

Explore the Bible: Liberation

August 30, 2017

- The Explore the Bible lesson for Sept. 17 focuses on Exodus 12:1-13.

While the Exodus account is full of unfortunate, gruesome and saddening stories, in this session we encounter an utterly dismal combination of these adjectives. It is heartbreaking for us to envision how Pharaoh's disobedience led to the final plague that stole the life of many firstborn in Egypt, including his own.

We need to sense the pain and anguish that took place on the night of the first Passover, and for the obedient and God-honoring we look to the reward: *God provides deliverance for those willing to trust him.*

Prepared

Obedience and trust are not overnight phenomena. Trust is gained and given over time, and obedience is refined after many, many, many failures due to disobedience. As naturally selfish beings, we require that preparation to become prepared to live out obedience and trust in God. Now that Moses and Aaron had gone through some experience with God as their leader, it was their turn to train up the Hebrews.

God established this first month, showing his authority over time. By beginning a new season for the Hebrews, this marked a remembrance of the beginning of their deliverance. Ask your class: *How did God establish a new season in your life?*

Our preparation begins with God's authority. Interestingly enough, this 10th day of the first month also was when Joshua later would lead Israel across

the Jordan River into Canaan. God's instruction for the meal itself and the animal involved also shows how careful we must be to be obedient. Such perfection would honor God and allow for harmony between God and his devoted.

If there is anything we must learn as devoted followers of God, it is that we must make ourselves ready and holy. *Test your Bible knowledge: Name other biblical accounts where God calls us to be prepared and particular with his instruction.*

Sacrificed

Imagine how this perfect creature would be cared for after selection and until sacrifice. When we sacrifice, it costs us something. Even King David recognized this in 2 Samuel 24:24. We must remember, as our predecessors knew, that sacrifice is never a free pass. *How are we tempted to confuse sacrifice as "free" today?*

The blood itself would have been poured into a basin following the slaughter and applied on the lintel and doorposts. Nahum Sarna notes this marked the location "between the sacred Israelite interior and the profane world outside" (Sarna, *Exodus*, 55). As this would allude to Christ's sacrifice later, we see how blood (life's flow) is a significant sign of marking the sacred from the profane.

Notice, though, that this sacrifice must be perfect. A profane sacrifice will only anger God and prove disobedience (see Malachi 1). As Jesus Christ would prove to be the perfect sacrifice for humanity, the Hebrews had to rely on the unblemished lamb or goat yearling. *Consider how we rely on another's perfection for deliverance.*

Hurried

Perhaps one would better understand this piece of the story after practicing the Seder meal. The quick preparation of the flesh and speedy consumption of the entire meal—including digesting the bitterness of their present situation—reminds us that following God requires urgency.

While we may apply urgency and quickness to our obedience, even more than this is the mindset of being ready to go at God's command. Israel needed to be ready for a quick exit. *While we combine this with the particularity of preparation, how do we balance being "careful" and "ready"?* Haste is the term here, but this does not mean a lack of care.

Delivered

While the people of Israel were busy being ready to enact their God-given deliverance, God would pass through Egypt casting judgment on the puffed up and disobedient. Those who relied on their false gods would pay with the lives of their most innocent. Sadly, the cost of disobedience tends to fall heavier on others because of their association. Nevertheless, God is just in his judgment.

The good news is that judgment's effect will not fall heavily on those who trust and obey. Andrew Peterson's song "Deliver Us" offers a poignant glimpse: "Our sins they are more numerous than all the lambs we slay. These shackles they were made with our own hands. Our toil is our atonement and our freedom yours to give. So Yahweh, break your silence if you can."

Indeed, God would break the silence with deliverance. Both in Egypt and on Golgotha, the screams of judgment would eventually be overwhelmed by the shouts of deliverance (although we are a bit ahead of ourselves here).

The application of the precious and holy blood would stay God's hand of judgment with his merciful passing over. One thing is true: God's deliverance is remarkable. *Share a brief story of personal deliverance that defied judgment.*

Conclusion

Keep in mind that when this account happened, the people knew nothing of a coming Savior. In fact, they barely knew who their God was, but they were getting to know him. To grasp their new understanding of deliverance, consider their perspective before hastily comparing the Passover to Jesus Christ. It is true that the Passover does point us forward, yet we have the benefit of being on this side of these accounts.

Describe their sweetness of being delivered from generations of slavery. Surely this tells us more about God, who is actively revealing himself to humanity. As a closing to this session, consider listening to Andrew Peterson's song mentioned above as a beautiful connection between Israel's first deliverance and our ultimate deliverance.

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