



The Seventh Plague of Egypt, John Martin, 1823

About the artist and painting: The English Romantic painter John Martin was no stranger to death and despair. Out of the 13 children born to his mother and father, John was one of only 6 that survived childhood. He grew up in poverty, the son of a farm laborer. In 1813, John lost his grandmother, mother, father, and youngest son all in the same year. Despite his popular appeal to English society, he was never really celebrated much less even accepted by the art community. Yet he was somewhat of a revolutionary by choosing to paint very fantastic, biblical scenes and landscapes. One can't help but think John looked to the extraordinary aspects of the bible to deal with the harsh realities of life in a broken world.

His 1823 work, *The Seventh Plague of Egypt*, helps to capture the deliverance theme so prevalent in the Book of Exodus. In the painting you have these mighty structures of Pharaoh's palace, city, and pyramids all displayed in their grandeur. In Moses' day this represented to God's people Pharaoh's power and oppression towards them as he ruthlessly made their lives harsh. Yet God is breaking into these circumstances, "showing up" to bring about His deliverance. In this painting, over and above the Egyptian structures is something more magnificent, the storm of God: thunder, hail, and fire being poured down upon the oppressor and persecutor of His people. And your eye is drawn to the man standing on the left side of the painting, Moses, with outstretched arms looking to the LORD and His deliverance.

The purpose of Exodus:

“The original purpose of Exodus was theological, to teach God’s people about himself and their relationship to him.” - Peter Enns, NIVAC, 25.

“Exodus is about a man, Moses. He is central to the narrative in a way in which no single character, not even Abraham, dominates Genesis...Exodus is about a nation, Israel, moving from slavery in Egypt into freedom...but ultimately Exodus is about God, about the God of the covenant who has instituted a new relationship between himself and those whom he has called to be his people.”
- John Mackay, Exodus, 9.

“The whole story of Exodus is a covenant narrative. The God who pledged himself to Abraham and his descendants remained the faithful God. He had made promises and intended to honor them, and when his moment came, honor them he did...in a word, Exodus cannot be described simply as the book of the holiness of the Lord, nor simply as the book of the presence of the Lord, but as the book of the holy God present in all his holiness at the heart of his people’s life, their provident savior and friend, who makes provision whereby they, in all their unworthiness, may live safely with him.” - Alec Motyer, The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Exodus, 20, 23.

The setting for Exodus 1:1-2:25 is Israel in Egypt. The opening section sets the stage for the rest of the book by describing: the connection to the narrative of Genesis (Ex. 1:1–7), the oppression that has arisen under a new pharaoh (1:8–22), the preservation of Moses at birth (2:1–10) and later in Midian (2:11–22), and the declaration of God’s intimate knowledge of Israel’s suffering and God’s faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham and his descendants (2:23–25).

Exodus is a journey in two parts.

Part One: Egypt Exodus 1-15 Aug. 7th – Oct. 30th

Part Two: Sinai Exodus 16-18 Nov. 6th – Nov. 20th

Pause for Advent: Nov. 27th – Dec. 18th

Part Two Cont. Sinai Exodus 19 - 39 Jan. 8th – June 25th

Pause for Capital Campaign Series: Jan. 22nd-Feb. 12th

Pause for DNOW: February 19th

Pause for Missions Sunday: March 26th

Resources for further study:

Exodus: A Mentors Commentary by John Mackay

Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture
(Volume 2) (The New American Commentary) by Douglas Stuart

MARCH 19, 2023

Delivered to a Lavish Surrender

Exodus 25:1-9 ESV

The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

Scriptures for further study:

Genesis 32:26-29

Genesis 12:1-3

Genesis 26:2-3

Ephesians 1:3

Romans 12:1

Luke 9:23

2 Corinthians 9:7

1 Timothy 3:1

BIG IDEA: If in Jesus Christ we have received such a glorious status and eternal privilege, let the church lavishly and voluntarily offer their lives back to God in response to such remarkable redemption.

OUTLINE

1. Our Glorious Status

2. Our Eternal Privilege

3. Lavish Response

4. Voluntary Response

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"It is significant that Moses does not devise the plan for creating a sanctuary for God; rather, the Lord provides a detailed 'pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture' and demands that Moses produce it 'exactly as I show you' (v. 9). At the end of Exodus, the testimony is that 'according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did' (40:16). As an extension of the second commandment (20:4–6), God shows Israel that His worship occurs according to His pattern. As a holy God, He was not to be approached according to the best Israelite ideas or the whims of the culture, but according to His Word. This continues to be the pattern for approaching God today: not according to our ideas or cultural whims, but according to the divine mandate."

-Gospel Transformation Study Bible

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What words come to mind when you think about royalty? Privilege, wealth, irresponsibility, and maybe decadence? While this may all be true, these words do not apply unilaterally. “Queen Elizabeth was a principled leader. At the tender age of 21, she pledged in a public radio broadcast, “to devote my life whether it be short or long to the service of my people”. As King Charles said in his tribute speech to the Queen, “That was more than a promise: it was a profound personal commitment which defined her whole life. She made sacrifices for duty. Her dedication and devotion as sovereign never wavered, through times of change and progress, through times of joy and celebration, and through times of sadness and loss.” -Sept. 19th, 2022, The CEO Magazine online. How does this tribute shed light on how Queen Elizabeth viewed her privileged birth? What aspects of glorious status and eternal privilege do we God’s chosen people have that might resemble a monarch’s?

2. What difference might it make in your life to say to your heart, “I am overwhelmingly blessed” and “I lack nothing in Christ”? What difference do these realities make when life on earth disappoints you? What difference do these realities make when you are devastated because life took a turn you didn’t expect? What difference do these realities make when you receive great news or a great gift that makes you smile; that you can say in your heart, “There is nothing like knowing I’m blessed by God in Jesus?”

3. In the beginning, the Lord walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve. He was present with them. From the passage you can see that the Lord’s desire to be with His people hasn’t changed. What does this tell you about His heart? The Lord’s intention continues through Jesus. Considering the reality of the Lord’s heart how can this reshape negative perceptions about the Lord? How can this lead you to worship at home, at work, and on vacation?

4. Egypt was one of the wealthiest nations in the world when the Lord delivered the Israelites from Egypt. Through the Egyptians, the Lord provided the Israelites with more financial resources than they would need for the trip to the Promise Land (Exodus 12:36, 25:3-7). At the heart of the Lord’s rescue was his intention to be present with His people. His presence with the Israelites provided, secured, and assured them of provision, protection, and purpose. Considering this, what were two characteristics of the Israelites’ response to the Lord’s request? From Romans 12:1 and Luke 9:23, how is the Israelites response a model for Christians today? In what ways is Jesus’ life a lavish example for us to follow?

“This was not just a place where people gathered for religious services. What made it special was that the LORD himself made His presence known there in a perceptible manner. He was not going to be an absent monarch, but one who presenced Himself among His people with whom He came to dwell.”

- John Mackay

“They were materials identified with royalty and kingship...”

- John Mackay

“The call to give these items was announced to all Israelites who were willing to surrender their most valuable possessions, most of which they had taken as spoil from the Egyptians months earlier.”

- Daniel Stuart

“May not a single moment of my life be spent outside the light, love and joy of God’s presence and not a moment without the entire surrender of myself as a vessel for Him to fill full of His Spirit and His love.”

- Andrew Murray

“In giving willingly, believers honor God by imitating the generosity of their Creator. God loves a cheerful giver. Giving can and should be joyful, for it is done as an act of obedience. Obedience is to be a matter of delight for believers.”

- Spirit of the
Reformation Study
Bible

5. Have you observed both lavish generosity and spectacular greed in a child? The LORD provided a heart-check moment for the people by asking them to give from their heart (Exodus 25:2). What is the posture of your heart when you are provided with an opportunity to give of yourself or your resources to someone else and the Lord?

PRAISE TO JESUS- Read Hebrews 9:11-14. Praise Jesus, the perfect mediator and high priest, who shed His own blood to secure for you the blessing of His eternal presence with all the rights and privileges of His beloved child. Praise Him for purifying your conscience from dead works so that you may joyfully have fruitfully work in service to Him.

REPENTANCE THROUGH JESUS- Reflect for a moment through prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of the moments at home or at work when the attitude of your heart was stingy and tentative rather than lavish and joyful. Confess these moments and repent through Jesus. If you have hurt someone as a result, go to them and confess and ask for forgiveness.

CONSECRATION FOR JESUS- Because of His lavish example of voluntary sacrifice for you, and through his perfect righteousness which has been accounted to you, consecrate your heart, head and hands to free and voluntary service to Him in the many places in His Kingdom where He has placed you to live.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

1. Starting with our passage from Exodus 25 most of the chapters remaining in Exodus deal with God giving His instructions for the construction and use of the Tabernacle.

- a. What is the Tabernacle? (Make sure to talk with your children about how the Tabernacle was the place of worship for the Israelites.)
- b. Ask your children to describe worship.

2. According to Exodus 25:8 what is the reason that God instructed His people to build the Tabernacle? (Talk with your children about how God set out to dwell among His people.)

- a. What difference do you think it meant to the Israelites that God would dwell with them?

3. Does anyone remember where the Israelites got the gold and silver to build the Tabernacle? (See Exodus 12:35-36)

4. How does God dwell with His people today? (Talk with your children about how God the Father and God the Son sent God the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.)

5. Take time this week to praise God together as a family for the way God loves to live among His people.

Scriptures for further study:

John 1:14

Matthew 28:20

1 Corinthians 6:19

Romans 8:11

FOR STUDENTS

1. Read Exodus 25:1-9. What does the Lord instruct His people to make for Him and why?
2. List the supplies needed to construct the Tabernacle. Considering the Israelites' circumstances, how might they have gotten these resources in the first place? (See Genesis 15:13-14, Exodus 3:21-22, Exodus 12:35-36).
3. What had the people of Israel learned about God and their access to Him in the events described in Exodus chapters 19-24? (See, Ex 19:9-25, 20:18-21, 24:1-2).
4. Which aspect of the Tabernacle's design, and what it points to, particularly resonates with you today?
5. Imagine someone said to you, "What is the point of thinking about the Tabernacle? It was where God lived among his ancient people, and that's all we need to know." What would you say?

**Selected questions borrowed and adapted from The Lamb of God by Nancy Guthrie

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. Did you know that there are 50 chapters in the Bible (most of them in the Old Testament, and several of these in Exodus alone), that speak about the construction, furnishings, ritual, and priesthood of the Tabernacle?

Question: What do you think this communicates to us about the priority that worship has in God's eyes?

2. The Tabernacle was to be placed in the center of the tribes of Israel.

Question: What does this suggest about the centrality of God? Would you say currently that worshiping God is central to your own life?

3. God prescribed exactly what the Tabernacle would look like, from the colors to the ornaments, to the dimensions. One of the reasons God laid out this exact pattern, is that He wanted the Tabernacle itself (including the colors) to communicate and teach of His holiness, divinity, and royalty.

Question: As you look around the church building, what does the architecture communicate about God? What physical and tangible objects do you have in your home, on your desk, etc. that help point you to God?

4. While the Tabernacle was certainly meant to convey the sense of God's holiness and His being set apart, yet the Tabernacle was also a powerful reminder of God's presence among his people. "And I will dwell among them." (verse 8)

Question: In what ways does it encourage you to realize that God is always with you?

Question: Did you know that John's Gospel says that Jesus Christ became a man and that he dwelt (literally "tabernacled") among us? (see John 1:14). God is more than symbolically present, He actually and physically lived among us. Again, how does this nearness of God affect the way you view your relationship with Him?