

Blood that Talked

You may want to turn in your Bibles to Exodus Chapter 10. We will be reflecting on a portion of the chapter today.

Think back to your days in high school or in college. For some of us, that might not be a very good feeling. Stay tuned. I am about to say the words that could strike fear or dread into many students. You may have guessed it already. The term paper!

When I was in high school a student pointed out that a picture is worth a thousand words and asked if he could put three pictures in his term paper, instead of writing a three thousand word term paper. I think you can imagine the teacher's response to that question. Needless to say, the teacher did not agree with his request.

One picture is truly worth one thousand words. In the passage of the Bible we will discuss, we will look at the words in the picture of blood painted on the door frames of the children of Israel. Today, we will reflect for a few minutes on the first recorded Passover. This is the Passover that took place when the Moses was working to convince the Pharaoh to free the children of Israel.

A little background might be helpful. There seems to be a reoccurring pattern in the early chapters of the book of Exodus. Moses asks for freedom for the children of Israel. The Pharaoh refuses and God sends a plague.¹ Over and over again, we see this pattern.² The case could be made that the general pattern is seen for most of the plagues.

Then we get to the tenth plague. That is where we pick up the Exodus story. The tenth plague is death of the first born in Egypt.

Rabbi Harvey Fields identifies two major themes in this portion of Exodus - receiving gold and silver from the Egyptians and the beginnings of Passover celebrations in the portion of the Bible we will study this morning.³ I disagree with the rabbi. I see two other major themes in - justice and grace. The themes of receiving Egyptian silver and gold, and the start of Passover celebrations seem secondary to the themes of justice and grace.

Moses tells the Pharaoh that the Lord will kill all of the first-born in Egypt.

Exodus 11:4-7 (Moffatt Bible) Moses said, "The Eternal declares that he will pass through Egypt about midnight, ⁵when all the first-born in Egypt shall die, from the eldest son of the Pharaoh on the throne to the eldest son of the slave-girl at the mill, with all the first-born of all the cattle. ⁶Then shall a loud wail ring through all the land of Egypt, such as never has been heard, such as never will be heard again. ⁷But not even a dog shall bark against any of the Israelites. . .

The children of Israel are told to kill a perfect lamb or kid,⁴ to kill the animal between sunset and dark, and to smear blood on the door posts.⁵ This is so when the Eternal moved through the land killing the first-born, God would not harm those in the homes marked with blood.

Exodus 12:13 (Moffatt Bible) The blood shall mark the houses where you live, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, sparing you a deadly stroke, as I strike down the land of Egypt.

The blood said several things. The blood talks about the sacrifice, the satisfaction of God's purpose, the substitution, submission to God and salvation.⁶

Sacrifice.⁷ The blood said, "God sacrificed for me." While the young lamb died, the lamb was not the true sacrifice. The labours of the people were not the sacrifice. The sacrifice was made by God, not by the children of Israel. The children of Israel were slaves to an oppressive and abusive government. They were in no position to rescue themselves. God is the one who performed miracles, who did all of the work to give the children of Israel freedom. And later in the wilderness, it was God who worked to lead the Israelites, to provide them with food and water. The Lord defeated the enemies of the children of Israel so the children of Israel could possess the promised land.

Blood still speaks to us. The blood of Jesus spilled at Calvary powerfully makes the same point. No longer are we slaves to sin and to our own futile efforts to save ourselves. We can rest our sin and works weary bodies. God is our sacrifice. The blood spilled at Calvary cries out, "God sacrificed for you!" The Word says, Christ is our Passover!⁸ That means judgment, condemnation and death pass over us. And we are spiritually untouched!

[Satisfaction of God's power.](#)⁹ The blood said, "I am completely satisfied by God's power." That means God's power is able to completely meet our real needs. God can do that, because God is able to vindicate us, discharge the legal obligations and debts we owe, prove we are His in a court of law and provide us with the assurance of His continued love.

The children of Israel probably understood this when cattle were included in the plague. The first-born cattle might have been included in the death sentence, because the Egyptians venerated their cattle.¹⁰ You might be thinking, "Say what?" There is some thought the Egyptians almost worshipped cattle.

The ancient Egyptians had numerous gods.¹¹ One of those gods was represented by either a cow or a by a human wearing a crown with a sun between cow's horns.¹²

This is significant to both the Egyptians and to the Israelites. The Eternal's act - striking down the first-born cattle, sent a clear message to the Egyptians. That message was that the true God, the God that was over the children of Israel was stronger than their gods. After all, He could strike down what represented their gods! The message to the children of Israel was equally powerful. God of was strong enough to deliver them, because He could destroy the gods of Egypt. With this plague, it was God 10, false gods 0.

As the Lord lead the people out of Egypt, provided for their every physical need and protected them, the people's needs were completely satisfied by God. In our lives, God protects us and supplies our needs. We are satisfied by His power.

[Submission to God.](#)¹³ The blood said, "I submit to the Lord." The blood on the doors showed the people were under God's authority. That means the children of Israel were agreeing to defer to God's superior wisdom and power.

There is some thought the Lord did not need to have the houses marked. First, most of the children of Israel lived in Goshen.¹⁴ Second, all of the first born were condemned in Egypt. The sentence against the first born did not distinguish between the Jewish first born and the Egyptian first born.¹⁵ The blood on the doorways was a visible testimony that the people were under God's authority and leadership, not the leadership and authority of humans.

In the ancient world, the dreams of the father were often "bound up in his firstborn son."¹⁶ The first born got a double portion of the inheritance.¹⁷ The first born sons had a special rank.¹⁸

When God said the first born sons would die, God aimed directly at those with special rank, at those who thought their special rank made exempted them from letting God lead, from letting God be in charge. About the death of the Pharaoh's son, John MacArthur comments, "Whatever significance might have been attached religiously, politically, dynastically, and socially, it was all stripped away . . ."¹⁹ A person's power and position are not important to the Lord. Personal power is all stripped away by God. His gaze cuts through our worldly rank, looking for something more important than rank.

The Pharaoh's eldest son was not exempt. This was because the Pharaoh would not place his personal sovereignty under God's sovereignty. Pharaoh's real sin was not letting God be god.²⁰

The truth is that God does not want just our wonderful outward signs of piety, such as baptism or church attendance. He does not want only our dedicated labour of love, our service, our tithes or our offerings. God is looking for something much more significant than those things. What God wants is not the outward signs of spiritual riches. Our spiritual sweat and intense efforts to earn what only God can give leave us outside of God's sovereignty. The problem is that those signs of faith might be won by personal sweat and personal sweat does not place us in submission to God.

The Lord wants us to have the real spiritual riches that are found only when we place God's sovereignty over our personal sovereignty and operate under God's rule.

Salvation.²¹ The blood said, "God is my salvation." The blood smeared on the door posts symbolized salvation. The children of Israel's bondage was ending. Moses had delivered the declaration of independence to the Pharaoh. Freedom from slavery was beginning. And that freedom was won by the hand of God.

God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.²²

The Lord is still in the business of salvation. He is moving to bring us total and complete liberty from the ravages that sin and sickness have brought to the world. And at the end of time, we will see it was all won by the hand of God.

As you reflect on this passage of the Bible, I invite you to think about the blood that covers the door posts of your heart. What does that blood say? How can you help others hear the blood speak?

Prayer:

Paint the blood of Calvary on the door posts of our hearts. Then focus our attention on the picture, until our hearts grow as soft as Your heart. Make the painting of Your love large enough that people can see it from long distances. Paint Calvary on our hands, so work, school, home and community see God when they see the labour of our hands. Amen.

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E.W. Bullinger. **The Companion Bible.** (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregal Pub., 1922), 82-83, discusses a slightly different pattern in the first and second plague of liberation demanded, plague inflicted, plague imitated, liberation refused.

Bullinger, 82-86 outlines slightly different patterns for some of the plagues, but they all have in common the pattern of either a warning or a command to let the children of Israel go and then the plague sent.

Harvey J. Fields. **A Torah Commentary for Our Times.** Vol. 2 (New York: UAHC Press, 1991), 27.

Exodus 12: 4-5.

Exodus 12:6-7.

James Smith. **Handfuls on Purpose.** Vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub., 1947), 276. Smith gives sentence explanations.

This contrasts with Smith's explanation of the "Lamb slain", 276.

Smith, Vol. 2, 69, cites 1 Corinthians 5:7.

Smith looks at this as God's purpose accomplished through the blood.

Nahum M. Sarna. **The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus.** (Philadelphia: Jewish Pub. Society, 1991), 52.

"Egyptian Gods Description." **Social Science Data Library.** (Boulder Colorado: University of Colorado at Boulder, n.d.), internet web site - <http://sobek.colorado.edu/LAB/GODS/>.

"Hathor." **Social Science Data Library.** (Boulder Colorado: University of Colorado at Boulder, n.d.), internet web site - <http://sobek.colorado.edu/LAB/GODS/hathor.html>.

Smith views this as the faith and obedience of the people, 176.

Jean M. Alley, et. al. **The Open Bible: New Living Translation.** (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1998), 91, state the blood "was not simply to mark the Israelite homes. The Hebrews were already by themselves in Goshen."

James Smith. **Handfuls on Purpose.** Vol. 2. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Pub., 1947), 68. See Exodus 11:4-6 and 12:12.

Kenneth Barker, et. al., eds. **NIV Study Bible.** (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub., 1994), 100.

Barker, et. al., 100.

Alley, et. al., 91.

John MacArthur. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. (Nashville: Word, 1997), 110.

Alley, et. al. state, "Pharaoh's real problem was that he would not surrender his self-assertiveness and the maintenance of his sovereignty. This is the essence of sin", 90.

Smith sees the children of Israel's safety depending on the blood, 276.

²²John 3:16 King James Version.