

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 6

The Ten Plagues

The Ten Plagues

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To show the fulfillment of God's promise to redeem His people using an "outstretched arm and great acts of judgment." God used the Ten Plagues to fulfill this promise.

Key Verses

Exodus 7:14-12:32—Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 8:12

Revelation 20:6

1 Peter 1:13-21

John 1:4

Memory Verse Deuteronomy 3:24

"O Lord God, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?"

Hook

Review the memory verse from last week: Proverbs 21:30.

Ask the class, "What happens if your parents ask you to do something and you don't do it? Do they punish you? What happens if after they punish you, you still don't do what they ask? Does the punishment get worse?"

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

The goal of the class is to work through all ten plagues, so select carefully the passages that you read. God had promised Moses that He would release the people of Israel. Pharaoh, however, due to the hardness of his heart, refused to let the people go. The events of Exodus 7-12 show what happens when someone who thinks they are a god stands against the One True God.

God began to show His power through great wonders designed to reveal to Pharaoh that the God of the Israelites is not only real, but more powerful than all the false gods of Egypt. The Nile, which many Egyptians worshipped, was turned into blood, but Pharaoh did not let the people go. A plague of frogs was brought forth, but Pharaoh hardened his heart again. During both of these events, Pharaoh's charlatan replicated God's wonders. However, when God turned dust into gnats, they were unable to imitate God and bring life into the world. They declared to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." Pharaoh then tried to bargain with Moses, asking that instead of the people travelling to Mt. Sinai, they would worship God in Egypt. This was unacceptable to the Lord, and He brought forth flies into the land. God, however, separated the plagues so that it only affected the Egyptians and not the Israelites.

The plagues came quicker at this point: The Egyptians' livestock died, they were afflicted with boils, hail fell from the sky and destroyed their crops. God said to Pharaoh, "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. You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go."

God then sent a plague of locusts, which wiped out whatever plants and crops that were left over from the hail, leaving the Egyptians with no livestock and no crops, and basically no food. Finally, God put all of Egypt into complete darkness before sending the final plague, the death of the firstborn children.

LOOK

There are two important lessons for us to see in these passages. First, God will accomplish His goals no matter who stands against Him and no matter how powerful they are. If God wants something done, He will do it. God revealed Himself in stunning and powerful ways to Pharaoh, yet Pharaoh still fought in vain against Him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

The second important lesson for us is that there are consequences for disobeying God. Because of Pharaoh's refusal to listen to God, the people of Egypt suffered mightily. All of their food was destroyed, their water was all turned into blood, their livestock was all destroyed, even their very own bodies were afflicted with illnesses. At any point this suffering could have been avoided, and yet Pharaoh still would not listen to God. The end result for the Egyptians was darkness and death.

For us, the ultimate disobedience to God is refusing to listen to God, accept the completed work of His son Jesus Christ, and be saved. The Bible uses a few different metaphors for the consequences of rejecting Jesus. One of those is called "outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12), while another is simply called "the second death" (Revelation 20:6).

For the Israelites, there was an escape from that death. If they took the blood of a lamb and spread it over the door of their house, then death would pass over them and they would be saved. For us the solution is exactly the same. We too need to be covered by the blood of a Lamb, and if we are, we too will be saved. The Bible calls Jesus the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the earth. It says that we have been bought by God, not with gold or silver, but by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:13-21).

If our lives are covered by Christ, He promises that we will have light and life, (John 1:4). If not, we too will have darkness and death. Praise be to God that He has made a way for us to be redeemed out of slavery, sin, and death. The Lord did mighty works in sending the plagues against Egypt, but no work is mightier or more powerful than the one that He performed for us, sending His Son to die on a cross, and in doing so, conquering death itself.

TOOK

As a class memorize Deuteronomy 3:24.

Ask the students to think about things that God may be asking them to do. Have them examine themselves and see if there is anything that they are not being obedient to God in.

Pray: Thank the Lord for the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses all sin. Give any students who wish to the opportunity to respond to the message of the Gospel. Pray for any unbelieving family members of the students.

Parent Question: Why is Jesus called "The Lamb that was slain?"

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Select Passages in Exodus 7-12 By David Guzik

4. (19-21) The first plague comes upon Egypt: The Nile turns to blood.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood* and *pitchers of stone*.'" And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **That they may become blood:** This is the first of the plagues. There are nine in total (the tenth is the slaying of the firstborn, which is in a class by itself), and they are grouped together in threes. In this structure of threes, the first two plagues only come after warning and a call to repentance; the third plague in each set comes without warning.

b. **All the waters that were in the river were turned to blood:** Some say the plagues each have a naturalistic explanation. In the case of this first plague, some point out that when the Nile reaches an extremely high flood stage, it collects finely powdered red earth, and this red earth carries organisms that color the water and kill fish. But if this were the cause, it is hard to explain how Pharaoh could possibly be impressed.

i. God may or may not have used natural mechanisms to accomplish these plagues; even if He did, the timing and character of the plagues come from God's hand alone.

ii. It is important to understand that these plagues were all literal; there was nothing symbolic about them. Each plague pointed to a greater meaning than the event itself, *but they really happened*. This guides our understanding about the plagues in the Book of Revelation; there is no reason to see them as merely symbolic either.

iii. The plagues God brought against Egypt had a definite strategy and purpose. Each of them confronts and attacks a prized Egyptian deity. Not only did they bring punishment against Egypt, the plagues also answered Pharaoh's original question: *Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?* (Exodus 5:2) The plagues show the LORD God to be greater than any of the deities of Egypt.

c. **So there was blood throughout the land of Egypt:** Specifically, this first plague was directed against the numerous Egyptian river deities. The Nile itself was virtually worshipped as a god by the Egyptians, and the LORD God shows that *He* has complete power over the Nile, not some river god.

i. "The 'plagues' are described by cognate Hebrew words, all meaning 'blow' or 'stroke'." (Cole) Each plague was as if God were to strike or beat a deity worshipped by the Egyptians.

ii. The Egyptian god *Khnum* was said to be the guardian of the Nile, and this showed he was unable to protect his territory. The god *Hapi* was said to be the spirit of the Nile, and was brought low by this plague. The great god *Osiris* was thought to have the Nile as his bloodstream; in this plague he truly bled. The Nile itself was worshipped as a god, and there are papyri recording hymns sung in praise of the river.

iii. There is a significant mention of something like this in a papyrus from this general period known as the Ipuwer Papyrus. It actually says (Ipuwer 2.10) that the Nile was blood and undrinkable. The same papyrus repeatedly mentions that servants left their masters.

5. (22-25) The magicians of Egypt copy the miracle.

Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

a. **The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:** Digging in wells, the magicians of Egypt found fresh water to replicate the LORD's plague upon the Nile. The magicians turned fresh *well water* into blood.

b. **The magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments:** Bible scholars warmly debate if this was a magician's trick or if these **enchantments** were miracles from Satan's hand. The evidence seems to lean in favor of them being miracles from Satan's hand.

i. If the magicians of Egypt really wanted to do a miracle, they should have turned the bloody river clean again. They didn't because it seems that Satan cannot perform a constructive, cleansing miracle. He can bring supernatural destruction, but not goodness. All they did was make more bloody water!

ii. "Alleviation of human suffering is no part of the programme of the devil or his agents. That can only come from Jehovah, through the believing cry of his servants." (Meyer)

c. **Pharaoh's heart grew hard...Neither was his heart moved by this:** One way or another, the result in the heart of Pharaoh was the same. Pharaoh took another opportunity to reject and dishonor the LORD God.

Exodus 8 - Plagues Upon Egypt

A. The second plague: Frogs.

1. (1-4) The warning of the second plague.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.'" "

a. **Go to Pharaoh:** This series of plagues will end with death coming to almost every home in Egypt. God could have brought that terrible last plague early in this series, but did not - and did not for a determined purpose. God used this series of plagues to glorify Himself (especially above the gods of the Egyptians), *and* to give Pharaoh chance to repent.

i. We should see the good mercy of God in doing this. He might have gone directly to the more severe judgment, but instead gave Pharaoh many chances to repent and change.

b. **I will smite all your territory with frogs:** God threatened a plague of **frogs** for a specific reason. The Egyptian goddess *Heqet* (or, *Heket*) was always pictured with the head of a frog. Among the ancient Egyptians, frogs were considered sacred and could not be killed.

i. Egyptians worshipped the frog as a female goddess because frogs were common around the Nile, because they reproduced rapidly, and because being amphibians they are part of two worlds, creatures of both land and water.

2. (5-7) God brings frogs upon the land through Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Egypt do the same.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

a. **The frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt:** Since the Egyptians worshipped the frog, God gave them a plague of frogs. We see both God's determined plan and His sense of humor.

i. "Though he is the Lord of hosts he has no need of powerful armies, the ministry of angels, or the thunderbolts of justice to punish a sinner or a sinful nation; the *frog* or the *fly* in his hands is a sufficient instrument of vengeance." (Clarke)

ii. "Thus the first and this second plague are about the water; the third and fourth about the earth; the five next about the air; and the last about man." (Trapp)

b. **And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs:** The ability of the magicians to do the same **with their enchantments** points to a supernatural power present; this wasn't the work of a skilled illusionist, this was occult power at work.

i. For all their occult powers, all the magicians could do was make *more* frogs! They could only make the problem worse; yet their work gave Pharaoh an excuse to further harden his heart.

3. (8-15) Pharaoh asks Moses for help.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD." And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that* they may remain in the river only." So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God. And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only." Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

a. **Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs:** Here, God's previous promise (Exodus 7:1) was fulfilled. As a prophet of God, Moses stood in the place of God before Pharaoh, and Pharaoh made his request to God through Moses.

i. **Entreat:** "An unusual word, meaning 'intercede', the first occasion on which pharaoh has been really moved,

and on which he makes a promise to let Israel go, a promise which he does not keep." (Cole)

ii. "The frogs could not be killed because of their sacredness, and yet such large numbers of them would be revolting in their loathsomeness, especially because cleanliness was a particular mark of the Egyptians." (Thomas)

b. **So the LORD did according to the word of Moses:** When Moses prayed, God answered - and all the frogs died. The understated description "**the land stank**" gives a hint at how nauseating it was.

c. **He hardened his heart:** Even when Pharaoh's plea was granted, his heart did not change - **he hardened his heart** - yet Pharaoh did just as God said he would.

i. "This becomes a familiar pattern: when he did not keep it the first time, no doubt it became easier and easier to do the same again." (Cole)

ii. "Pharaoh *increased his guilt*. His vows heaped up his transgressions. He forgot his promises; but God did not. They were laid by in store against him." (Spurgeon)

iii. "As to Pharaoh, it is the story of a strong will, making itself stupid, while all the way, until the condition was utterly beyond hope of remedy, God gave him opportunity to use that strong will in surrender." (Morgan)

B. The third plague: Lice.

1. (16-17) God tells Moses to initiate the plague of lice.

So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **Stretch out your rod:** This plague came unannounced. This time God did not show Pharaoh the mercy of a warning and an invitation to repentance.

i. We must never think God is unfair when He does not show mercy. If someone were *totally* fair, they would *never* show mercy.

b. **Struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast:** This plague struck at the heart of all Egyptian worship, especially at their priests. The Egyptian priesthood was extremely careful about hygiene and ritual cleansing; an infestation of lice made them unable to worship their gods.

i. The plague of lice was also upon every **beast**. The gods of Egypt would not receive the sacrifice of lice-infested animals, so this stopped their sacrificial system.

2. (18-19) The magicians of Egypt are unable to duplicate this plague.

Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This *is* the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

a. **Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not:** These magicians could use occult powers to change a rod into a snake, to turn water into blood, and to summon frogs - yet they could not bring forth lice. This shows that as great as Satan's power is, it is limited - and it

comes to its limit rather early.

b. **This is the finger of God:** When the magicians said this to Pharaoh, it showed they knew there was a power greater than their own, yet it was a power that they did not honor and serve.

c. **Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them:** The hardness of Pharaoh's heart is shown when he would not even listen to the analysis of his own advisers. There was no *rational* reason why he insisted on resisting and rejecting the LORD God.

3. (25-27) Pharaoh tries to compromise with Moses.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us."

a. **Go, sacrifice to your God in the land:** In this, Pharaoh suggested a compromise, allowing Israel a holiday for their God, but demanding they stay within the land of Egypt to worship. Pharaoh wanted to negotiate with Moses (and the LORD), and find some compromise common ground.

i. "That is the true attitude of the man of faith. Evil is always suggesting some compromise. To listen to it, is to remain enslaved. The only way into liberty is to leave the land of evil; to go accompanied by the women and the children; and to take all property also. It is when that attitude is assumed, that men pass out from all bondage, and find the liberty which is in the purpose of God for them." (Morgan)

b. **If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us?** Moses reminded Pharaoh of the social uproar this would cause, and held to the original request, refusing to compromise. Moses' character has grown strong before Pharaoh.

i. "Moses refuses on the grounds that to sacrifice in Egypt would be like killing a pig in a Muslim mosque, or slaughtering a cow in a Hindu temple...In the sense that the Egyptians would consider the sacrifice of a sacred animal as blasphemous." (Cole)

4. (28-32) Pharaoh's false repentance.

And Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

a. **I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness:** This was a clear promise, and one that Pharaoh did not live up to. We cannot tell if Pharaoh deliberately lied to Moses or simply changed his mind once the plague of flies was gone.

i. Many people turn to God in a time of calamity, and when things get better, they almost immediately turn their hearts back in hardness to God. Pharaoh was not an unusual example of humanity; he was like many or most of us, ancient or modern.

ii. **I will let you go** carries the tone that Pharaoh believed that he owned or controlled Israel. "They were not

Pharaoh's people; Pharaoh never chose them, he had never brought them where they were. He had not fought with them and overcome them. They were not captives in war, nor did they dwell in a territory which was the spoil of fair conflict." (Spurgeon)

b. **Intercede for me:** This shows Pharaoh knew exactly who the plagues came from, and how they could be stopped (by humbly appealing to the LORD God).

c. **Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also:** Despite God's kindness to him and to Egypt, Pharaoh continued to harden **his heart**. This is a demonstration of how deep and severe the gradual hardening of a heart may become.

i. As we continue in sin and reject God's opportunities for us to repent and return, the hardening continues. It is commonly seen. A man doesn't start by gambling away his paycheck; it starts with continuing on in friendly betting, and his heart grows hard. A man doesn't start with shameful perversion; it starts with a few magazines, a couple of videos, and his heart grows hard. A woman doesn't start addicted to alcohol; it starts with some social drinking and her heart grows hard.

ii. "The drunkard, the murderer himself, is a man who at first did evil as far as he dared, and afterwards dared to do evil which he would once have shuddered at." (Chadwick)

B. The ninth plague: Darkness.

1. (21-23) A plague of darkness comes without warning.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness *which* may even be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

a. **Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt:** As was the pattern with the previous plagues, the third in this set of three came without warning.

b. **Darkness which may even be felt:** This was no normal darkness, it had a supernatural element to it that could **be felt**. Light is not only a physical property; it is an aspect of God's character (*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*, 1 John 1:5). In judgment, God can withdraw His presence so significantly that the void remaining is **darkness which may even be felt**.

i. Seemingly, God did not even allow artificial light sources to work. The Egyptians attempted to use candles and lamps but were unable to produce light. This was dramatic show of greatness over the prominent Egyptian god *Ra*, thought to be the sun god.

c. **All the children of Israel had light in their dwellings:** We don't know if this was because God spared them the plague or because God granted them His unique presence, bringing a supernatural light.

2. (24-29) Pharaoh's last attempt at a compromise with Moses.

Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you." But Moses said, "You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there." But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day

you see my face you shall die!" And Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."

a. **Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back:** With this, Pharaoh made his last offer to Moses. All the children of Israel could go into the wilderness for three days of sacrifice unto the LORD God, but they must leave their livestock behind.

i. Undoubtedly, Pharaoh felt God was a hard bargainer and made the best deal for Himself that He could. Pharaoh still saw things as someone who thought he could bargain with the Creator. This shows that he still didn't really know who the LORD God was, because He still had not submitted to Him.

b. **Not a hoof shall be left behind:** The LORD God, and the prophet Moses representing Him, was absolutely unwilling to compromise on these points. God wanted deliverance for *all of Israel* and for *all that belonged to Israel*, and was not willing to deal on the point.

i. This reflects the response of God to every attempt we make to surrender less than everything to Him, or to willingly leave some things in bondage. He says, "**Not a hoof shall be left behind.**"

c. **Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more!** In exasperation, Pharaoh ordered Moses out and told him to never come back. Moses assured Pharaoh, "**You have spoken well. I will never see your face again**" - but this was not good news for Pharaoh.

i. "Pharaoh was now beyond reason, and God did not reason with him." (Morgan)

ii. This ends the account of the nine plagues, and though there is one yet to come - the plague upon the firstborn - it is so unique that it must be considered by itself.

iii. The Bible tells us there were several reasons why God sent these plagues upon Pharaoh and Egypt.

- To answer Pharaoh's question, *Who is the LORD?* (Exodus 5:2). In the plagues, God showed Himself greater than any of the false gods of Egypt
- To show the power of God through Moses (Exodus 9:16)
- To give a testimony to the children of Israel for future generations (Exodus 10:2)
- To judge the false gods - demons, really - of Egypt (Exodus 12:12, Numbers 33:4)
- To warn the nations - more than 400 years later, the Philistines remembered the LORD God of Israel as the one who plagued the Egyptians (1 Samuel 4:8)
- As a testimony of the greatness of God to Israel (Exodus 15:11, Deuteronomy 4:34)

Exodus 12 - God Institutes Passover

A. Passover instructions.

1. (1-6) Each household should take a lamb.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.'"

a. **This month shall be your beginning of months:** The coming deliverance from Egypt was such a signifi-

cant act that God told the children of Israel to remake their calendar. The new year would now start with the month of their redemption from Egypt. It was a dramatic way of saying that *everything* was to change.

i. "God is ever the God of new beginnings in the history of failure. The ultimate statement is found in the Apocalypse in the words: 'Behold, I make all things new.'" (Morgan)

ii. "Commence a nation's annals from its evangelization. Begin the chronicle of a people from the day when they bow at the feet of Jesus." (Spurgeon)

iii. **Speak to all the congregation of Israel:** "This is the first occurrence in the Pentateuch of what was to become a technical term, describing Israel in its religious sense...and which underlies the New Testament use of *ekklesia*, 'church'." (Cole)

b. **Every man shall take for himself a lamb:** On the tenth of this first month, each family - or household - was to take a lamb, and the lamb was to live with the family for the four days until Passover (**on the tenth day of this month...until the fourteenth day of the same month**).

i. In this way, the lamb became part of the family. By the time it was sacrificed on the fourteenth it was both cherished and mourned. God wanted the sacrifice of something precious.

ii. **If the household is too small for the lamb:** The rabbis later determined that there should be at least ten people for each Passover lamb, and not more than twenty.

iii. "Passover was a domestic and family festival, and thus shows its early origin. It has here no temple, no meeting-tent, no altar and no priest: but representation, if not substitution, is clearly implied." (Cole)

c. **Your lamb shall be without blemish:** The lamb was also to be **without blemish**. This sacrifice unto the LORD had to be as perfect as a lamb could be.

d. **You may take it from the sheep or from the goats:** The Hebrew word for **lamb** can refer to either a young sheep or a young goat.

i. "The Hebrew *seh* is quite a neutral word and should be translated 'head of (small) stock', applying equally to sheep and goats of any age. The Hebrews, like the Chinese, seem to have regarded any distinction between sheep and goats as a minor subdivision. Probably because of this, to 'separate the sheep from the goats' is proverbial of God's discernment in New Testament times (Matthew 25:32)." (Cole)

ii. **Israel shall kill it at twilight:** "Christ came in the evening of the world; in the 'last hour' (1 John 2:11); when all lay buried in darkness; in the eventide of our sin and death." (Trapp)

2. (7-11) Instructions for eating the Passover.

'And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire; its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD's Passover.'

a. **Take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses:** Before the Passover lamb could be eaten, its blood had to be applied to the doorway of the home, to the top and upon each side the blood was applied. The only part of this sacrifice given to God was the blood; the rest was eaten

by each family or discarded (**what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire**).

i. As the blood was applied to the top and each side of the doorway, this blood dripped down, forming a figure of a cross in the doorway.

ii. The blood on the doorposts showed that the sacrifice of the Passover lamb was to be remembered in daily life. You would see it every time you went in or out of the house.

b. **And thus you shall eat it:** Then, the lamb could be eaten - but only if it had been **roasted in fire**, with the lamb itself coming into contact with the fire, and with **bitter herbs** accompanying the meal.

i. "The paschal lamb was not killed in order to be looked at only, but to be eaten; and our Lord Jesus Christ has not been slain merely that we may hear about him and talk about him, and think about him, but that we may feed upon him." (Spurgeon)

c. **Let none of it remain until morning:** The Passover lamb had to be eaten completely; a family had to totally consume the sacrifice.

i. The idea behind eating it all was that you had to take it all then, and not store up some of the rescue for later. It was for right then, right now, and you had to receive all of it without thinking you could take a bit then and come back to it later if you pleased. We take *all of Jesus*, not just the parts that please us.

d. **With a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand:** The Passover lamb had to be eaten in faith, trusting that the deliverance promised to Israel was present, and that they would walk in that deliverance immediately.

i. Faith was essential to the keeping of Passover: *By faith he [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.* (Hebrews 11:28)

e. **It is the LORD's Passover:** The Passover was the Lord's in the sense that He provided it:

- As a rescue, to deliver Israel from the plague of the firstborn.
- As an institution, to remember God's rescue and deliverance for Israel through every generation.
- As a powerful drama, acting out the perfect sacrifice and rescue Jesus would later provide.

i. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul made it perfectly clear: *For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us* (1 Corinthians 5:7). John the Baptist drew on a similar image when he said of Jesus, *Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* (John 1:29) It seems that Jesus was actually crucified on Passover (John 19:14). *We see Jesus in the Passover.*

- Jesus lived with and became bonded to the human family before He was sacrificed for them.
- The sacrifice of Jesus has to be appropriate to each home, not simply on a national or community basis.
- Jesus the Passover Lamb was spotless - perfectly so, not stained by any sin, any moral or spiritual imperfection.
- It was only the blood of Jesus, His actual poured-out life that atoned for sin.
- In His death Jesus was touched with fire, the fire of God's judgment and wrath.
- In His death Jesus received the bitter cup of God's judgment.
- The work of Jesus has to be received fully, with none left in reserve.
- The Passover work of Jesus for His people is the dawn and prelude to their freedom.

3. (12-13) The protection of the blood.

'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. Now 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 the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.'

a. **When I see the blood, I will pass over you:** For Israel to be spared the judgment on the firstborn, they had to apply to blood just as God said they should. The blood of the lamb was essential to what God required.

i. If an Israelite home *didn't* believe in the power of **the blood** of the lamb, they could sacrifice the lamb and eat it, but they would still be visited by judgment.

ii. If an Egyptian home *did* believe in the power of **the blood** of the lamb, and made a proper Passover sacrifice, they would be spared the judgment.

iii. Additionally, an intellectual agreement with what God said about **the blood** was not enough; they actually had to *do* what God said must be done with the blood.

b. **I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt:** God regarded Israel as His firstborn, His favored people. If Egypt refused to release God's firstborn, then God required the firstborn of Egypt as a penalty and judgment.

1. (21-23) Moses tells the elders to do as God said.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb*. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you*."

a. **Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them:** The elders were expected to lead the way. Moses instructed them to observe the Passover, knowing the rest of the nation would follow.

b. **Take a bunch of hyssop:** They used **hyssop** to apply the blood to the doorposts and the lintel. Through the Scriptures, hyssop was often used to apply blood for the cleansing of sin.

i. In Leviticus 14:6, the ceremony for the cleansing of a leper used **hyssop** to apply blood. In Numbers 19:6 **hyssop** was used for to make the ashes of a red heifer for the water of purification. In Numbers 19:18 **hyssop** was used to apply the purification water.

ii. David, in his great Psalm of repentance, said *purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean* (Psalm 51:7). **Hyssop** was always connected with purification through sacrifice.

iii. **Hyssop** was even connected with Jesus' great sacrifice for sin. John 19:29 points out when Jesus was offered sour wine to drink on the cross, the sponge soaked with it was put on a bunch of **hyssop**.

c. **When He sees the blood...the LORD will pass over:** The LORD looked for blood. This blood sacrifice was the basis for sparing people from judgment.

i. Rescue from the angel of death didn't happen by a prayer or a fasting or a good work; it was accomplished by a life given on behalf of others.

3. (27b-28) The obedience of the people.

So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

a. **So the people bowed their heads and worshipped:** Rightfully, the immediate reaction of Israel to this announcement (before it actually happened) was *worship*. They honored the God who said He would do all this for them.

b. **Then the children of Israel went away and did so:** In many ways these were the most important words of the whole account. As great as God's deliverance was, the people would have never received it if they had failed to do what God told them to do.

i. We wonder if any Israelites suffered under the judgment of the firstborn because they *did not* believe and obey. We wonder if any Egyptians were spared judgment because they *did* believe and obey.

C. The final plague: the death of Egypt's firstborn.

1. (29-30) God slays the firstborn of Egypt.

And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck 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 livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was not a house where there was not one dead*.

a. **The LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt:** God told Moses that Pharaoh would not let them go until he was forced to by God's mighty works (Exodus 3:19-20), and that this work would somehow touch the firstborn of Egypt (Exodus 4:21-23). Now the situation unfolded just as God said it would.

i. **To the first born of captive who was in the dungeon:** **Dungeon** is "Literally, the 'pit-house'. Pits were a common prison. Here the opposite to pharaoh is not the 'mill girl' (Exodus 11:15), but the prisoner of war in the dungeon." (Cole)

b. **All the firstborn in the land of Egypt:** This plague was directed against two significant Egyptian gods. First, *Osiris* was the Egyptian god thought to be the giver of life. Second, this was against the supposed deity of Pharaoh himself, because his own household was touched (**the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne**).

i. An inscription was found in a shrine connected with the great Sphinx that records a solemn promise from the Egyptian gods vowing that Thutmose IV would succeed his father Amenhotep II - whom many believe to be the pharaoh of the Exodus. This unique, emphatic promise from the gods that something so natural would happen - that the eldest son would take his father's place as Pharaoh - was perhaps because Thutmose IV was not his father's firstborn son, and the firstborn was struck dead at the first Passover. Therefore, they believed that the second born son needed special protection from the gods and the inscription sought to provide that.

c. **So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt:** In dealing with Pharaoh, God first had to inform his *mind*, and then break his *will*. Pharaoh's problem wasn't that there was insufficient intellectual evidence; his heart had to be broken and made soft towards God.

i. Egypt and Pharaoh would not give God *His* firstborn - Israel (Exodus 4:22-23); so God took the firstborn of Egypt. Finally, Pharaoh knew that the LORD God was greater than all the Egyptian gods, and was greater than

Pharaoh himself - who was thought to be a god.

ii. **A great cry in Egypt:** Israel cried to God for deliverance (Exodus 2:23), and they cried to Pharaoh from relief (Exodus 5:15). Now the Egyptians had reason to cry.