THE LIFE OF MOSES
NOVEMBER 9th
THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT- EXODUS 11:1-15:22


The 10th and final plague on Egypt was the death of the firstborn. While the Egyptians were receiving God’s judgment, the Israelites were observing the Passover. This terrifying and wonderful night became the “night of nights” for Israel, and the month in which it occurred (Abib, renamed Nisan after Babylonian captivity) became the beginning month for their religious calendar.

This was the birth of a nation. In the early hours of the night, the Israelites left Egypt, never to return; and on the banks of the Red (Reed) Sea saw the Egyptian army destroyed.

These chapters are the heart of the Old Testament. They are to the Old Testament what the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are to the New Testament.

a. The Events
i. The 10th plague- Exodus 11

God revealed the nature of the 10th plague to Moses and Moses repeated God’s words to the people and then to Pharaoh. The Egyptian king was told that at midnight, God would pass through the land and kill the firstborn son of every household, from the family of Pharaoh to the slaves- even the firstborn of the cattle. It was a terrible but fitting judgment considering Pharaoh’s earlier slaughter of Israel’s male children and the years of slavery.

Pharaoh should’ve feared and repented at the warning, but instead he didn’t and “the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of the country” (Exodus 11:10).

ii. The provision for Israel- Exodus 12:1-13, 21-28, 43-51

The instructions for the Israelites’ are the most important elements of Chapter 12. First each Israelite family was to select from the flock a lamb to be eaten by that family on the night God would pass through Egypt. It was to be one year old- a young but mature animal; and it was to be without any blemish or defect- a perfect specimen. The lamb was to be kept in the home from the tenth to the fourteenth of the month when it was to be killed at twilight. The blood was to be spread on the doorframes of the house with hyssop (marjoram) to be a sign to God.

The lamb was to be roasted whole. The people were to eat it in haste, dressed for their departure with sandals on their feet and staffs in their hands. Any uneaten part of the lamb was to be burnt.

The people were to remember this night and observe it throughout the generations and teach their children the meaning of the ceremony.
The Passover was to be an observance for the Israelites alone. Yet a person who had been brought into the number of the covenant people by the rite of circumcision could partake.

iii. The Feast of Unleavened Bread- Exodus 12:14-20

Because of the hasty departure, the bread was taken without leavening was added (Exodus 12:34). The Feast of the Unleavened Bread symbolized this. The first night of Passover became the first night of this feast and it continued for 7 days until the 21st of the month.

iv. The death of the firstborn of Egypt- Exodus 12:29-30

Imagine what this must have been like. For the Israelite families who sat down to dinner that night prepared for their departure. An air of suspense would have permeated the small talk. Then there would have been complete silence as the destroyer began his work and the first wails of the mourners began to rise from various locations in the city. There would have been loud screams and crying. All the Hebrew families would be sitting in silence, trembling just a little, waiting for the call that would signal their departure.

Where was the power of Pharaoh, the “perfect god”?

v. The departure from Egypt- Exodus 12:31-42

While it was still dark, the call went out for the people to leave Egypt as the Egyptians exclaimed “For otherwise we will all die” (Exodus 12:33).

Some translations said that the Hebrew people “borrowed” articles of silver and gold and clothing from the Egyptians. However, the better translation is that the people “asked” for gifts and they were given to them because “the LORD made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people” (Exodus 12:36). This fulfilled the prophecy given to Abraham when He said, “They will come out with great possessions” (Genesis 15:14).

The account says that 600,000 men left Egypt. However with women and children, this would mean more than 2 million people. Imagine traveling by foot with a group the size of the Greater Vancouver area.

vi. The dedication of the firstborn- Exodus 13:1-16

Since the firstborn of Israel had been spared by God, it was appropriate that the firstborn males of Israel be set apart for God. In fact, because the firstborn of the Egyptian animals also died, the dedication of the firstborn also included the animals. Later the tribe of Levi took the place of Israel’s firstborn sons (Numbers 3:11-13).

b. What the People Learned

The concise instructions show that there are great spiritual lessons to be learned.

i. Israel also was guilty before God
The Israelites might have thought differently since they had been spared during the 4th to the 9th plagues. This might have encouraged them to think that there was something intrinsically better about themselves. They might have been proud of their ancestry. However, the Israelites would have lost their sons as well as the Egyptians if they had not obeyed God’s instructions.

Without understanding the wretched spiritual condition of the Israelites one cannot comprehend the absolute sovereignty and grace of God in redeeming them—but not them only. Have you considered the utter corruption and the total depravity of all people, including you? Do you marvel at God’s infinite mercy toward you? How much do you value God’s wondrous love that provided salvation for you?

**ii. Salvation is received through the channel of human faith**

Hebrews 11:28 says: “By faith [Moses] kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.” Faith was involved in this deliverance; in fact, it was the key to emancipation.

God’s word required that the people believe Him and act on that belief by applying the blood of the lamb to the doorframes of their houses and by remaining inside while the destroyer passed. It might have seemed absurd, as the Word of God often does to unbelievers. However, absurd or not, faith believes God and obeys Him. If people do not believe God, they will perish. Those who do commit themselves to Jesus and follow after Him and they do not perish. “There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23-24).

**iii. Without the shedding of blood there is no salvation**

The most important lesson from the Passover details is that salvation requires the shedding of blood. The lamb must die. Leviticus 17:11 says, “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” Hebrews 9:22 declares: “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” It was no easier for the Israelites than it is for us to swallow. Remember that the Israelites had to keep the lamb in their houses from the 10th to the 14th day, long enough to become attached to the animal. Then having to kill it. If they did not kill it, the family would perish.

**c. The Death of Jesus**

Still “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). These things are pictures of the greater and only adequate sacrifice that was to come. “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed [for us]” (1 Corinthians 5:7). Again “it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18-19).
John the Baptist’s declaration “Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29 compare v.25). This is the climax of what theologians call the progressive revelation. In the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve first sinned, God killed animals in order to clothe them. The Passover showed that one animal could stand for one family. Later at Sinai, God taught that one animal could stand for the nation during the instructions for the Day of Atonement. Finally, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus, saying, “Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

One lamb for one person. One lamb for one family. One lamb for one nation. One lamb for the world. And there is no salvation apart from our Lamb.

2. CROSSING THE RED (REED) SEA- EXODUS 13:17-14:31

a. The Importance of the Crossing

This event is mentioned in the Bible even more than the Passover. Even heathens knew of the event, for Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho, told the Hebrew spies, “We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt” (Joshua 2:10).

b. The Location of the Crossing

There is much debate about the location of the crossing but it impossible to tell definitively. It must be a place where the water is deep enough to bury the Egyptian army. Also, we must realize that instead of proceeding directly to Canaan, God led the people from the east back to the west into what some could clearly see was a cul-de-sac. The people were hemmed in by the desert and high mountains on the sides and in front by water. Pharaoh thought the Israelites were aimlessly wandering, but he didn’t realize that “The LORD [was] fighting for them against Egypt” (Exodus 14:25).

c. The Significance of the Event

We see God’s power to deliver His people. There are no hopeless situations if God is on our side. We need only to do what God told the people to do: “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today... The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still” (Exodus 14:13-14).

3. THE FIRST “SONG OF MOSES”-EXODUS 15:1-21

That morning the sun rose on a new nation. Now the Israelites were free on a different land. They were a picture of the redeemed today, who were enslaved to sin but who have now been made a new people in Christ and have been given a new and awesome destiny. “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).
They broke into song. This is the first song mentioned in the Bible. In his lifetime, Moses composed at least 3 songs, this first “Song of Moses”, another in Deuteronomy 32 and a third in Psalm 90.

What is most important in this song is that it glorifies God. Moses was used of God and emerged as a great man of faith, however Moses is not mentioned once. Instead, the word Jehovah or Yahweh occurs 11 times and “God” occurs twice, and there are 35 mentions of God.

Many of our songs talk of our love of God, our worship, our experience. Do they mention God’s love, God’s tender mercies and Christ’s atonement and resurrection? Do they exalt Him or your experience of Him?

Revelation 15:2-3 records that those who had been victorious over Satan “sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb.”

4. APPLICATION
   a. The Hardening Effects of Sin
      The bitter result of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart was the destruction of his firstborn son and many of his army. Sin hardens hearts and the end of a recalcitrant heart is destruction. For those who refuse to repent, the ultimate end is eternal judgment in Hell. Have you acknowledged that you are a helpless sinner and repented of your sins? Will you do so today? To repent means to turn from your sin and turn to God.

   b. Faith’s Victory
      Are you afraid to obey God’s command? Do you fear the difficult circumstances that may threaten to impede your progress? Are you anxious that people, even seeming crowds, will be against you? You need fear none of these things. The Lord reigns as king above every circumstance and person. Though obedience to Him may require that you go through tumults that seem to have no reasonable explanation, will you dare to trust and follow Him? The very circumstances or people that would appear to inhibit your progress or even threaten your life will become, in God’s hands, the tools for your spiritual growth and deliverance. Will you take the next step of faith and see how God works on your behalf?

   c. The Value of God-given Ceremonies
      Among His good gifts are sacraments and services that remind us of what He has done on our behalf. For Israel, the Passover was one. For us, the equivalent is the Lord’s Supper, which Jesus instituted on the night of His arrest so that we might “remember” Him (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). Do you attend the Lord’s Supper faithfully? And what about church? Are you faithful in your attendance?

   d. The Importance of a Song after Deliverance
      After deliverance there should always be a song. Those who have been redeemed sing the song of the redeemed, which is why we enjoy such a rich
collection of hymns in Christianity. Do you love to sing praises to God? Then sing. If not, ask God to teach you. God taught David, who said, “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God” (Psalm 40:3).