

A New Beginning

Exodus Part 2

Preparing for Promised Land

1/3/2021

Introduction: I love the first of the year.

A. There is something special about turning the calendar over and starting fresh.

1. Even though we are the same person we were on Dec. 31, we feel like we can start fresh.

2. Even though things haven't really changed, we feel a new energy to do better and be better.

a. Let this year be a year we are healthier.

b. Let this year be the year we pursue peace and joy.

c. Let this year be a whole lot better than last year.

d. Let this be a year of New Beginnings.

B. God loves new beginnings.

1. He loves it so much that He tells Israel that the Passover celebration is to mark the beginning of Israel's calendar.

2. God literally started the Jewish calendar with a celebration of deliverance from slavery and Egypt!

3. God wanted the beginning of every Jewish person's year to begin with a reminder and celebration of God's salvation.

a. While we celebrate the beginning of dieting and exercising season, God wanted His people to celebrate His power over the powers of sin and oppression.

b. And unlike our New Year's resolutions that will usually fail, God will not and cannot fail.

C. During this series on the second half of Exodus, I want to share with you what God is saying in this Book.

1. This series has literally been a year in the making and will take some time to cover.
2. You are going to see Exodus with a clarity like you have never seen before, so take notes in your Bible and use my sermon notes for further study.
3. We are going to make clear those parts of Exodus that trip us up like the Law portions and the Tabernacle.
4. We are going to be stretched by God's vision for Israel, a vision that God still possesses for Her and see how that vision applies to us as well.
5. We are also going to learn the important lessons of following God, and pursuing His presence, in the midst of wilderness seasons.
 - a. One of the most important lessons of this last 2/3rds of Exodus is to learn how to pursue God's presence when everything around us is dry and barren.
 - b. What does it mean to trust God in desperate and desolate places?
 - c. Israel repeatedly fails this test, but we don't have to.
6. ALL of us need this message series.
7. I invite you to join me in pursuing God through Exodus unlike any time before.

1. Exodus tells the story of God redeeming Israel and making her into a Nation.

A. For 430 years, Israel is a slave in Egypt.

1. The difficult part of this is that this was God's plan.
 - a. You can't pray away the seasons that God has ordained.

b. God consistently put difficulty in the paths of His people to test them and to teach them.

2. When God promised Abraham that God was going to make His seed into victorious nation, part of that making involved 400 years of slavery and oppression.

3. But God decreed not only a season of slavery but also a future of victory.

4. When we go through seasons of oppression, know that God also has planned seasons of victory.

B. We start our journey in Exodus 12.

1. God has seen the oppression of Israel and has heard their cries.

2. God has prepared a human deliverer who will represent God and His power to Pharaoh.

3. 9 plagues, attacking the very foundations of Egypt have been unleashed.

4. The 10th plague, death of all firstborns, will be unleashed very soon.

5. And now, God is preparing Israel for her moment of deliverance.

Exodus 12:1–28 (CSB)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PASSOVER

12 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²“This month is to be the beginning of months for you; it is the first month of your year. ³Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they must each select an animal of the flock according to their fathers’ families, one animal per family. ⁴If the household is too small for a whole animal, that person and the neighbor nearest his house are to select one based on the combined number of people; you should apportion the animal according to what each will eat. ⁵You must have an unblemished animal, a year-old male; you may take it from either the sheep or the goats. ⁶You are to keep it until

the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter the animals at twilight. ⁷They must take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they eat them. ⁸They are to eat the meat that night; they should eat it, roasted over the fire along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or cooked in boiling water, but only roasted over fire—its head as well as its legs and inner organs. ¹⁰You must not leave any of it until morning; any part of it left until morning you must burn. ¹¹Here is how you must eat it: You must be dressed for travel, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in a hurry; it is the LORD's Passover.

¹²"I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both people and animals. I am the LORD; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. ¹³The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴"This day is to be a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to the LORD. You are to celebrate it throughout your generations as a permanent statute. ¹⁵You must eat unleavened bread for seven days. On the first day you must remove yeast from your houses. Whoever eats what is leavened from the first day through the seventh day must be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶You are to hold a sacred assembly on the first day and another sacred assembly on the seventh day. No work may be done on those days except for preparing what people need to eat—you may do only that.

¹⁷"You are to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread because on this very day I brought your military divisions out of the land of Egypt. You must observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent statute. ¹⁸You are to eat unleavened bread in the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day of the month until the evening of the twenty-first day. ¹⁹Yeast must not be found in your houses for seven days. If anyone eats something leavened, that person, whether a resident alien or native of the land, must be cut off from the community of Israel. ²⁰Do not eat anything leavened; eat unleavened bread in all your homes."

²¹Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, select an animal from the flock according to your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. ²²Take a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and brush the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood in

the basin. None of you may go out the door of his house until morning.
²³ When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, he will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you.

²⁴ "Keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your descendants. ²⁵ When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, you are to observe this ceremony. ²⁶ When your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' ²⁷ you are to reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians, and he spared our homes.' " So the people knelt low and worshiped. ²⁸ Then the Israelites went and did this; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

2. Exodus 12 is one of the most important Passages in all of Scripture.

A. The two defining celebrations for the Jewish people are the Sabbath and the Passover.

1. The identity of Jewish people are tied to these celebrations.
2. Wherever Jewish people are found, they have been known by Sabbath and Passover.
3. That's because God used the Passover and the Exodus as the basis of Israel's identity.
4. Whenever they would forget who they were and what they were called to be, they were to look back and remember what God did for them in Exodus.

B. It was not with weakness that God delivered Israel.

1. Instead, God delivered Israel with demonstrations of power and authority.
2. Exodus 12:12 says that God executed judgment against the gods of Egypt.
 - a. God doesn't say they were fake gods.
 - b. God says they were real gods that God demonstrated real power against.

c. Why is this important: If the enemy of Israel was imaginary then imaginary power would have been enough to set them free.

d. Growing up as a boy, I killed a lot of imaginary enemies with imaginary bullets.

e. The forces opposing Israel were real, but they were no match for God.

3. We are all battling right now.

a. The enemy you are fighting is real and the threat is real.

b. Don't pretend like your battle isn't real.

c. Because if the battle isn't real, neither will be your victory.

c. It's important to realize that we "wrestle not against flesh and blood".

d. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

e. The battle we face is real but God is bigger.

C. The importance of God's judgment upon Egypt and Israel's deliverance is made clear in a couple of ways.

1. First, all of the details about how to celebrate Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (two different events) remind us of the importance of this to God.

a. Do you ever read parts of Exodus, Leviticus, or Deuteronomy and wonder why all the detail and repetition?

b. One of the reasons is we repeat what is important.

c. God repeated the instructions for this celebration because of its importance.

2. Second, this event is so important that God recreates Israel's calendar around this celebration.

- a. For 400 plus years, Israel had worked on Egypt's calendar and system.
- b. But now, they were no longer slaves.
- c. God emphasizes this by saying "this will be the beginning of months for you."

3. God's calendar begins with deliverance.

A. Ultimately, deliverance is about sin and our fallenness

1. We aren't being delivered from good things.
2. We are being delivered from evil things.
3. Evil comes from sin.

B. Sin only leads to two options: Death or deliverance.

1. Egypt died, Israel was delivered.
2. But Israel's deliverance was not without a price.
3. The price was symbolized through the death of a sacrifice.

a. On that night thousands of goats and lambs would die in place of the firstborn of Israel.

b. Someday, the Lamb of God, Jesus would die for us.

c. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he declared: "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."

John 1:29

C. **Notice that each family/household was to have its own sacrifice.**

1. No skimping or skipping.
2. Every family was in need of deliverance.
3. But this was not like pagan sacrifices where the sacrifice was consumed or thrown away.
 - a. Each was to take and eat it.

b. Three-thousand years later or so, Jesus would hold up a piece of bread and say "Take and eat, this is my body..."
Mat 26:26.

4. The death of the animal was no empty symbol. It foreshadowed the sacrifice of an even better sacrifice.

a. While the body was eaten, the blood was placed over the doorpost.

b. When the destroying Angel saw the blood, it would Passover that family.

c. Deliverance ensued because of the presence of the Blood.

5. When death comes for us, what will be most important is if the Blood of Jesus had been applied to our lives.

a. When we stand before God, He won't care if you took the vaccine or not. It is not a salvation issue.

b. When we stand before God, He won't care if you had the end-times prophecies correct in your mind. So brace yourself, because none of us will get it all perfect.

c. What will matter will be the presence of the Blood of Jesus that is applied when we enter into Covenant with God.

d. So let me ask, "Are you washed in the Blood?"

e. Is your heart right with God and with each other?

6. Notice that people were not allowed to celebrate by themselves.

a. They were to celebrate as families and, if you didn't have a family, you were to join with your neighbors.

b. Deliverance was a community, family, and national event.

c. For those tempted to follow Jesus alone, I want to warn you against that trap.

d. Hebrews reminds us to not forsake gathering together.

e. God designed victory to be a corporate experience.

D. The Unleavened Bread was a big deal.

1. Leaven/yeast represents sin in most Scriptures within the body.

2. Israel ate unleavened bread on the day of deliverance because they were in a hurry to eat, due to the urgency and speed of their deliverance.

3. There was no time for the bread to rise.

4. Each year, when God's people celebrated with unleavened bread, they were reminded that they were delivered on God's timetable.

a. No one would have chosen to make unleavened bread if they had that chance.

b. They would have planned for the bread to rise first.

c. But deliverance happens on God's timetable.

5. Some of us are waiting for prayers to be answered.

a. I am to remind you that we work on God's timetable, and His timing is different than ours.

b. Don't give up, cause deliverance and victory is coming.

4. God's deliverance of Israel brought about a remarkable change in her organization and focus.

A. ¹⁷"You are to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread because on this very day I brought your military divisions out of the land of Egypt.

1. How do a group of slaves leave as an army?

2. How do former slaves leave out in military order?

3. This is not a riot or a rabble leaving in massed chaos.
4. This is an army marching out with God as their protector and Moses their General.

B. God's deliverance can do what we cannot:

1. He turns slaves into soldiers and a rabble into an army.
2. As our song today says, He turns Graves into Gardens.

C. Throughout Israel's Exodus journey, God turns places that should have been Israel's grave and turn them into places of miracles.

1. Israel should have died in Egypt, but God rescued them.
2. There graves should have been at the edge of the Red Sea, but instead it became a place of celebration.
3. They should have died at Marah with no water, and in the wilderness with no food, but God has a way of turning epic defeats into great victories.
4. 2020 has felt like a defeat in some ways.
 - a. But much good has happened along the way.
 - b. Many of us are praying and following Jesus with an intensity we didn't have this time last year.
 - c. Priorities are clearer than ever before.
5. So don't give away what God has declared to be a victory.
6. Because one minute you are a slave, the next minute God makes you a soldier.

5. God begins the deliverance with a celebration.

A. Watch the order here in verses 24-26.

²⁴“Keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your descendants. ²⁵ *When you enter the land* that the LORD will give you as he promised, you are to observe this ceremony. ²⁶ When your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ ²⁷ you are to reply, ‘It is the

Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians, and he spared our homes.'

1. When you enter the land that the Lord will give you...

2. Israel is still in slavery for a few more hours.

a. She still had a long journey ahead of her.

b. But God declares a better future:

c. When YOU enter the land, you will celebrate this moment.

d. The deliverance that happened in Egypt was to be celebrated in Canaan.

3. "Israel prepares to celebrate their deliverance in Egypt before it actually takes place."¹

B. There are certain fulfillments that we, as believers, are still waiting for.

1. Yesterday, I did my 32nd funeral as a pastor, most of them for believers.

2. More than likely, before the end of this week, I will counsel someone in a rocky marriage, give wisdom to someone facing a difficult situation, or help someone in need of financial help.

3. This week, some of you will be excited by what happens in the Washington, others will lose your minds and mourn like someone who has no hope.

4. We will face death, and sickness, and evil, and pain, and oppression this week and every week after that.

C. Yet, God gives us the opportunity to celebrate the coming victory.

1. Through His Spirit and through His gifts, and through miracles, we are given a taste of the future glory that awaits us,

¹ Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, ed. H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick, vol. 1, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 443.

and we are called to celebrate the Promised Land even in the middle of Egypt.

2. There is coming a day when I will never officiate another funeral.

3. A day when we will never receive another call for prayer.

4. A day when the Government will be upon Jesus' shoulders.

5. A day when there will be no sickness, no more pain, no more evil, no more destruction.

6. And that future is so assured, that we can celebrate it here on Earth.

D. I'm thankful that, in Christ Jesus, we are victorious, and I'm called to celebrate.

Closing: Today, I call upon all of us to start this year right.

A. The right way is by seeking God and celebrating what He has done.

B. So, All across this place, would you stand and let's go to God with a new intensity.