



# 2025 Weekly Devotions

Week of: December 1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>

Sermon: November 30<sup>th</sup>



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH  
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December 1

**John 3:19-21**

It is interesting to know that the sun god worshipped in Egypt was known as Ra. What they would have considered as the very source of light was overrun by the God of Moses and Aaron in the 9<sup>th</sup> plague leveled against Egypt (Ex. 10:21-29). Once again God demonstrated His power over the powerless and false gods of Egypt. I find it interesting that the Egyptians were putting their trust in hope in part of God's creation, the sun, rather than the Creator of the sun. Not unlike much of the behavior of humanity today.

I think it is easy for us to draw some conclusions concerning this ninth plague. We know that the Bible tells us that God is light, and darkness is the absence of light which means that where God withdraws Himself from a people, there will be utter darkness and chaos. Without the light and presence of God, nothing remains for a people but death itself which is what we will find in the tenth and final plague poured out on Egypt and the Pharaoh. The fact that the light remained where the Israelites were is striking to say the least (10:23). This was undoubtedly a supernatural source of light for the Israelites as much as the darkness was for the Egyptians. The Egyptians had a darkness they could not light up, and the Israelites had a light they could not put out.

I am grateful that we are called children of light (Eph. 5:8). It is written, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). The Bible also contains this verse, "The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble" (Prov. 4:19). I can't help but think of the three days of darkness over Egypt pointing to the three hours that darkness fell over the earth when Jesus hung on the cross which was an expression of God's withdrawal of His presence. It was indeed a dark time for Pharaoh and his people.

It is extremely sad but so very common for man to prefer the darkness over the light. Why you might ask? The reason hinges on the fact that humanity is sinful and would rather hide their sinful deeds in the shadows and in darkness rather than be exposed for what they are in the light. Think about the reality that Moses and Aaron stood in the presence of Pharaoh so many times representing God and every time he preferred to remain in his darkness. Yes, it is true that God hardened him at times to demonstrate His power and to clearly paint the picture of what redemption would look like as He would deliver individuals from the bondage of sin. This does not deter from the fact that Pharaoh had long before rejected God's truth. John wrote, "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19). Surely, God is revealing this truth in the life of Pharaoh in this ninth plague recorded in Exodus 10.

December 2

### Exodus 4:22-23

Chapter 11 of Exodus introduces the tenth and final plague brought down on Egypt. Interestingly, the word translated as “plague” in chapter 11:1 is a different Hebrew word this time. The Hebrew word used in this case means *strike* or *blow*. This is going to be a decisive blow that ends this contest between God and Pharaoh. In many ways, when we reach this plague, it is as if God is saying to Pharaoh, “My kid or yours?” If you look back in chapter 4 you will find that God refers to Israel as “My firstborn son” (v.22). In a prophetic sense, God follows that up with this demand, “Let my son go that he may serve Me. If you refuse to let him go, behold I will kill your firstborn son” (v.23). That may sound harsh, but God is not joking when He pours due wrath on a guilty person.

It is safe to assume God considered Israel His firstborn son because of the covenant relationship that He entered in with Abraham back in Genesis 12. This relationship was characterized by a father’s care, a son’s privileges, and a son’s obligation. Of course, we know that as Scripture reveals more of God’s plans for the world, we learn that Israel has a unique place among the nations as God’s representative “kingdom of priests.” Like a firstborn son, the inheritance of promises belonged to them as well. This came with expectations and responsibilities of which we know Israel failed to fulfill on most occasions.

Now, we come back to Exodus 11:4-5 and see God enacting this particular plague which would be the fulfillment of what He said He would do in Exodus 4. As chapter 10 ended with the Pharaoh breaking off all open communication with Moses from that point on, the end is upon Him. Pharaoh, in a rage, demands that Moses leave his presence and never return for if he did, he would surely be put to death. The lines are clearly drawn. Pharaoh has decided that he would not let God’s firstborn go and in so doing forfeited His own.

The final judgment is coming and the contest over the firstborn arrives. We quickly learn however that this is not just a matter of God merely rescuing His firstborn Israel. The Israelites have to prepare for this tenth and final plague with the selection and slaughter of a lamb for each household. The twelfth chapter reveals to us that the lamb had to be cooked and eaten in haste after its blood had been smeared on the doorposts and lintels of each Israeli home. Why in the world did they have to do so much preparing if God was going to simply rescue them? There must be more to the story than what is on the surface.

Keep in mind that the people making up the nation of Israel were often rebellious, stiff-necked, and disobedient to God’s words. We must see the tenth plague as God coming in a final judgment way. The problem that the Israelites faced was that they were guilty of sin too. It was God’s mercy, grace, and provision of a substitute that would assure the safety of His own firstborn. It was actually a circumstance in which Israel had to be rescued from Egyptian bondage AND God’s own wrath against their own sin. The point of the Passover is that God’s people could find shelter behind or beneath the blood that was shed for them.

December 3

### Hebrews 2:17

The night of the Passover provides a beautiful picture of God's people being protected from the wrath and judgment that fell all around them. Back in Noah's day, with judgment looming, Noah and his family were safe in the midst of God's wrath raining down on the world. As I wrote a few weeks ago, we, as God's children today, are safe in the righteousness of Christ that covers our sin.

I have chosen a passage today from the New Testament to shed more light on what was actually happening that night when the Lord sent the death angel to meander through the streets of Egypt to execute His judgment on the firstborn. The author of Hebrews wrote, "Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make *propitiation* for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). The lambs chosen in the original Passover were shadows of the spotless Lamb of God who was to come to save the lost.

In the incarnation, Jesus took upon Himself human form and nature to save mankind. By His perfect obedience, Christ satisfied the demands of God's law and merited eternal life for us. By His submission to the atoning death of the cross, He satisfied the demands of God's wrath against us. He satisfied the divine requirements for reconciliation. Church family, the night of the Passover that is described in Exodus 12, propitiation was taking place. The death and shed blood of the sacrificial lambs satisfied the wrath of God and protected those under the blood.

The death of the firstborn was an act of divine judgment. God said, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord" (Ex. 12:12). Notice that it was the blood that caused the destroyer to Passover the homes. It is written, "...and when He sees the **blood** on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will Passover the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your house and strike you" (v.23). This is because of propitiation – God's wrath was satisfied. If it were not for the blood, the destroyer would have entered and brought death because the Israelites were guilty too.

Yesterday I mentioned that the contest between God and Pharaoh came down to God saying, "Your kid or mine?" Today, I want to leave you with another amazing thought related to what happened here. God was telling Pharaoh that He would absolutely and certainly deliver His own son – Israel. It would turn out to be at the expense of the firstborn of Pharaoh and all of Egypt. When it was all said and done, God knew that the day would come when in order to eternally save His own "firstborn", He would have to sacrifice His only begotten. In a very real sense God said, "My son for yours." He did not sacrifice Israel for Pharaoh, but He did sacrifice Jesus for you and me. Notice that God said in Ex. 12:23, When I see the blood not when I see you. It was mercy, grace, and the substitute that saved His people. It still is today.

December 4

## **2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:11-14**

This first statement today is going to be deeply theological. The Passover was all about propitiation not expiation. Now, before you close the book on this point to ponder hold on a minute; This is really good. Propitiation as I said yesterday, has everything to do with the wrath of God being satisfied. In other words, a payment was made that met the demand for justice. This goes all the way back to the moment in the Garden of Eden when death entered the human race because of Adam and Eve's sin. When God said, "In the day that you eat of the forbidden fruit you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17), everything changed and the "wages of sin" were put into place.

When the tenth plague unfolded on Egypt that night so long ago, God was exacting the payment for sin. As I wrote earlier this week, the Israelites were guilty too and the only reason the firstborn of Israel did not die was because God's wrath was satisfied by the death of a substitute (propitiation). This other fancy word that I used in paragraph one was expiation. This theological word means the *washing away of sin from our hearts*. The Passover instituted that night in Egypt had nothing to do with an experience of forgiveness. It had everything to do with God's wrath being satisfied.

I write this today dear ones because I want you to keep remembering that the penalty that was to be paid "once for all" was not accomplished on this night. There was definitely a picture or shadow of salvation granted by the means God provided, but at that point it was just a shadow. Christ would indeed fulfill the need for our hearts to be cleansed of sin and for us to gain a righteousness necessary to be accepted by God the Father in order for Him to be able to justly declare us forgiven and righteous (justified). This is why the "great exchange" of 2 Corinthians 5:21 is so precious. There Paul wrote, "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

The author of Hebrews captured it perfectly when he wrote, "But when Christ appeared as a high priest, of the good things that have come...He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (9:11-12). You see church family, what happened on the night of the Passover was wonderful for Israel, but it was not eternal in its efficacy. The people continued to sin and thus God gave them the Levitical system in order to have a means for atonement, forgiveness of sins, and to maintain the ability to have a relationship with God through the sacrificial system that He provided. Keep in mind that this entire system was also just a shadow of what would be accomplished permanently in and through Christ.

In Hebrews this beautiful truth continues in this way: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ..." (9:13-14). Praise God that He took care of *expiation* by the blood of Christ not of bulls and goats – forever!

December 5

### Hebrews 9:28

I was thinking of how strange it may seem that the blood was sufficient and powerful to enact the satisfaction of God by “paying” the price necessary for propitiation. Isn't it a little strange that it was blood that secured the safety from God's rightful wrath? Remember that God's judgment in this case was about death. After the disease, desolation, and darkness, now the last and final judgment was death.

God's judgment was against every family in Egypt. The truth is that it would also mean death for any of the Israelites who in unbelief did not sacrifice a lamb and place the blood on the doorposts and lintels. God was showing up to inflict death. Make no bones about it. This was a harsh judgment that ended in death for many. Remember that it was a result of repeated refusal to hear and obey the word of God.

Now, there was also death in every Israelite home too. We know of course that it was not the firstborn of the Israelites but a lamb. The death had already taken place before the midnight visit. I want to introduce a very important theological term again. Yesterday it was expiation. Today it is substitution. The lamb dies in the Israelite homes so that there would be no other death that night as a result of God's judgment. I find an interesting fact here that could be easily missed as it relates to substitution.

It would not be a fair substitute if someone took my truck and told me not to worry because they had left a substitute for me in the driveway. If I go outside to look and see a little red wagon, I will not consider that an adequate or suitable substitute. You see, for a substitute to be sufficient in the exchange, it must be of equal value. We read about the lambs having to be without blemish as a shadow of the perfection of Christ. But there is another requirement necessary to make the substitute acceptable to God.

The principle was spelled out in Exodus 12:3-4 where it is written, “Tell all the congregation of Israel...every man shall take a lamb according to their father's houses, a lamb, for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb.” What is that all about?

Author Alec Motyer wrote, “To make sure the lamb matched exactly, they had to count both heads and stomachs! The lamb must be exactly right for the needs of God's people.” In Exodus 12:10 they are told that if they have overestimated and there is some lamb leftover after everyone has eaten, they are to burn what remains. The substitute was to be exactly what each person and household needed; not too much and not too little. The lamb that died, under whose blood the Israelites were protected, was matched exactly to the number and needs of each. That is what substitution had to be. Sometimes we say, “Like for like.” Keep in mind too that God referred to the whole nation as His “firstborn.” This was a substitute not just for the first born in each home or field. It was the substitute for the people of God as a whole. I hope you see how this points to Jesus.

December 6

**1 Peter 2:24, 3:18**

The death of the lamb and the blood smeared on the door frame made deliverance both possible and inevitable. It was not until the death of the substitutes and the shedding of blood mixed with faith and obedience to the words of God that they could go, but go they must. They feared the Lord, they believed in what He spoke, and He brought deliverance. I am reminded of an event that they would soon experience as they stood trapped between the Egyptian army led by Pharaoh and the shores of the Red Sea. It was there that God opened the sea, dried the ground, and summoned them to go. In like manner, the lamb was killed, the blood shed, and the summons to go followed the night of the Passover. When the Lord delivers, He expects us to set out.

Note that in Exodus 12:11 we get a picture of a people prepared and ready to launch out in faith. The Passover meal should be viewed as the first step on a journey. The Israelites who trusted God, walked through the blood stained doors of their homes into safety and walked out in freedom into a pilgrimage with their Savior.

So often, we are reminded in both the Old and New Testaments that our relationship with God is characterized by walking. God told Abraham in Genesis 17:1, "Walk before Me and be blameless." Paul said, "As a prisoner in the Lord, therefore, I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1). In that same admonition to the Thessalonians he added, "...who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). God redeems and rescues in order to send out. Our salvation is wonderful in so many ways, but it is important to understand that it is also a call to walk with God and to serve, honor, and glorify Him as we do.

The Israelites ate the Passover meal dressed for the road ahead. We too dear ones, should understand our commitment needs to be to pilgrimage. God did not shelter the Israelites in order for them to stay hidden and tucked away safely in their place of refuge. No! He saved them in order to call them unto Himself, and this night began a lifetime of walking after God.

Peter wrote it this way in his epistle, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24). We are called to live to righteousness and to walk in newness of life. Jesus became our substitute so that we could represent Him as ambassadors here on earth. Isaiah reminds us in Isaiah 53:5, "...that He was pierced for our transgressions...upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed." We are made whole and well church family to walk in His steps and to do it in a manner that reflects our relationship with Him and His worth.

December 7

## Exodus 1

As we close out another week of “Points to Ponder,” I want to remind you of a reality that seems often to be forgotten. For some reason, I find that people have a propensity to feel sorry for Pharaoh and judgmental towards God. Many cannot seem to get pass the idea of God hardening a person’s heart. In this case, our tendency is to picture Pharaoh as the poor pitiful guy who wants to do the right thing but this mean, hateful God is simply not allowing him to follow his kind heart.

Church family, I want to remind you that the last time I preached, I mentioned that God’s judgment appears to come when His patience has been exhausted. When God reached the point when He says enough is enough, it is then too late for the people being judged. There was a day when God literally closed the door to the Ark that held Noah and his family as well as the animals. There was a day when the Spirit was removed from Saul. There was a day when the temple was burned to the ground and the Israelites taken into captivity. And there was a day when God had enough with Pharaoh.

I call you back to the events of Exodus 1. Long before there was any talk of hardening the Pharaoh’s heart, we get a picture of the condition of his heart and the absolute rotten and evil acts that reveal it. We learn in Exodus 1:7 that the Israelites were very blessed and had multiplied and grown strong in Goshen. The pharaoh who we continue to deal with in the first 12 chapters of Exodus is this same person. He did not know Joseph and decided to deal shrewdly with them (v.10) in order to enslave, oppress, and control. See what it says about how they treated the Israelites, God’s firstborn, in verses 11-15. Keep in mind that as you do, this is the guy that God judges in the end.

Now, recall that it was this Pharaoh who told the Hebrew midwives to kill the baby boys born to Hebrew mothers (v. 16). When that did not work, Pharaoh commanded ALL of his people, to kill EVERY son born to Hebrew moms and dads. It was in their dire straits that their groaning and cries came up to God. Again, dear ones, before you decide to judge God as if He is somehow in the wrong and treating poor Pharaoh unfairly, think again. God’s “son” had been enslaved for four hundred years. Do you honestly think that God was impatient and unfair to the Pharaoh who made their conditions horrible?

As the day came for God to pour judgment upon the Pharaoh and many of the Egyptians, I want you to see another evidence of our Great God’s mercy and grace. In Exodus 12:38 when the Exodus began, it says, “A mixed multitude also went up with them.” Friends, do you know what this means? God allowed the Egyptians who believed to actually be a part of His people who made it out of Egypt. Even in the Old Testament, God made allowances for the “dogs” who were not originally a part of His family. Jesus commended the Gentile woman’s faith who was considered a “dog” by many (Matt. 15:27-28). God is patient, always just, wise, and loving. The time came when He determined Pharaoh had crossed a line of which He would never allow him to cross back over – not that Pharaoh ever wanted to! There is a day for all men appointed unto death and then judgment (Heb. 9:27).