactly what God predicted would happen (Ex. 3:21-22). As we mentioned, God told Abraham that this would happen (Gen. 15:13-14). The Egyptians were more than willing to give Israel anything to get them to leave. They were willing to financially underwrite her departure.

Now since Israel is leaving, as it were with the shirt on their back, they would certainly need supplies to survive in the wilderness. How could nearly 2 million people survive in a wilderness that went from Egypt to Canaan?

In order to survive they would need traveling money to be able to buy supplies from traders and those who had some caravan or also from some local settlement they might come across. Also when God wanted them to worship Him, He demanded that a worship center be built and that worship implements be made that were worthy of His greatness. Where would Israel get all of this money?

She got it all from the Egyptians. The Israelites had gone to their neighbors and asked for things just as God had commanded and the fact is God turned the minds of the Egyptians to give her what she wanted and needed.

The Israelites literally went from poverty to wealth overnight. They were rich in their possessions; they were rich in their freedom and they were rich in their relationship with God.

PART #3 – The factual data concerning the actual Exodus. **12:37-42**

There are six facts that are revealed in these opening verses that describe the actual Exodus:

Fact #1 - The first travel was from Rameses to Succoth. **12:37a**

Rameses was a city in northern Egypt, which was a key governmental city that had actually been built by the Israelites (Ex. 1:11). It was a sort of outpost military city that stored supplies. This apparently was the national departure point for the Exodus. They all congregated at Rameses and from there traveled east and then south.

The first stop is a place to the southeast named Succoth. The actual Hebrew word “sukka” designates a booth or shelter. So we may assume that this first stop in the Exodus was in some sort of “shelterville.”

Fact #2 - The number of Israelites was 600,000 men plus the women and children. **12:37b**

Now we do not exactly know the total number of Israelites who left Egypt. Obviously there were tens of thousands of people and many scholars believe the number could have been as high as about 2 million.

Fact #3 - There was a number of non- Jews who also went with Israel. **12:38a**

There was a mixed multitude that went with the Jews. These were a “mingled people.” Right from the beginning it is revealed that God’s program is primarily centered on Israel, but it includes other ethnic people. We may assume that some of these people realized that God was on the side of the Israelites and they wanted in on a connection to the true God.

Fact #4 - There was a large number of flocks, herds and livestock. **12:38b**

Not even the animals would be held hostage anymore to the Egyptians.

Fact #5 - They baked unleavened bread to eat for food on the trip. **12:39**

Fact #6 - The date of the Exodus was 430 years after the Egyptian captivity. **12:40-42**

Jacob's family had gone to Egypt near the year 1870 B.C. Now, in 1440 B.C., it was time for Jacob's family to leave.

This is exactly what God told Abraham that He was going to do (Gen. 15:13). He said it would be about a 400-year captivity and then He would deliver Israel and that is exactly what He did.

You cannot honestly examine this text without seeing an amazing display of the sovereignty of God.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1) God is totally and completely sovereign over all things at all times.**
- 2) God is a God of Israel. There is a distinction between Israel and every other nation in the world and wise are political leaders who realize this.**
- 3) Death hits every family one way or another.**
- 4) The only hope we have when death comes calling is to be covered by the blood of the Lamb. Salvation is not found in our works, but it is found in totally and completely trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.**