

GOD SHOWS HIS POWER

+ SESSION IN A SENTENCE:

God is faithful to bring deliverance from bondage, but that deliverance came at a price.

+ BACKGROUND PASSAGE:

Exodus 5–12

+ SETTING:

Moses accepted the call to be God's messenger in Egypt, going to Pharaoh with the full authority and power of God, the great "I AM." But upon arrival, his message was met with resistance and retaliation by Pharaoh, which resulted in near-rejection of Moses' leadership by the people of God. Yet God reaffirmed His covenant with Moses. God's power would be demonstrated in full force as He unleashed a series of plagues, culminating in the death of Egypt's firstborn sons and the sparing of Israel's through the Passover sacrifice.

DAY 1

READ:

Exodus 5:1–6:4

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Exodus 6:2-3

NOTES

When you begin watching a good fireworks show, you are captivated by the first bright displays. But you also know those early shots pale in comparison to what is coming, culminating in a grand finale. Similarly, this describes God's plan to rescue Israel and lead them out of the land of Egypt to the land of Canaan. In fact, God's entire covenant framework works this way: a gradual unfolding of greater and greater displays of God's power.

This is what God meant when he said to Moses that He revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as "God Almighty"—El Shaddai—but He made Himself known to Moses and His suffering people in Egypt as "the LORD"—Yahweh. God had made an everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and showed Himself in mighty ways, but the rescue of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt would be something those patriarchs never experienced.

This was an encouragement to Moses to trust in the midst of seeming impossibility. And it is an encouragement to us today. God has given us a new covenant in Jesus, who has rescued us from sin, death, and the grave. And yet, we are told that there is something even better to come when Jesus returns to lead us to our promised land, the New Jerusalem.

We can trust God because we've seen Him work: in rescuing His people from Egypt, in sending Jesus as our Savior, in myriad little ways in which He sustains and blesses us. And we can trust that He will fulfill His promises in the future.

Which promises of God do you have the hardest time trusting? What reasons do you have for trusting God?

DAY 2

READ:

Exodus 6:5–7:25

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Exodus 6:5-6

NOTES

God told Moses that He “heard the groaning” of the people of Israel. God was not immune nor indifferent to Israel’s suffering. For God to “hear” is different than our hearing. Sometimes humans can hear in a literal sense and yet be powerless to do anything. But when God said He heard Israel, it meant He was poised to act. God Almighty—the great “I AM”—would act.

How would God act? “With an outstretched arm.” In Scripture, God’s arm is representative of God’s power. All through the Old Testament, especially in the prophets and the Psalms, the writers referenced God’s mighty arm or mighty hand. This is a reference to God’s ability and power to do something strong.

Pharaoh—the most powerful person in the world at the time, who commanded armies and who snapped his fingers and sent enemies to a quick death—would be no match against the power of God’s outstretched arm. His money, his status, and his gods couldn’t save him.

This was more than a mere rescue of Israel. This was a spiritual battle in the heart of the world’s most prosperous nation. Those who put their trust in false gods found their faith misplaced and their foundations shattered. Those who put their trust in Yahweh, however, found strength.

Today, it seems evil is on the march and wicked rulers will reign forever. But we should remember that their power has an expiration date. They are no match for the outstretched arm of the Almighty. We should take heart and put our trust not in princes but in the God who hears His people’s groans and who stretches out His hand in righteousness and justice.

How does it affect you knowing that God hears and responds to the groaning of His people?

DAY 3

READ:

Exodus 11:1–12:11

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Exodus 12:5-8

NOTES



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #59: CHRIST AS PROPITIATION

Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be atoned for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great love toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary payment that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

When we read about the Passover in Exodus, it seems to make sense to those of us who are aware of the Bible's stories. But for the Hebrews, this would all be new. They were to take a one-year-old lamb or goat and kill it at the appropriate time. Then they were to cook and eat the meat as a special Passover meal and apply the blood of the animal to their doorposts. If they did this, God's judgment against Egypt would pass over their homes. God's people were to obey every aspect of God's special instructions.

Why this strange practice? There is much important symbolism here. First, to atone for the sins of the guilty, an innocent sacrifice was required by God. This points back to the first couple, Adam and Eve, who were covered in their shame by the skins of an innocent animal, and it points forward to the final sacrifice, Jesus, the Lamb of God who was slain for the sins of the world.

The judgment of death was coming to every family that quiet night. Yet Israel escaped death, not because of their own righteousness but because of the covering of the innocent lamb. And so it is today that God's judgment is coming for the world, and those who apply Jesus' blood to the doorposts of their hearts will escape God's wrath.

Egypt was warned by Moses and by the plagues. They could have turned to God in repentance and escaped His judgment. Today, salvation is available for all those who believe, who turn from their gods, who repent, and who trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to atone for their sins.

Why does God require an innocent sacrifice to atone for sin?

DAY 4

READ:

Exodus 12:12-28

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Exodus 12:12-14

NOTES

God was telling the people of Israel what was about to happen in Egypt. The plagues had taken a severe economic and physiological toll on Egypt, each a direct strike at the false deities of this pagan nation. But what was about to happen would bring this world superpower to its knees. Yet Israel would be saved, not by their own ingenuity or grit but because they had a God who heard their groaning and extended His outstretched arm on their behalf.

God told Moses that the blood would be a distinguishing mark for them. This sign of blood on the doorposts would save the firstborn in Israel from God's righteous judgment against Egypt. And this one-time occurrence would begin their new calendar and form the rhythms of their new life of freedom. God was not merely rescuing them from oppression, He was calling them out as a new people.

Today, God is making a new people, a new creation. We, like Israel, have blood as our distinguishing mark. We were bought with "the precious blood of Christ," like that of a lamb without blemish or spot (1 Pet. 1:19). God has stretched out His arm on our behalf, sending His own Son to the cross and raising Him from the dead for our salvation from sin.

God is warning the world that another judgment is coming, but there is salvation available. We believers are those tasked with sharing this news with the world. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord is saved from death and welcomed into God's new people, the church.

How should the reality of God's judgment and grace change the way we think about those who have not yet believed the gospel?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"The doorposts of the Jews were marked with the blood of a slaughtered animal. Our foreheads are marked with the blood of Christ. And that sign, because it was a sign, was said to keep the destroyer away from the houses marked with the sign. The sign of Christ drives the destroyer away from us insofar as our heart receives the Savior."¹

-Augustine (354-430)

DAY 5

READ:

Exodus 12:29-51

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Exodus 12:29-32

NOTES

Moses got the middle-of-the-night call he had been waiting for. Pharaoh, whose heart had hardened even in the face of increasing demonstrations of God's power, was broken enough to relent and let Israel go. But this came at a great cost. Every firstborn child in Egypt was dead, from the child of the king to the child of the prisoner. God's judgment didn't discriminate based on social class or economic status.

Pharaoh, we know, never did acknowledge Yahweh. He asked for Moses to bless him but never expressed remorse or sorrow for his sin. He wanted salvation on his terms. The sight of his stricken son caused him sorrow but not repentance.

Today, many seek relief from their circumstances. They cry out to God in desperation. And yet, few are willing to see God as more than someone who can rearrange their troubles. They fail to see Jesus as their Savior and their Lord. They want God on their terms. This same mind-set would lead to Pharaoh's ultimate demise in the Red Sea.

The threat of judgment and the need for salvation, like it was in Egypt, doesn't respect wealth or social class or even religiosity. From the wealthiest celebrity to the most impoverished pauper, everyone needs the mercy of God. The good news is that God's grace is available for all those who believe, who see Jesus Christ as the Lamb whose blood can cover their sins and save them from God's judgment.

What is the difference between the remorse expressed by Pharaoh and the genuine repentance expressed by believers?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Once we have set ourselves to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth, which is what Christians are meant to be, it is incongruous for us to continue to insist upon the sort of security the world tries to guarantee. Our security lies not in protecting ourselves from suffering but in putting ourselves fully into the hands of God. The desire for physical and material security makes us sly and hard. No. We must be like little children. The child in its father's arms is not worried. It lies quietly at rest because it trusts its father."²

-Elisabeth Elliot (1926-2015)

POINT 1: God remembers His covenant with His people (Ex. 6:2-8).

God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was _____ forgotten and would be honored with God's _____ involvement.



How has God's self-revelation in Scripture since the creation account increased our knowledge of Him?

Because God is "the Lord," He acts faithfully and powerfully to keep His covenant and deliver His people from their _____, just as Jesus powerfully saves _____.

POINT 2: God requires a perfect sacrifice from His people (Ex. 12:2-7).

God's plan for the deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery involved fashioning a new _____ for them. Their lives were to be _____ by the faithfulness of God on their behalf.



What are some ways believers in Jesus are marked by the faithfulness of God on their behalf?

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #59: CHRIST AS PROPITIATION

Because of God's righteousness and holiness, humanity's sins must be _____ for in order for people to be reconciled to God. As the propitiation for sins, Christ's death is the appeasement or satisfaction of God's _____ against sin. Christ's propitiation for our sins demonstrates both God's great _____ toward sinners (1 John 4:10) as well as the necessary _____ that results from the penalty of sins (Rom. 3:26).

POINT 3: God releases judgment in the midst of His people (Ex. 12:12-13,29-32).

God's judgment upon Egypt was severe, but it was not capricious. The Lord is _____ and _____, and He will make His glory known throughout the nations in the _____ of His people.



Why is it important to recognize the just judgment of God against sin?

No human can escape the judgment of God, regardless of wealth, status, or privilege. God's _____ can break stubborn hearts, but salvation can only be found through _____ and _____ in God.



How has God worked to bring you to a biblical understanding of His just judgment and salvation by grace?

MY RESPONSE

Because we have been rescued from sin and death through Christ's sacrifice, we exercise our freedom in Christ by living for His glory, telling others of the good news of salvation through the Lamb slain for the sins of the world.

- **HEAD:** How might you declare the good news of the gospel to those who are in danger of God's righteous judgment?
- **HEART:** What are some ways your group can work together to share the gospel in your community?
- **HANDS:** What practical steps can you take to engage in a gospel conversation this week?

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"And the only way I know for any man or woman on earth to escape the sinner's payday on earth and the sinner's hell beyond—making sure of the Christian's payday on earth and the Christian's heaven beyond the Christian's payday—is through Christ Jesus, who took the sinner's place upon the Cross, becoming for all sinners all that God must judge, that sinners through faith in Christ Jesus might become all that God cannot judge."³

-R. G. Lee (1886-1978)