

# REDEEMING GRACE

*"Put away the gods which your fathers served . . . in Egypt".*

– Joshua 24:14

## Gleanings from the Plagues

Last week we examined the purpose of the plagues that overtook Egypt. In them we saw the power and wisdom of God. They testify how the LORD will one day deal with injustice; and they serve as a solemn warning to the world that God will bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel.



Second, through the arrangement of the plagues we learned how God warns before bringing corrective measures. Third, we were given glimpses into Satan's devices as we examined the Egyptian magicians. Though limited in their power, they were none the less instruments of Satan; deceiving men and human government. Their tactics patterned Satan's methods. Finally, we saw how these plagues serve as a striking forecast of the future tribulation period that will one day come upon the whole earth.

Today we are going to examine Israel's deliverance from the house of bondage. In these passages we will discover principles behind God's sovereign grace as He redeems

men, both then and now. It is vital we understand that both Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin and death, are not due in any way to their, or our righteousness. It is a work of divine grace, not human merit.

Imbedded within the pages of these plagues is a graphic picture of God's amazing work of grace. God does not want us to miss this point. To miss this, is to miss seeing our desperate condition and our need for a Savior. To miss this, is to miss seeing the mighty work of God as He illuminates and draws us unto Himself. To miss this, is to miss eternal life.

**"THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD OF THE HEBREWS, HOW LONG WILT THOU REFUSE TO HUMBLE THYSELF BEFORE ME . . . ? – EXODUS 10:3**

**1. Examine the verses below. Discuss Israel's moral condition before they were delivered from Egyptian bondage.**

- a. Deuteronomy 9:4-6
- b. Leviticus 17:7
- c. Joshua 24:14
- d. Ezekiel 20:6-9

**ANSWER:**

Let's begin by viewing Israel's moral condition before their deliverance from Egypt.

Deut. 9:4-6 - "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my **righteousness** the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. <sup>5</sup> Not for thy **righteousness**, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land . . . <sup>6</sup> Understand therefore, **that** the LORD thy God giveth thee **not** this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people."

Israel was in as much need of salvation as we were before Christ. Note Israel's moral condition before the Exodus.

In Leviticus 17:7 we read,

"And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto demons unto whom they have gone a whoring".

Mark the words "no more." The implication is plain. **Before coming into the wilderness, Israel had practiced idolatry.**

Plainer still is Joshua 24:14,

"Now therefore fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord".

Here we learn the patriarchs served false gods before Jehovah called them, and that their descendants did the same thing in Egypt.

Turn to Ezekiel 20:6-9:

"In the day that I lifted up my hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; **Then said I unto them, 'Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.'** But they rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt; then I said, **I will pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them, in the midst of the land of Egypt.** But I wrought for My name's sake that it should not be polluted before the heathen,

among whom they were, in whose sight I made Myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt" (Ezek. 20:6-9).

This passage is very pointed. It supplies us with more details on Israel's spiritual condition before their exodus from Egypt.

- a. **First**, this passage tells us that Israel worshiped the idols of Egypt.
- b. **Second**, it shows how God reprimanded Israel for worshipping idols.
- c. **Third**, it informs us how Israel failed to heed God's reprimand, even more, they blatantly defied Him.
- d. **Fourth**, it intimates how the earlier plagues were also visitations of judgment upon the Hebrews, as well as the Egyptians.
- e. **Fifth**, it shows that the Lord delivered Israel, not because of any worthiness or fitness He found in them, but simply for His name's sake.

## 2. To whom did Israel cry when under Egyptian bondage? — Exodus 2:23

**What reason is given for God's response to Israel's suffering? — Exodus 2:24**

**What can we learn from these verses? Is there any application in this for us today?**

### ANSWER:

As we turn to the book of Exodus—everything in it is significant. Here we find how the physical condition of the Israelites accurately symbolizes their spiritual state. When we first see Israel in the book of Exodus we find them in bondage and at the mercy of a cruel king. Their physical condition portrays our spiritual condition before salvation. Here the natural condition of mankind is seen — "captives" of the Devil.

Second, we read that they "sighed by-reason-of their bondage, and they cried" (Exodus 2:23). But nothing is said about them crying unto God in this passage!

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage."

They were conscious of their hard lot, but not yet conscious of the One from which their deliverance must come. Their attitude is much like our before we were saved. The Holy Spirit stirs our heart. We see our spiritual wretchedness. Our lost condition makes us sigh and groan, but we are still unacquainted with the Deliverer.

It is wonderful to mark the words that follow in Exodus 2:23-24

"And they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. <sup>24</sup> And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

God heard their cry, even though their cry was not addressed to Him. And God "remembered His covenant." Here we see the ground of God's action. It was not Israel's faith that drew God's attention, for they had none. Nor was it solely their broken condition, for there were many others in different parts of the earth equally wretched, whom God ignored. Rather, God had respect to Israel for His covenant's sake. Much as today.

Remember, we were once . . .

"Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." – Eph. 2:12-13

We are not saved on the grounds of our righteousness or good works.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" – Titus 3:5

It is purely a work of God. And it was precisely this with us. God made a provision for our sin in Christ. He did this before the foundation of the world and it was this, which made Him have "respect" unto us!

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" — Eph. 2:8-9.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" — 1 Peter 1:18-20.

### 3. Note the shallowness of Israel's faith in the following passages.

- a. Exodus 4:31 —
- b. Then trouble came — Exodus 5:9, 19
- c. Then came God's promises —Exodus 6:6-8
- d. Exodus 6:9 —
- e. Then came the plagues on both the Egyptian's and the Israeli's

#### ANSWER:

Unknown to the enslaved and groaning Israelites, God had raised up for them a deliverer. Exodus 3 records the Lord's appearance to Moses at the burning bush. This is where God appointed Moses to be the deliverer of His people. But Israel did not know it. They were in total ignorance of the wondrous grace which God had in store for them.

Similarly! When we were first made conscious of our woeful condition we groaned beneath the intolerable load of guilt, and our seemingly hopeless straights. We knew nothing of God's appointed Deliverer.

Next, we are told the Lord sent Aaron into the wilderness to meet his brother. Together they entered Egypt, and gather the elders of Israel. There they told them of God's promised deliverance — Exodus 4:31.

**"And the people believed;** and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

But it is clear from what follows that this was not genuine faith. Their worship was superficial. Much like many of us when we first learned of Christ. We were still in our painful bondage and all we wanted was relief from its grasp. When we became aware that there might be Someone to deliver us, we were willing to try anything. Maybe religion could rescue us. It was something hopeful without knowledge and faith.

It is also striking to read in Exodus 5:9! As soon as Pharaoh learned of God's intentions toward Israel he at once increases their burdens and says, "Let more work be laid upon the men."

It is interesting to see how Pharaoh foreshadows Satan here! As soon as the great Enemy of souls discerns the spirit of God commencing His operations of grace within us (the sinner), he makes our spiritual lot more miserable than ever. He tells us to work harder. Satan tells us we must labor with increased zeal if we are ever to find favor with God.

Exodus 5:19 -- "And the officers of the children of Israel did see that **they were in evil case (in trouble)**, after it **was** said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.

Next, we read that the people came to Moses complaining of their increased misery. Even now Israel did not put their trust in the Lord, but instead, leaned upon the arm of flesh. It is much like as before we trusted in Christ—instead of turning at once to Christ for relief, we seek other methods to relieve our misery.

Did not the "prodigal son" act in this way. When he "began to be in want", he did not immediately return to the Father, but "went and joined himself to a citizen of that country". How slow, how pathetically slow, we are to learn the great truth that God alone is able to meet our deep, deep need!

Next, Moses sought the Lord, and the Lord in tender patience told Moses to go unto the Israelites and say,

"I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you of their bondage, and I will redeem you with stretched out arm, and with great judgments; And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will bring you in unto the land,

concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord" (Exodus 6:6-8).

This is God's marvelous grace! However, it is sad in what follows.

Exodus 6:9 -- "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel, **but they hearkened not unto Moses** for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage"

This goes to show us that Israel's earlier bowing down and "worshipping" in Exodus 4:31 was merely a fleeting moment. How true to life is the picture presented here! While Israel groaned under the burdens of the brick-kilns of Egypt, **even the promises of God failed to give relief.**

So, it was with each of us. While we continued to justify ourselves by our own works, while we sought to weave a robe of righteousness by our own hands, even the promises of the Gospel failed to comfort us. It is not until our souls turn away from self and puts our trust alone in the finished work of Christ, that peace will be obtained.

Romans 4:5 says, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Exodus 6:9 -- "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage".

This is the last thing which we are told about the Israelites spiritual condition until the Angel of Death visited the land of Egypt.

#### **4. Israel's deliverance is a real event. It is also a type. In what way does Israel's deliverance parallel our redemption? What can we learn from this?**

*(Typology is a special kind of symbolism. (A symbol is something which represents something else.) We can define a type as a "prophetic symbol" because all types are representations of something yet future. More specifically, a type in scripture is a person or thing in the Old Testament which foreshadows a person or thing in the New Testament.)*

**Review the various ways the these plague are a type.**

**Why do you think Israel experienced 3 of the 10 plagues?**

**What does this teach us about human nature?**