

See the Salvation of the LORD

Exodus 11:1-12:42

How many of you can remember sitting through history class in school?

I remember sitting my high school history class and looking back on it now I wished I had put in a much better effort in that class.

I wish I had put more effort in because the goal of a general history class like that is to hit on the highlights of history.

It some of the big events that have proved to be pivotal in the shaping of the world down through the centuries.

It shows us how we have arrived at where we are today.

While that is true of the world generally speaking, it is also true of the church specifically speaking.

This morning we come to an event in the book of Exodus that is absolutely monumental in terms of the history of the world and especially as it relates to those who belong to Christ.

If you have your bibles turn with me to Exodus 11:1-12:42.

In this text we see two things happening at the same time. We see God's judgement and we see the salvation of the LORD.

In His bringing one more plague on the Egyptians, the LORD saves the people of Israel from slavery.

As we look upon this event there are four lessons for us regarding the salvation of the Lord.

First it is clear here that...

Point #1 – Salvation happens according to God's plan by means of His power.

From the moment the LORD promises to rescue people from sin in Genesis 3:15 to moment where the New Jerusalem descends from above to remain upon the New Earth forever the LORD is the One Who makes "known the end from the beginning from ancient times, what is still to come" only He can say "My purpose will stand and I will do all that I please." Isaiah 46:10.

That God has planned all of this is made clear throughout the book of Exodus and we are reminded of it again here is **11:9-10**.

Of course this is much bigger than the book of Exodus.

In Genesis 15:13 God tells Abraham his descendants will be enslaved 400 years.

In Genesis 46:3-4 God tells Jacob to go to Egypt without fear because God will go with His people and 'make them into a great nation' and bring them back again.

Numerous times in the OT God refers to Israel as His "Chosen People" which indicates pre-planning.

Now it is one thing to make a plan, it is another thing to carry it out in the way you want.

This is the very reason God gives here in verse 9 as to why He is saving His people in that way that He is. He says He is doing things like this “SO THAT my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt.”

Salvation is a display of the power of God which is without limit.

When we read through all the plagues that the LORD brings upon Egypt the Bible makes it clear that it is because of the LORD and this last plague emphasizes that.

Look with me at a few verses: **11:1, 4; 12:12, 23a**

In the previous plagues God uses something in nature to inflict hardship upon the Egyptians.

Here the devastation is carried out in a very direct and personal way.

It is this action of God that will result in the rescue of His people.

Very clearly then we see God has a plan and He also possesses the power to carry it out as He pleases.

Understandably people struggle with this reality, but this is the necessary reality of Who God is.

God is all knowing (omniscient). There is nothing hypothetical to the LORD and He is never surprised.

It's more than that. In addition to knowing everything the God of the Bible claims to possess the power necessary to do everything He wants (omnipotent).

Since God knows everything across all time and He has the power to do everything He desires He must therefore make decisions before time even begins about every action He will take or not take throughout all eternity.

I know this is a point of struggle for people.

I know we often ask, “Why do it that way?”

[Have you ever heard of the name Frank Lloyd Wright? He was an architect, probably one of the most famous in history. He once designed a house that was built partially over a waterfall. To me that seems like a bad idea, but that house was built in 1935 and it's still standing. Designing things that people questioned at the beginning but that turned out to reveal his genius it exactly what made Wright so famous.]

If that is true for a mere mortal, how much more so will it be true of the LORD?

God does all kinds of things that I do not understand.

He does all kinds of things that I would not do.

We may ask, “Why does God save His people by sending all these plagues which climax in the death of Egypt's first born?”

Certainly, I could offer a logical defense of this.

Egypt is a land full of idolatry which is why v.12 describes this as ‘judgment against all the gods of Egypt.’

I could argue that no one would value salvation if they did not witness God’s wrath.

I could tell of the importance of God’s holiness.

There are many answers that can be given, but the ultimate answer is that God is God and we are not.

[While we may have questions about how and why God does things, knowing that He saves His people according to His plans by the means of His power is good news for all who belong to Him because it means that His salvation is certain. Hopefully this raises an important question in all our minds. How do we get to be a part of God’s saving work? Our text shows us that this morning. It shows us that...]

Point #2 – Salvation happens by God’s grace.

No one is rescued by God because of his/her own goodness. If that is your hope it will be your destruction. No a person is rescued by God’s grace from beginning to end.

As we see throughout the plagues of Egypt we find here God’s judgment of Egypt and God’s salvation of Israel side by side.

On one hand a person might read these chapters and think that they are about God’s rescue of the Israelites out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Clearly that is true, but what is also true is that Egypt’s power should not be the main concern of the Israelites.

As God has poured out devastation upon the land, the Israelites have been spared the pain and loss of what has happened.

It happens again here as we are told this in **11:6-7**.

The question that most people ask when confronted with the LORD’s judgment is, “Why is God so harsh?”

People ask the question this way because people lost in sin have little appreciation for the holiness of God.

Egypt here is full of idolatry. The Pharaoh in the hardness of his heart leads his people to persist in rebellion against God.

When we see this situation in its proper perspective the big question is NOT, “Why does God strike down the 1st born of Egypt?”

The big question is, “Why does the LORD spare the 1st born of Israel?”

At the first sign of adversity they were ready to do away with Moses and Aaron.

Looking to the future, there will be complaining, idolatry, disobedience, and unbelief.

Why then are they saved? On account of the undeserved Grace of the LORD.

We read of how God will show His kindness to the people of Israel in 12:1-13.

They are to take a one year old lamb without defect, kill it, and put the blood of the lamb on the posts and tops of their doors.

Old Testament Commentator Carl Keil points out that there is no blood placed across the bottom of the door so that there would be “no trampling of the blood.”

Down a little further in **12:21-23** we read this.

They put the blood on the doors by making brushes with bunches of hyssop.

Walter Kaiser notes that hyssop is often associated with ‘cleansing’ in the Old Testament.

This act then symbolizes God’s people being washed clean.

Why are the Israelites saved from God’s judgment? Because they believed God and were covered by the cleansing blood of the lamb.

[How many of you believe the weather forecast? If the forecast for tomorrow says it is going to rain and you believe the weatherman when he says to take an umbrella with you, and it does indeed start raining you will stay dry because you are covered by the umbrella.]

God is far more trustworthy than the weather forecast.

He very clearly tells His people judgment is coming and He provides a means for them to be protected from it.

Of course the Passover lamb is only a foreshadow of what God does through the Jesus.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 calls Jesus our ‘Passover Lamb’

It is by faith in His shed blood upon the cross that we find forgiveness for our sins.

Just like the doors in Goshen were covered with the blood of the lamb and God’s judgment passes over, so too those who believe upon Jesus Christ are covered by His blood and therefore, God’s wrath passes over.

[Salvation happens according to God’s grace. It’s available to you if you put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. I love what it says here in **12:28**. In this moment they believed God and therefore got to enjoy His grace, but God gives them instructions far beyond this one night in Egypt. He tells them to continually celebrate this feast

in the generations to come. That gives us a third important lesson about the salvation of the LORD which is...]

Point #3 – God’s people must remember His saving works.

The LORD governs all of history towards the redemption of all things and if we fail to look back across the landscape of time through that lens we will fail to see the point of anything.

In 12:1 God tells Moses and Aaron that the month in which God puts to death the first born of Egypt but passes over the first born of Israel is to become for the nation of Israel the first month of the year which is a statement about the pivotal importance of this moment.

In that month they are to commemorate the event by sacrificing a lamb at twilight on the 14th day of the month.

They are to eat bitter herbs to be reminded of the bitterness of slavery.

They must eat unleavened bread and be dressed and ready to go because God’s deliverance will come that very night.

Now look at what is written in **12:14-20**.

The meal that they are eating on the night they are saved from slavery in Egypt is to become an annual feast of celebration intended to look back and recall God’s salvation.

God places such a high importance on remembrance here that if a person disregards the instructions about eating the unleavened bread they are to be “cut off” from the people of Israel.

The yeast here represents more than the haste with which they had to leave Egypt.

It is also a clear reminder to the people to leave Egypt behind them.

Yeast is used in the Bible to illustrate both the power of something good and something evil.

The idea is that though yeast is a small ingredient in a dough recipe, it has an effect upon the whole loaf of bread.

How much idolatry does it take to corrupt God’s people? The smallest amount!

By commanding the people to get rid of all the yeast in their house every year for seven days, the LORD is reminding them to rid themselves of the idolatrous influences of Egypt.

We see the idea of commemoration emphasized in 12:24-27.

The very fact that God gives this command anticipates His covenant faithfulness.

This is a “lasting ordinance for you and your descendants” He says, “...when your children ask” that indicates that they are going to have descendants, they are going to have children to ask.

He wants them to look back and remember what He does here.

Why? Because if they fail to look back and remember they will drift away from the LORD and His salvation.

[You may remember good King Josiah from the book of 1Kings. He lived at a time when the people of Israel had forgotten the LORD. They had turned away from God and toward idols. Josiah' desire was to turn the nation back to God and one of the things to does in order to do that is celebrate the Passover. Listen to what is says in **2Kings 23:22-23**. That likely has a twofold meaning. It likely means that Josiah's Passover feast was greater than previous feast, but it also likely means that the feasts of those years were celebrated improperly and perhaps there were many years where it was not celebrated at all. Failing to remember leads to drifting away.]

This is just as significant for us today as it was for the Israelites.

The Passover Meal is a powerful connecting point between Old Testament saints and New Testament saints.

It is during the Passover Meal that Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper.

Of course we do not sacrifice a lamb, because Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, has been sacrificed once for all (Hebrews 9:12).

But we do eat the bread representing His body, and we drink the cup representing His blood.

Why does Jesus ask us to do that? He says, "Do this in remembrance of me!"

We are told in Revelation 5:12 that Jesus' work is celebrated and remembered in heaven which leads me to think it will be that way for all eternity.

Are you tempted to go back to your old life?

Are you remaining in the land of Egypt when the New Jerusalem awaits?

If so, then you must remember God's works of salvation!

Remember what God has saved you from and seek with all your heart to live in it.

[Thinking upon God's salvation can only be for the good of our souls. It reminds us that He has planned it all and brings it to be by the strength of His unequalled power. I reminds us of His glorious grace, and it keeps His salvation consistently upon our hearts and minds. There is one more thing that we need to see in the salvation of the LORD from this text. It is this...]

Point #4 – Every blessing enjoyed by God's people comes from being rescued by Him.

All the things we can give thanks for in the present and any hope that we have for the future is because God calls us His own.

After the LORD has gone through Egypt we read this 12:31-36.

If you go back over the previous plagues you will find a few spots where the king of Egypt tries to reach a compromise with the Moses and Aaron.

He says, “You can go but only the men” (10:11), “Sacrifice, but here in the land” (8:25), “Go, but leave flocks” (10:24).

Listen, God never compromises! Opposing Him only leads to destruction.

Pharaoh for the moment sees that and all the people and their possessions go free.

For the first time in their lives these people get to experience freedom.

Every Christian should know that feeling.

Before knowing Jesus we were slaves to a far more lethal enemy than the king of Egypt.

We were ‘slaves to sin’ according to John 8:34.

Like the Israelites we had no power to save ourselves, but God set us free through faith in the Person and Work of His precious Son.

To know the joy of freedom is wonderful, but there is more here.

Near the beginning of chapter eleven in verse two God had told the Israelites to ask for “silver and gold” on their way out.

Here at the end of chapter twelve they do just that and the Egyptians give them a whole bunch of stuff.

Two phrases stand out to me in the description of this.

First it says, “The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people.”

Before this the Bible tells us that the Egyptians detested the Israelites.

It’s probably not that they liked the Israelites it’s probably that they were happy to see them go hoping that giving them what they are asking for will stop the plagues.

The other phrase that stands out to me is the phrase “they plundered the Egyptians.”

Plunder is usually a word associated with warfare.

If an army in the ancient world attacked a city or nation and won the war they would usually come and take all their stuff.

Here the Israelites get the Egyptian’s stuff without ever drawing a sword, shooting a bow, or mounting a horse.

What do they do to acquire the riches of Egypt? Nothing! God does it all.

[It's like being a kid in school who has his milk money stolen every day all of the sudden having the world's strongest man as a 24 hour a day body guard. When the bully shows up to collect the cash the body guard says, "No way" and makes the bully empty his pockets instead.]

It is the same for those that belong to Christ.

We were all dead in our sin, prisoners condemned to die and Christ rescued us by completely conquering sin and death on Calvary's cross.

Not only are we set free but God has lavished blessing upon blessing on His people.

These are not things of silver and gold, but rather of knowing the infinite love and forgiveness of the LORD and the joy of fellowshiping and worshipping with fellow believers.

These are ours because of the Salvation of the LORD, but there is more to come.

Listen to the words of Romans 8:32 "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Did you hear the logic of that statement? If God has already given His Son on our behalf, it is inconceivable to think He would not give us the whole of creation.

The riches and blessings that belong to God's people on account of His Salvation are beyond compare.

Do you see it?

It is as plain as can be in this passage.

God has planned it all, He has poured out His Grace through the blood of the lamb, He calls us to remember, and He has bestowed His blessings upon us.

Look and see how great the Salvation of the LORD is.