

## Exodus 11-12

### *Slavery & Freedom*

Freedom is a valuable commodity. Just ask Filipino hostage Angelo dela Cruz. Dela Cruz was held hostage by Islamic terrorists in Iraq for two weeks. At one point they brought him into a blood spattered room, sharpened a sword and probed his neck for the right spot to cut.

When the Philippine government gave into the demands of his captors, they set him free in Baghdad. Dela Cruz was constantly guarded by six insurgents clutching AK-47s and grenade launchers and was bound and stashed in a car compartment while being moved to at least four houses.

What kind of thoughts went through his mind during those two weeks? What are the six hostages still being held, thinking right now?

I'll guarantee you, the sweetest words any captive could ever hear are, "You're free to go."

There's only one thing worse than being held under bondage; and that's being under bondage and not even knowing it.

There is a determined, concerted, persistent move in our country to remove any concept of God and absolute truth from our society.

Walk on to almost any university campus in our country and try to talk about right or wrong, or morality and ethics and people will look at you with a blank stare.

In his book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Professor Allan Bloom makes the observation: "There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative...The students, of course, cannot defend their opinion. It is something with which they have been indoctrinated."

In an April, 2002 poll by Zogby International conducted for National Association of Scholars reveals three-quarters of all college seniors report that their professors teach them that what is right and wrong depends "on differences in individual values and cultural diversity,"

We're reaping the results of moral relativism today big time.

Between 1960 and 1999, the percentage of births to unwed mothers increased 523 percent.

The number of couples living together without marriage increased almost tenfold. During the 1990s, the number of cohabiting couples increased almost 50 percent.

More than 70 percent of high school students admitted on a recent survey to cheating on an exam at least once in the past 12 months (45 percent said they did so two or more times).

Motor-vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death among persons aged 10 to 20. Number 2 is homicide and number 3 is suicide.

About one in four regular Internet users -- or about 21 million Americans -- visits a pornographic Web site at least once a month.

Almost half of all white Americans and one-third of all black Americans are "unchurched" and see no real compelling need for church.

Our "freedom" from God's principles hasn't made us free. It's enslaved us to our own passions but few people seem to see that.

In the days of Moses in the Book of Exodus there were people who thought they were slaves who were really free, and people who thought they were free who were in the worst bondage.

Lets look at Exodus chapter 11 this morning and see what we can learn from God's inspired record. **Exodus 11 pg 59**

All of the events we're reading about today took place around 1445 BC. The Hebrew people have been enslaved by the Egyptians since 1730 BC.

For centuries the Hebrews cried out to God to deliver them from the suffering they were experiencing at the hand of their captors. How many of them must have thought, "Where is God? Why has He abandoned us?"

But see, God hadn't abandoned them. They hadn't chosen God, God had chosen them. God raised up the nation of Israel and set His love upon them because He chose to.

Later on, after God brings them out of Egypt and brings them through their years of wandering in the wilderness it's finally time to enter the land He'd promised them.

Just so they'd understand, God gives them this explanation: Deut 7:7 *"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers..."*

Out of all the sinners on the Planet God chose a man named Abraham and his descendants to be His people. Not because of any good in them, but because God wanted to. God set His love upon them because He wanted to.

God had a plan. That plan didn't include getting the descendants of Abraham out of Egypt until the time was right. In Exodus 11 the time was right.

God raised up a Hebrew named Moses. He gave him an education in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He prepared him for another 40 years on the backside of the desert. Then he sent him to the Egyptian Pharaoh, Amenhotep II, to say, "Thus says the LORD, Let My people go."

Through Moses, God brought a series of plagues on Egypt but it didn't matter how bad things got, Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrew slaves go. Last week we saw the first nine of the plagues. Each one was a challenge to a particular Egyptian god.

Today we come to the 10th and final plague.

As we do, I want us to see first of all *The Horrific Consequences of Sin*

At the end of chapter 10, at the conclusion of the 9th plague Pharaoh says to Moses, *"Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"*

Get out of here and don't show your face on my doorstep again or I'll kill you.

Moses says, *"You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."*

Let me give you the RPV translation of Moses words (that's the Regensburg paraphrase version), "No problem. Have it your way."

Chapter 11, verses 1-3 is parenthetical. We're being told what God told Moses before he had walked into Pharaoh's court for the last time.

Verse 4 picks up the conversation, *"You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."* Verse 4 **Read vs 4-9**

The Egyptians believed their pharaoh was a god. He was all-powerful, all-knowing and controlled nature and fertility.

They identified him with the god Amon-Re. This Pharaoh's name was Amenhotep.

Now catch this: Amun represented absolute holiness. He was different then any other Egyptian deity. He was so holy that he remained independent of the created universe. He was the Egyptian creator deity was believed to be self-created. It was believed that he could regenerate himself by becoming a snake and shedding his skin. At the same time, he remained apart from his creation, totally different from it, and fully independent from it.

Pharaoh was inseparably linked with the Egyptian perversion of the true and living God. Jehovah. The God of the Bible.

You can find all kinds of parallels to Biblical truth in ancient history. The Babylonians had the Gilgamesh epic which is about a universal flood. The Egyptians had Amun-Re, the creator god who was self existent and holy.

Critics of the Bible want to turn things around and say that the biblical writers just adopted ancient pagan deities and events and put them into the Bible.

Actually just the opposite happened. God revealed Himself from day one with Adam and Eve. He did destroy the world with a flood. The reason there are parallels to the Bible is because these things are real.

Almost every ancient culture on the globe had a flood story.

The difference is striking though.

The Bible presents straight forward truth. Ancient accounts always twisted and perverted the truth.

In the 1850's Sir Henry Layard, a British archeologist, uncovered an amazing find. A 7th century BC Assyrian king named Ashurbanipal had amassed a library of over 25,000 cuneiform tablets. The library was buried over and preserved intact in Nineveh.

In that library we have copies of the Enuma Elish, which is the Sumerian creation epic, and the Gilgamesh Epic. You can read the entire texts today online, in English.

Once you begin to read them you can't help but see the difference between them and the Bible. They talk about the same events, because the events happened.

But the Bible just gives a straightforward account and the others are filled with obvious distortions of truth.

The Bible says God brought the flood because people were hopelessly sinful and wicked. In the Babylonian story, they were too many people on earth and they were too noisy. God couldn't get any rest.

The Egyptian creator god created himself and shed his skin like a snake. The differences are obvious.

Now here is Pharaoh, leader of the most advanced, prosperous, powerful nation in the world and everybody in Egypt associated him with a perversion of the true and living God.

They believed that when Pharaoh died he would transformed into Osiris, the father of Horus and god of the dead, and he would pass on his sacred powers and position to the new pharaoh, who was his son his son.

Talk about a clash of worldviews.

And so what does God say? He says "I'm going to kill the first born of every Egyptian from the lowest slave to the firstborn of Pharaoh, the heir to the throne."

Up to this point the LORD had destroyed every god that the Egyptians had - Isis, Osiris, the gods of the sun, the land, the water - all of them were shown to be inferior to the LORD. By then putting to death the firstborn son of Pharaoh - God was destroying the one person they considered to be their future prophet to the gods.

### **Read 12:29-33**

When Cecil B. DeMille remade his 1923 silent version of the movie the 10 Commandments in 1956 he chose to insert something that's influenced preachers ever since.

I read 6 sermons in preparing for this one. In every one of them it said that there was a death angel that passed through and took the lives. You'll notice, that's not in the biblical text.

The reason Demille chose to insert the idea of a death angel was because he didn't think people would respond well to God being the killer. He was right. We don't respond well, do we?

That's a hard truth for us to take a hold of. But that's what the Bible says.

How could that be? How could God wreak such destruction on people He created. A lot of those firstborns were children. A lot of them were just infants.

Remember we saw that God didn't choose to bless Israel because they were any better than anyone else. He chose to love them of His own accord.

The Bible says that the God of creation isn't shedding His skin like a snake. He's the eternal sum of perfection. He is holy in the purest sense of the word. He created the world. He told Adam not to sin. And then He allowed Adam the freedom to make a choice.

Adam chose to disobey God and we've been doing it ever since. The Bible says: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way..."*

God has said, *"The wages of sin is death."* In Exodus 20 God will give the 10 commandments. He said, *"These shall be your righteousness."*

There's not one of us in this room today who haven't violated all 10 in spirit many times over.

We're in bondage and don't even know it. There are Horrific Consequences to Sin but we are so blind.

God didn't owe the sinful people of Israel anything. But He choose to show them grace.

God didn't owe the sinful people of Egypt anything, but He gave them 9 chances to turn to Him.

Every plague was an absolutely unmistakable confirmation that He was God. Not Pharaoh. Not Osiris. Not Ammon-Re. Not the Nile. Jehovah is Lord of heaven and Earth. That should have been real obvious.

But Pharaoh's heart was hard. The people of Egypt's hearts were confused. And so in Plague number 10 there's judgment.

We don't have to like it. It doesn't have to sit well with us. We just have to see God's point. Sin is serious stuff with God. He doesn't joke around.

*So, We See the Horrific Consequences of Sin*  
*Second, We Learn of the Astonishing Depth of God's Love*

### **Read 12:1-14**

Here God institutes the most significant of all the celebrations and holy days of the Jews. Passover. We're here 3400 years later and every year millions of Jews celebrate Passover.

God gave Moses very specific instructions. On the 10th day of that month, the month of Abib, each family was to kill a lamb, put its blood on the door posts and the cross piece over their door and then eat the lamb.

God said, "Do this and I will pass over your house as I'm destroying the firstborn." At first I thought, I wonder if any of the Jews refused. I wonder if any said, "I'm hungry for beef, not lamb. This lamb is like a pet to us, I'm not going to kill it!" "I don't know if blood will ever come out of the doorposts""

I wonder if any thought the whole blood on the doorposts thing was just too strange.

Later on, when Moses is leading the Nation on their wilderness wandering a bunch of Israelites are going to be bitten by poisonous snakes.

God will tell Moses to do another seemingly strange thing. He'll say, "Make a snake out of brass and put it up on a pole. Whoever looks at that snake shall live."

Some did and lived. Some didn't and died. But this time everybody did what they were told.

Why? Because of plagues 1-9. They knew what God said, He would do.

Isn't God's love amazing? These people are so fickle that not long after they're out

of Egypt they make a golden calf and say, *"This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"*

They didn't deserve God's love, but God gave it to them anyway.

God even made provision for the Egyptians who wanted to leave with them to go along.

How deep is God's love?

**Turn to John 1:29 pg 938**

**Turn to I Corinthians 5:7 pg 1015**

This is the heart of Passover. Jesus is the final lamb. It's His blood that was shed at the cross that washes away sin.

It took the blood of the Son of God so God sent His Son.

Joel Pankow writes: In reality, the only thing that distinguished the Israelites from the Egyptians was the blood of the lamb. It didn't have anything to do with who the Israelites were. They didn't have to shed one ounce of their own blood. They didn't have to nail their doors shut or design a special kind of underwear or hang garlic in their window. They didn't have to come up with a remedy or an escape plan. They didn't have to be or do anything. God just said, "put this blood on your doorpost and you will avert disaster." The Israelites did nothing - the plan, promise, and blood did everything. All the Israelites did was slaughter the lamb, sit there and enjoy a quiet night of food over a fire.

The Bible says there's nothing we can do to earn or deserve forgiveness. In fact it says: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

*It says: All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

Why is it that some people get upset with the idea of God slaughtering the Egyptian firstborn, but aren't even the least bit moved by the truth that God slaughtered His only begotten Son for them?

God's love is shown in His willingness to send Christ to pay for our sin.



In his book, "Before the Face of God" R.C. Sproul writes,

The liberal view that God is just a big Santa Claus in the sky who overlooks sin has permeated our culture and infects the minds of Christian people. The good news of the gospel is not that God overlooks sin, but that he has dealt with it.

If God overlooked sin, he would be a God without moral standards, without character. But the true God is a holy God. He has integrity, and he will not overlook sin or clear the guilty in his court. Sin and guilt must be dealt with, not passed by.

You know, God's way of dealing with our sin was to provide a substitute (a lamb) that would take the penalty for us. That substitute is Jesus. If we trust Him we will be spared the dire consequences from our sin.

Jesus said, *He that believes on me has everlasting life.*

He said in another place: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."*

In the plague of the death of the firstborn and the institution of the Passover we see:

*...the Horrific Consequences of Sin  
We Learn of the Astonishing Depth of God's Love  
We are Left With a Profound Sense of Gratitude*

Bruce Goettsche has written: *Can you imagine the sense of gratitude these Hebrews had. Every time they looked at their firstborn son they were reminded that God had saved them by His grace. Every time they watched their child play, every time they attended a wedding or held a newborn, they were reminded that God had saved them. Every time they celebrated the Passover they were stunned anew with the wonder of God's love.*

## **Back to Exodus 12 Read vs 37-41**

On May 27, 2001 Martin & Gracia Burnam, Missionaries with New Tribes Mission in the Philippines were taken captive by Islamic terrorists. For one year they were drug through the jungles, chained to trees, and subjected to unbelievable hardships.

Even though it seemed like their captivity would never end, Martin was sure they'd be rescued. Finally on June 7, 2002, on a rainy afternoon troops from the AFP, The Armed Forces of the Philippines came into their location, guns blazing to stage a rescue.

Gracia watched in horror as the deliverers accidentally shot Martin to death in the gun battle.

Later on the lieutenant in charge came to talk with her.

"I know that your probably very angry with us, but we were just doing our jobs."

This is what she said, "We never forgot who the bad guys were and who the good guys were."

The ones who held them captive were the bad guys. The ones who came to set them free were the good guys.

Sometimes we might forget who the bad guys are. Sometimes we may get confused about what God is allowing in our life and think He's our enemy.

Lucifer, the god of this world is our enemy. He's the one who wants to hold us in bondage. He's the great deceiver who the Bible says blinds people's minds from the truth.

God is our Savior. He's our deliverer. He sets us free from the slavery that holds us down and in the end leads to eternal destruction.

When we really understand the love of God. When we really catch the wonder of the cross. When we really apprehend what it means to be forgiven and set free there aren't words to express the gratitude that flows out of our heart.

Can you thank God this morning that He's your Savior?

The consequences of sin are a whole lot worse than we could begin to imagine. God's love is deeper than the deepest sea. A right response is to offer our lives back to God in thanksgiving.

The NT puts it this way: *You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*