

## EXODUS 12

### INTRODUCTION

The suffering for the Israelites is nearly at an end, for over 400 years they have been in slavery but now the end is in sight. God has sent nine severe plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians because of their failure to worship God and their failure to obey God's word and let God's people go. But although the suffering and bondage is almost over for Israel it is not over yet for Egypt for they are about to experience the most devastating plague to come upon them when they faced the plague of the death of the first-born.

This plague could have been averted if only Pharaoh had submitted himself before God and have let God's people go as commanded by God but Pharaoh refuses to do so. Now I am not intending to go into great detail in this passage for it is so well known but I do want us to learn the truths that we receive from this magnificent passage of Scripture.

### 1. EVERYONE IN EGYPT DESERVED GOD'S JUDGEMENT

I do mean everyone, Egyptians and Israelites. The Egyptians worshipped other gods; they refused to obey the one true God. They lived according to their own laws rather than God's law and they only saw the Lord as one of many gods who are of equal standing. But the Israelites were no better. They were not going to be saved because they were more worthy than the people of Egypt or because they were less sinful. They were sinners in the eyes of God sinners that often rebelled against God and often worshiped other Gods alongside their own God. They failed to listen to Moses and Aaron and often doubted God's word that Moses brought to the people. They deserved the judgement of God just as much as the Egyptians.

This truth is as valid today as it was in Moses day. There is no one either living today or has lived in the past or even will live in the future who will not deserve the judgement of God. If God decided to kill every person who sinned before God then there would be no one left on this planet. Now unless we see and understand this then we will not be able to appreciate the salvation that God provides for the Israelites or for us today.

God is not as accommodating concerning sin as we are. He takes sin seriously and even tells us that just one sin deserves the judgement of God. God does not say to us when we sin "it's only your first sin I will let you off" but he says "you have sinned because you are a sinner, your heart is rebellious against me"; therefore that one sin will be judged and judged severely by God. God is just and his punishment fits our sin perfectly so that his justice is done.

You see for God his law is a whole to break one part of the law is to break the law and is therefore worthy of his judgement being meted out (James 2:10). If someone breaks into a house they have broken the law and if someone murders someone else they have broken the law both deserved to be punished because they both have broken the law.

That is how it is with God. Someone lies they have broken God's law someone else refuses to submit to God, they have broken the law and both deserved to receive the due penalty for breaking God's law which is death both physical but also spiritual death being cut off from the presence of God. Of course we all are guilty of committing more than one sin and every day of our lives we break God's law, for how many of us are not guilty of having no other gods before the true God.

That is just the first of his 10 commandments. It's very important that we all see this for unless we do we will not understand the wonderful salvation that God has provided for sinners in the person of the Lord Jesus. There was not one Egyptian who could stand before God and say that his

punishment was too severe nor was there anyone who could face God and tell him that his punishment was not deserved.

Nor could any Israelite be proud before God and think that they escaped the punishment of the death of the first-born because they were not guilty before God. They were just as guilty but as we will see in a few moments it was because of the salvation provided by God that they escaped God's wrath and judgement. So every one of us here today deserves God wrath and judgement to come upon us because we are sinners and we are sinners who sin.

We rebel against God every day and unless we understand that, we will not understand the rest of this message. If in your heart there is just a touch of pride that thinks that you are the exception in spite of what the bible says Romans 3:10 you still think that you are not guilty before God then you are failing to understand what God is like and how serious your sin is. I'm sure you would never say that you never sin but it's just that all your sins are little sins.

There is no such phrase or concept in the bible all sins are big sins for all sin is against God and there is no one greater to sin against than Him. Every time you sin you snub God and that deserves the severest of punishments. Now if you don't learn anything else this morning learn this, get this into your head, my sin is serious and deserves hell. Get rid of all other thoughts that down plays sin in your life, throw out all you have learnt about how good you are and so on.

That is not God's estimation of you; you are a sinner in God's eyes (Romans 3:23) who deserves his just condemnation and punishment (Romans 6:23).

## 2. GOD PROVIDES THE MEANS OF RESCUE

Now once we understand that we all deserve God's judgement and wrath then God's act of providing a means of rescue from his judgement is seen in it as fullest light. God did not have to provide a Saviour for the Israelites he could have rightly judged both Israelite and Egyptian but out of his love and grace he provided a means of escape for those that will act in faith.

Remember that God is doing this not because the Israelites were any better than the Egyptians but because he set his electing love upon them (Deuteronomy 7:7) so that he might demonstrate his great love mercy and grace to sinners.

He did it in order that his name might be glorified and worshipped. So because of God's electing love he provides a means by which they might escape his judgement. He gives them instructions; telling them to take a one year old lamb without any defects and they are to do this on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Abib or Nisan. They are to take a lamb that is big enough to feed a whole family and if any household is too small for a whole lamb then they are to share it with their nearest neighbour.

The lamb is to be looked after until the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month then it must be slaughtered at twilight and the blood is to be taken and painted upon their doorframes. Then that same night they are to have a meal with bitter herbs and unleavened bread for on this night God will come in judgement and when he sees the blood on the doorframe he will pass over that house and no judgement will come upon that household.

However when there is no blood on the doorframe then judgement will come and the first born in that household will die just as God said. But notice that it is God who provides this means of rescue he tells the Israelites how they may be saved from his judgement. That is exactly what he does for sinners today. God has provided a means of escape he has provided salvation in the person of Jesus Christ. In the Passover the slaughtered lamb was the means of escape and as long as the Israelites obeyed God and used the right lamb the best lamb and painted the blood on the doorpost then they would be saved from the judgement.

In our day God has provided the Lord Jesus. He is described as the Lamb of God by John (John 1:29) and Paul even describes him as our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus was without defect he was the best that God could provide and he gave his life and shed his blood so that we could escape God's judgement. But it was God who did it, this was his plan and it shows his love towards sinners. God would have every right to leave us in our sin to face the consequences of our sin, he could have brought glory to his name by displaying his divine justice in punishing us as sinners but God in his wisdom sent his only beloved son into the world in order to die and shed his blood as our Passover lamb. He did it out of love and grace towards sinners and the result is that sinners can be forgiven and justified before God; instead of knowing his wrath and judgement we experience his love and mercy. Instead of going to hell we go to heaven and all because of God's initiative in providing Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

But notice that the people had to respond to God's plan of rescue. They were given very clear instructions and unless they followed these instructions they would not be saved. Unless they believed that the Lord was going to do what he said he was going to do and kill every first born then they would not do what they ought to have done. They had to act in faith, take God at his word and obey God's commands. Let's suppose that some Israelites thought to himself that to give the very best lamb was asking too much.

Let's say that he decided to give one of his lambs that were blind in one eye. It was one year old and meets all the other requirements but it had this fault that meant that it was not without blemish. However he kills it and paints the blood on the door. Would God not come to that house? Well of course the text doesn't say but putting blood on the door was no guarantee of salvation if it was the wrong animal that was sacrificed. For in doing so they would be sinning against the Lord for they would be saying that they know better than God that God got it wrong when he said it had to be unblemished.

That is walking by sight not faith but only those who take God at his word and act in faith are saved. Imagine if an Egyptian saw an Israelite taking the blood of a lamb and painting it on his doorframe. He asks what are you doing, "Oh" he says "I am doing what God says for that blood will save the life of my first born tonight." "Don't be so silly" the Egyptian replies "how can a drop of blood from an animal protect you? Besides you don't really believe all that nonsense about the first born dying do you?"

But that night comes and that Israelite family are saved but that Egyptian loses his oldest child. Now you might think it would be silly for any Israelite not to do exactly what God says and it would be silly for any Egyptian not to take seriously God's threat but is that not exactly what people do today in our own world. There are people who hear the way of salvation and who know that the conditions for receiving such a wonderful salvation is to repent of sin and to trust in Jesus as the our Passover Lamb.

Although they know the way and to some extent agree with the way of salvation they somehow think that God does not mean all that he says. They believe in Jesus in a very general way. They believe that he is the Son of God, they believe he came into this world, they believe that he dies on the cross for sinners.

They believe all; that but they do not believe that they must personally trust in him for salvation and personally repent of sin. Such people are doing exactly what that Israelite I described to you is doing. Such a person is disobeying God. You might agree with so much but somehow think that God has got it wrong when he calls upon you to believe and you to repent.

There is a clear offer of salvation for you this morning but you must receive it by coming to Jesus in repentance and faith. Yes God will enable you to repent and will give you the faith but you must

come. Will you come? Or is your heart just too proud to take that next step. But then there are other people perhaps here this morning that think just like that Egyptian I described to you. They think that this is all just religious nonsense.

How can the dying of one man be sufficient to forgive the sins of anyone who will repent and believe in Him? Yes belief in God is Ok if it helps you through life but all this stuff about blood and death and judgement is all a bit too much. Well this is God's way of salvation and therefore we need to be absolutely clear that anyone who does not come God's way will not be saved but will in fact face the judgement of almighty God.

That night in Egypt God did come in judgement and there was great devastation among the Egyptians. But the Israelites who took God at his word and believed in Him were saved as a result of the blood of that little lamb. That lamb died in the place of the firstborn, that lamb was God's substitute; it suffered and died so that the Israelites did not have to.

Those who will not come to Jesus in true repentance and faith will face the wrath and judgement of God. Such people are under the wrath of God they face his temporary judgements in this world but one day they will feel the full weight of his judgement as he sends all who refuse to believe in Jesus to hell for eternal punishment. Don't think he won't do it for he will, he fulfilled his word to the Egyptians and he will fulfil his word to those who do not and will not believe.

If you are saved, if you are trusting in the shed blood of the Lamb of God, if Jesus is our Passover lamb then we have indeed been rescued from the wrath and judgement of God. But we are saved not because of our own efforts but because God took the initiative by sending his only Son the Lord Jesus to give his life and to shed his blood for sinners like us.

We deserved his wrath and judgement we were no better than any other sinner, we were in slavery to sin but O the wonder of God's grace that he saved us through the precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus. That ought to inspire us in our worship of him this day. We ought to be encouraged in our service for him and we ought to be motivated in our evangelism for him so that others will hear about this wonderful and gracious gift of salvation for sinners.

Finally unsaved person here today, why don't you ask God to be merciful towards you, plead with him to open your heart and to save you through the sacrifice of his Son the Lord Jesus?

Amen