

Exodus

May 13, 2007

Chapter 11-12

I. The Plan for the Final Plague

Ex 11:1-10

11:1 Now the LORD had said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely. 2 Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold." 3(The LORD made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.)

4 So Moses said, "This is what the LORD says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. 5 Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. 6 There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt — worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. 7 But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave." Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

9 The LORD had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you — so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt." 10 Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country. NIV

The words spoken by the LORD to Moses might have been stated to him before the beginning of the meeting with Pharaoh. Moses' words to Pharaoh were apparently spoken before Moses left Pharaoh's presence, given that we do not see Moses leaving Pharaoh in Chapter 10 or being called back in this chapter.

II. The First Passover

Ex 12:1-11

12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. 4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. 5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. 6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. 7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. 8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. 9 Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire — head, legs and inner parts. 10 Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. 11 This is how you are to eat it: with

your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. NIV

Clearly we do not need to look hard at these verses to see Jesus and allusions to living today's Christian life...from Jesus being the Lamb of God to death passing over us even though we might deserve it.

Verse 3 In this plague, the Israelites did not have an automatic exemption. They had to demonstrate some level of faith, or at least someone in their family did, to survive.

Verse 5 While we usually think of lambs for Passover, it could also be a goat.

Verse 6 The 14th day would have been during the full moon. Since the feast would occur after twilight, the full moon would guarantee the maximum light for a feast after night.

Verse 7 The blood represents life and the fact of salvation...again it looks forward to Jesus and His blood shed on the cross.

III. The Superior of the LORD

Ex 12:12-13

12 "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn — both men and animals — and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. 13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. NIV

The tenth plague will happen the same night as the Passover feast. The Egyptians were pantheists. They had many gods. In the various plagues, many of these gods had been shown to inferior to the LORD; this plague is decisive in showing God to be greater than any other god since the Egyptian gods cannot save the firstborn. By showing that He was superior, He shows that He is the one true God.

IV. The Importance of the Event

Ex 12:14-20

14 "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD — a lasting ordinance. 15 For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat — that is all you may do.

17 "Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. 18 In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. 19 For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. 20 Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread." NIV

- Verse 14 The Passover was on the 14th day of Nisan/Abib. The Feast of the Unleavened Bread is from the 15th to the 21st.
- Verse 15 What does cut off mean? Cut off from God's benefits to Israel now and eternally. Obviously, if the LORD asks us to do something, and we do not do it, then we are at fault and deserve consequences.
- Verse 17 Strangely, "visions" imply an army, or at least some kind of organization as one.

V. Today and the Future

In this chapter, we see alternating instructions. Some apply to what the LORD expects of those participating in the first Passover; others apply to future generations. The two instructions build on one another.

Ex 12:21-50

NOW 21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. **22** Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. **23** When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

It is God who creates personally, and it is God who personally takes us from this life. The nature of the destroyer is not described. The chapter implies that the LORD was doing this punishment Himself, not using a surrogate.

FUTURE 24 "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. **25** When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. **26** And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' **27** then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Then the people bowed down and worshiped. **28** The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

NOW 29 At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. **30** Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. **32** Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."

33 The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!" **34** So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. **35** The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. **36** The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.

37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. **38** Many other people went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds. **39** With the dough they

had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves.

FUTURE 40 Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years. **41** At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD's divisions left Egypt. **42** Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the LORD for the generations to come.

43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the regulations for the Passover: "No foreigner is to eat of it. **44** Any slave you have bought may eat of it after you have circumcised him, **45** but a temporary resident and a hired worker may not eat of it.

46 "It must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones. **47** The whole community of Israel must celebrate it.

48 "An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat of it. **49** The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you."

Now

50 All the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. **51** And on that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions. NIV

Verse 24 Why would it be important for future generations to remember what happened on the first Passover?

Verse 29 Death came to the firstborn whether highest born (Pharaoh's son) or lowest born, even the livestock. Unfortunately for the Egyptians, the death of the their firstborn was just. First, we know this because the LORD decided it. Second, we saw the Egyptians kill the children of Israel, where Moses was a survivor. The LORD had warned of this eventuality at the end of Chapter 4.

Verse 31 Given the interchange of 10:29, we do not need to interpret this verse as Pharaoh and Moses having a face-to-face meeting. The word translated "summoned" or "called for" in other translations can mean, "proclaim, send word to or inform by messenger."

Verse 37 "Thousand" is Hebrew *eleph*, which can be translated thousand, cattle, clan, division, family, ox, or tribe. We will assume that the word means thousand when numbering the people. It might mean something else, but the easiest most direct meaning is undoubtedly thousand. See Ex. 38:25-26 for some mathematics that lead to this conclusion.

Verse 43 Once a foreigner becomes integrated into Israelite life and accepts faith in the LORD, they are no longer foreigners, such as in the case of Ruth. Men would have to be circumcised, which is probably part of the reason that circumcision is highlighted.

Verse 50 Notice the obedience of the Israelites.