**BCM Bible Study: October 7/8, 2020**

**Exodus 11:1-13:16: The Passover**

Review last week’s challenge:

1. Write your testimony with a focus on how God has intervened in your life, rescued you, and given you good things. Share this with someone.
2. Praise God for the wonders of creation. It is helpful to do this outside and I suggest writing this down or praying out loud to help your focus.
3. Praise God for the blessings in your life. Make a list. If people are on the list, reach out to them to express your gratitude for their influence on your life.

**Read Exodus 11:1-10**

* Recall that God had said this would take place. **Read Exodus 4:21-23**. Also recall that Pharaoh killed Israelite males: **Read Exodus 1:15-16**.
  + How do these passages shed light on the final plague?
  + We will return to the subject of the firstborn in ch. 13, but for now, note that Pharaoh is attempting to kill and enslave God’s firstborn (Israel, Ex. 4:21-23). God responds by doing the same to Pharaoh.

**Read Exodus 12:1-13**

* What are the basic instructions God gives for celebrating Passover?
* Jesus is referred to as our Passover Lamb – many believe that he died on the cross at the very moment the Passover Lamb was being sacrificed in Jerusalem. **Read John 1:29.**
  + What does it mean that Jesus is our Passover Lamb?
  + In what way do you see hints of Jesus in the Exodus passage?
* In executing this plague, God gives the Israelites a new calendar starting that day. (12:1) Why does God do this? What does this signify?
  + Do you feel like knowing God has given you a new start? In what way?
  + In what ways do you feel like you need a new start? How could the idea of placing yourself under God’s protection help with this?

**Read Exodus 12:14-28**

* This section involves the administration of two rituals: the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. What are the basics of what these rituals involve?
* These rituals were to be performed each year. Why? What purpose did they serve?
* It is important to notice that these rituals are future-oriented. By participating, people re-enacted the events of the Exodus. This physical action meant that the people were, in some mysterious sense, “participating” in the Exodus. This ensured that the Passover continued to be the center of the community’s identity, even when no one living had actually experienced the exodus. “In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt.” (*The Misnah*)
  + Why would practicing these rituals in this way be important for the faith of the Israelites?
* For Christians, the Passover has been replaced with the Lord’s Supper. **Read Luke 22:14-20** and **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.
  + What is the purpose of the Lord’s Supper? How is the meaning similar to the Passover?
  + Does the Lord’s Supper have any spiritual impact on you? Do you ever find yourself going through the motions?

**Read Exodus 12:29-42**

* What message does it convey that Israel walked out of Egypt in such a triumphant way?
* **Read Genesis 15:12-14.** How do these verses enhance the meaning of this section of Exodus?
  + What does this passage teach us about God’s provision?

**Read Exodus 12:43-13:16**

* What is the requirement for a non-Israelite to participate in the Passover?
  + What is the significance of being circumcised? (You enter into covenant with God.)
  + Why is it significant that God would make such a provision for foreigners? What does this teach us about God’s character? (Also note the mixed multitude in 12:38)
  + How does this inform our interactions with people who are not in the church or people of different ethnicities?
* What is the purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? The consecration of the firstborn?
  + The consecration of the firstborn is a complicated concept, but the general principle seems to be that firstborn belong to the Lord. God redeemed the firstborn, so they belonged to him. It is not clear how they are redeemed, but it seems that a lamb was to be killed in their place. In Numbers, we see another explanation: **Read Numbers 8:15-19.** How does this passage shed light on the purpose of this ritual described in Exodus?
  + We too have been redeemed/bought by Christ. We are His! Peter Enns says this: “They are always to remember who they are – or better, *whose* they are. Israel’s identity is a function of what God has done for them.” **Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20**, **Romans 12:1-2**
    - What does it mean to you that you belong to Christ? How does that concept impact your daily life?
    - The Egyptians were saved **from** slavery **to** walk in the ways of God. What were you saved **from**? What were you saved **to**? (Or, what newness of life have you found in Christ? See below for more clarity on the from-to language.)

Challenge

Tonight’s passage has a lot to do with remembering how God has intervened in your life and letting that inform your life now. In order to reflect on this, complete the sheet below that helps focus on what God has saved you **from** and what God is saving you **to**.

**Leaders:** Copies of the worksheet can be found on the info table at BCM.

Redemption Worksheet

The goal of this exercise is to recognize that God is not only saving you *from* something (i.e. pride), but that He is at the same time saving you *to* something (i.e. humility). On the left side of the sheet, write out what God has saved you from along with the corresponding thing he has saved you to. Two examples are provided. Come to study ready to unpack your list and answer the discussion questions.

What has God saved you from? What is God saving you to?

Anxiety Peace of Mind

Addiction Freedom

1. Which column was more difficult for you to complete? Why?

2. What area would you like to see redemption or more complete redemption?

3. Which change has been the more meaningful for you? Why?

Extra Notes:

* Didn’t Moses and Pharaoh say they wouldn’t talk again? Yes – but, don’t forget that the last verse of ch. 10 doesn’t record Moses leaving. It could be that Moses hadn’t left and that these were Moses’ final words before leaving Pharaoh. The fact that v.1 begins with a “now” and that the tense is “had said” both support this theory. “Now” is often a marker of an aside that is relevant to the story. That God “had said” these things communicates that this was a message Moses had ready to deliver before going to Pharaoh.
* It is interesting that cattle are specifically mentioned in 11:5 since they are an object of Egyptian worship.
* Since the Passover festival is supposed to help the Israelites participate in the Exodus, it could be that the bitter herbs reflect the “bitter” service of Israel in 1:14.
* None of Jesus’ bones were broken – Exodus 12:46, John 19:31-34.
* Many scholars have noticed that the festivals and practices named in this chapter were likely not brand new. They would have been cultic practices that were common to ancient people. God seems to be taking something that the Israelites were familiar with and giving it new meaning – similar to what he did with bread and wine. He transformed a cultic ritual and will later transformed Passover.
* The bread was to be unleavened as a reminder that the Israelites had to get out of Egypt in a hurry. There was no time for dough to rise!
* 600,000 men suggests that the entire population was about 2 million. This number brings up many questions – is this a precise number? Is 430 years enough time for the population to grow that way? It is interesting to note that a similar number shows up in Numbers 1:46 and Numbers 26:51 when soldiers are being numbered in a census. It is possible that this number in Exodus is looking ahead to these numbers to make a theological message – all those God saves are to be committed to his service. This solution has some difficulties and cannot be seen as the final answer. It is possible that the numbers should be taken at face value, though OT authors are not as concerned about precision as we are. They do a lot of rounding and are often more concerned with making a theological statement.
* The month of Abib is in late March/early April.
* Orthodox Jews carry leather boxes (phylacteries) with Scriptures verses that serve as the “sign” mentioned in Ex. 13:9.
* Why does the male donkey get separate treatment? I don’t know! In fact, after much research, there is a lot I don’t understand about the consecration of the firstborn. Moreover, why just the firstborn? Why doesn’t everyone “belong” to God? Perhaps the church is the corporate “firstborn” with respect to the world as Israel is the “firstborn” with respect to Egypt and the nations. It is also interesting that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his firstborn and that many ancient peoples practiced child sacrifice as a means of offering their firstborn to the service of God. God seems to turn this on its head – we offer our bodies as *living* sacrifices.