

A Mighty Redemption

Exodus 10:1-29

As we study this book of Exodus, especially as we go through these ten plagues, you must not lose the forest through the trees. That is, you need to be able to see the big picture, the overall purpose of God that makes our study of this portion of God's inspired word "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

We have to be able to read and study the Old Testament not merely as the history of some ancient beleaguered people named Israel, but as the symbol and type of our relationship with God as the people of God today. This relevance of the Old Testament to the existence and life of God's people today is made clear by Paul in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, where we read,

1 Cor. 10:1 "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

So Israel of the Old Testament was related to Christ! And the events of their history are described by these words,

1 Cor. 10:11 "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

So all these things are for us! All these things are for our training in righteousness. With that in mind, let's look again at these ten plagues, this afternoon numbers eight and nine.

v.1-2

We begin with this description of,

I. A MIGHTY WORK OF GOD.

God says to his people, look at what I have done in Egypt. He calls them "these signs of mine", miraculous signs. They are demonstrations of supernatural power designed by God to show forth his own glory. So that his people would recognize him and honor him.

The key verse today, v.2

As we've seen before, what we see with these plagues is that God is making himself known. He is identifying himself, revealing himself, something that desperately needs to be done today, since some many people conceive of God only by what is in their own imagination. Even many professed Christians maintain a very inadequate understanding of God, an insufficient knowledge of God that falls well short of how God has revealed himself in the Bible.

The God of Exodus is a great God! Hence we see great and mighty signs of his supernatural power.

A. God demonstrates his power.

Specifically plague number eight and plague number nine. The locusts and the darkness.

v.4-7

The people surely understood the greatness of God! And God did exactly what he promised,

v.14-15

Then the darkness,
v.21-23

To emphasize what we have seen so often before, God's power is also magnified by the realization that these plagues skipped over the Israelites. Even darkness. Somehow, they still had light in their own homes. Remember, there was no electricity back then, but still God provided light in the midst of darkness.

Let me go for a moment to that verse I said was so important, verse 2. I want to explain a little bit more the meaning of the word obscured by the New King James translation of, "the mighty things I have done in Egypt." The action verb there is not mere things I have done, but could be translated "dealt harshly." The different English translations don't know quite what to do with this word, one even suggesting "make sport of." The NASB has "made a mockery," and I think that's good, too. Actually the word means to make a fool of someone!

The emphasis of this word is that God's power and authority is so great that he makes those who rebel against him look utterly foolish! And he makes them look so utterly foolish because he deals with them so severely, so completely and triumphantly.

The best New Testament expression of this idea is found in Colossians 2:15, which speaks about the triumph of Jesus death and resurrection.

Col. 2:15 "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."

God makes a public spectacle of his enemies! So great are his mighty works. I summarize all of that simply by saying that,

B. God declares his sovereign authority.

The pathetic foolishness of Pharaoh's weaknesses are so obvious. We've seen them before. Look at them again.

v.16-20

Then after the plague of darkness,
v.24-27

Then the great climax to this point, the point of no return, the introduction to the tenth and final plague with which God will finally deliver his people out of Egypt. Pharaoh is still pretending to be in power, threatening Moses with death if he ever sees him again.

v.28

Moses turns around that threat and makes a promise from God.

v.29

The reference to Moses in Hebrews 11 is appropriate here, too,

Heb. 11:27 "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

So it shall be that God shall deliver his people Israel out of Egypt.

C. God accomplishes the redemption of his people.

He does it! God will do the mighty things, as I read in verse 2. Just as Moses and Aaron demand, despite the continually hardening of Pharaoh's heart,

v.3

The people of God will go and serve the Lord, and that really is the definition of redemption. It is the rescue and ransom of his people out of bondage and slavery, so that they might become worshippers! And surely that is the meaning of the word "serve me." Serve me with their worship!

And so this great Old Testament picture of redemption is so very appropriate for us today, as Christians. As the Israel of God today, in the New Testament. Redemption for us means the same thing it did for Israel, only the bondage wasn't in the form of a particular nation and the slavery wasn't the human bondage suffering in that nation. For us, this Old Testament history is a type of our redemption that is spiritual. We are rescued and redeemed from a spiritual bondage, the bondage of sin and death. And the ransom was paid by the blood of God's own son, his own begotten son, his beloved son.

Peter writes it this way,

1 Peter 1:18 "...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

So when we sing, "To God be the glory great things he has done," we're not singing about a group of people leaving Egypt. We're singing about the great redemption that we have in Christ.

And the mighty things by which God redeemed his Old Testament people Israel out of Egypt all point us to that great New Testament triumph of Jesus Christ at the cross, when he made a public spectacle of his enemies in triumphing over them! So great is our God. And so great is our salvation.

And now, one more thing from this text. Notice,

II. THE GENERATIONAL PROMISE OF GOD.

The promise of redemption, made to succeeding generations! This was a crucial element of Old Testament religion. We fail to gain the wisdom found in the Old Testament if we ignore it, and it surely is a consistent emphasis throughout the whole Bible.

God said to Abraham,

Gen. 12:2 "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing."

And who is that nation? The nation of his son. And his son's son. And his son's, son's son. Indeed, we read in,

Gen. 15:5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

Believing that promise is the occasion for the first definitive exposition of the doctrine of justification,

Gen. 15:6 "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Then after the covenant was established,

Gen. 15:18 "On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates."

In other words, the very essence of the covenant God has established with his people is expressed by those words, "I will be your God and you will be my people, you and your children!"

Consider, Deut. 6:1 "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged."

God performs these great and mighty signs so that the

children and grandchildren can learn to the fear him and serve him as the Lord God! That goes right back to our key verse,
v.2

This is not something incidental or of secondary importance. This is right at the center of God's mighty work of redemption. This is the reason God himself gives for the extent of these plagues, ten in all, "that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt."

The promise of the gospel is for you. The invitation of the gospel is for you. And for your children! Just think of that great pentecostal sermon preached by Peter. And so when Peter concluded and applied the message he preached on the day of Pentecost by declaring,

Acts 2: 38 "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

He added,

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

A. The covenant promise extends from one generation to another.

So it was that the outward sign of that promise as it was administered in the Old Covenant was placed upon the children of the covenant. And those infant boys were circumcised not because of anything that they had done or because anything at all to do with them. They received the sign of the covenant because they were the recipients of the covenant promise made to their father. In the Old Covenant, the wives and the daughters were included in the covenant directly as a result of their relationship

with their husband or father without that outward sign.

So it was that God marked out the recipients of his covenant promise from the rest of the world. And today our children ought rightly to be marked out as well, with the sign of the covenant in the New Covenant, namely baptism. For the promise is for them, and according to 1 Corinthians 7:14 they are considered "holy." While that cannot mean without sin, surely it does mean that they are distinguished and separated from the world. They are the children of the covenant.

The covenant promise of God extends from one generation to another. But there's a catch. We see it here in our text. The promise is not automatic. There are responsibilities attached.

B. Parents are urged to teach their children about the Lord.

God shows his signs to his people that his power might be declared from one generation to another,
v.2

And so we read,

Deut. 6:6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

We tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. We give them the word of God. From infancy, as Paul encourages Timothy about his heritage,

2 Tim. 3:15 "...from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

That's the goal! And how does that happen now? It ought to happen the same way it happened then. That is,

C. Families ought to serve God together as families.

Look back at our text,

v.9-11

Moses would not be satisfied to leave Egypt to go on his three day journey to the place of worship, unless he could bring his children with them, the little ones. And that's the point Pharaoh picked up upon, in the hardness of his heart,

v.24

From infancy, Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures. For us as well, from infancy, the little ones ought to be present in the congregation of the people of God. So that as they begin to talk and ask questions, they can begin to talk and ask questions! As I read,

Deut. 6:20 "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' 21 then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.'"

When your children ask, you give them answers! That's how they learn!

It is a lot of work, to be sure. It is much harder with some children than with others. Some children, sadly, grievously, reject that promise. Some rebel against it, and rebel against the Lord. But this work of teaching the next generation has eternal consequences! So as a broader church family, we claim this generational promise of God, to be our God and the God of our

children. Then we seek to be found faithful in teaching the next generation the praises of the Lord!

So tell them day in and day out. Day after day. Week after week. Year after year. In your home. And in the church. When you stand up and when you sit down! Tell the next generation of the mighty redemption we have in Christ. Teach them to be worshippers, for that is to be their highest calling in life.

But again the question, why did God harden Pharaoh's heart?

v.20

That refrain continues to reappear. Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart. So that God could continue to show forth his power, to reveal himself. That is what this text is about. It is what this whole sermon is really about. It is what we have focused on in the first two verses. God hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to demonstrate his own sovereign power, so he could make known to his people mighty acts, so that they might know that He alone is the Lord.

v.1-2

And we sing again today of the great things God has done in our redemption. "To God be the glory, great things he has done, so loved he the world that he gave us his son, who yielded his life an atonement for sin and open the lifegate that we might go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice. O come to the Father through Jesus the Son, and give him the glory, great things he has done."