

EXODUS

From Darkness to Light

Speaker: Pastor Ashwin Ramani

sermon study summary

October 8 / 9, 2022

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the plagues in Exodus was not primarily to bring judgment. The greater purpose was to invite Egypt and Pharaoh, all of Israel and the whole earth to come to know the One true God.

In the first three plagues God gave no preferential treatment to Israel. Israelites and Egyptians all suffered. Then God made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians—between those who believed God and those who didn't.

When God warned of a fourth plague coming, He told Pharaoh, "On that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. I will make a distinction between my people and your people" (8:22-23).

So God put an invisible no-fly zone over Goshen. Flying insects swarmed everywhere in Egypt except in Goshen. The next plague was a blow on livestock. All of the Egyptian livestock died – causing devastating economic loss. But once again the people of Israel are protected – not a single animal died in the land of Goshen. While all of Egypt were reeling from one plague after another – boils, hail, locusts and darkness – the people of God were shielded from them.

Pharaoh didn't believe the reports he was getting – that Egypt was suffering but Goshen was not. So after the plague on the livestock, "Pharaoh investigated and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go" (9:7).

But the plagues were having their intended affect, if not on Pharaoh – some people were learning that Yahweh is the true God. When Moses warned that hail was coming, "those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field" (9:20-21). When Moses warned that locusts were coming, Pharaoh's officials pleaded with Pharaoh to let the Israelites go (10:7).

The fact that Egypt was suffering from plagues but Israel was spared rattled the Egyptians' theology. In the Ancient Middle East, the deities were believed to be territorial. The gods had power over their area only. But Israel's God was not a tribal deity with limited power. Yahweh was proving to the Egyptians that His power is all pervasive and He is Lord even over Egypt. So Israel got preferential treatment while Egypt paid the price for their rebellion.

Persistent rebellion against God can bring disastrous consequences to an entire nation. Any nation that walks in persistent rebellion and insists on defying God will suffer dire consequences.

Is God showing favoritism by making a distinction between Israel and Egypt? The word translated 'distinction' (8:23) actually means redemption. It is the language of salvation. God is preserving His people from judgment.

God draws a line of redemption that separates His people from the rest! Each one of us has a story to tell. The LORD said to Moses, "Tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD" (10:2).

This Thanksgiving weekend we have a teaching opportunity. One generation needs to testify of God's works to the next. As you sit around the feast table, share stories about the good things God has done for you. Proclaim the wonder working power of our God.



EXODUS

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Briefly tell a story that was passed down to you about one of your ancestors.
2. Have you ever seen God treat a group of people differently than another group? Please explain.

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Exodus 8:1-4; 16; 20-23; 9:1-4; 8-9; 18-21; 10:1-6; 21-22

3. The plagues were an invitation to know God. Give evidence that some of the plagues accomplished this purpose. In what ways did God protect His people? In what ways did He show mercy to the Egyptians? Why would God use such extreme measures to make His point?

Read Matthew 27:45-46 and 1 Peter 2:9-10

4. In what ways does the ninth plague in Exodus foreshadow the darkness in Matthew 27:45-46? How does the rescue of the Israelites from Egypt foreshadow the rescue of Christ-followers?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. The Israelites were protected from the plagues. However, modern-day Christians seem to face many of the hardships the rest of the world faces. What does the protection and provision of God look like in these circumstances?
6. Pastor Ashwin encouraged us not to keep stories of God's work in our lives to ourselves (see Exodus 10:1-2), but to share them and use them to encourage others. Who is someone in your life right now you could encourage and how?

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 8:1-4; 16; 20-23

Exodus 9:1-4; 8-9; 18-21

Exodus 10:1-6; 21-22

Matthew 27:45-46

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Remind yourself what God has redeemed you from. How does God let you know that you are part of His family? Share it with someone.

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, David McMillin, Jared Harrison and Jorel Quemuel

