**Session 12: Week 7a**

***God of Deliverance***

**Exodus 11:1 – 12:28**

**31 October - 1 November 2022**

**The Birth Narrative Continues** – We have made it through nine “birth contractions” and are now ready for the final push in the deliverance of Israel. Remember that God had told Moses that Pharaoh would not just *allow* the Israelites to leave Egypt, but that he would *push them out*. They were at the moment of birth, so to speak.

**Chiasmus** – In this particular chiasmus, the central point that stretches across several chapters is the exodus event itself. We will see the chiasmus in its entirety over the next three weeks.

**Yahweh and Pharaoh** – At the end of the ninth plague, Egypt was locked in darkness, just as an infant in the womb is in darkness. But in this instance, a *nation* is about to be born and will be given a name and be called out with a purpose. God tells Moses that He has one final plague to bring, and then Pharaoh will let the Israelites go. We see that the people of Egypt, with the exception of Pharaoh himself, have come to have great respect for Moses and for Yahweh, and they willingly heap great wealth on the Israelites when they request it. Pharaoh is seemingly the only one who is still asking, “Who is Yahweh? I don’t know him.” He is appearing increasingly to his own people as a madman.

**Set Apart Ones** – The Lord warns Pharaoh that He will make a definite distinction between His people and the Egyptians when He sends His tenth and final plague. His people are set apart for His own purpose. And Moses tells Pharaoh that every knee will bow to him and that every tongue will confess that Yahweh is God.

**Instructions for the Passover Meal** – Chapter 12 seems to be an interruption in the narrative. Moses records in great detail for his readers how the Passover meal was to be prepared and eaten on the night that the tenth plague was to come. He amplifies the length of this because he knows it will be an instructional piece for the readers of his day, i.e. the Israelites who have wandered for 40 years in the desert and are about to enter the Promised Land. He shows that God took the time to prepare the people of Israel *before* they were free for how they were to rightly worship Him once they *were* free. These instructions were both a promise of imminent freedom and a pattern of how the people were to worship God:  **the Passover meal would be a means to worship God as they were created to do so.**

**A New Beginning** – Moses tells the people that this month, i.e. the month in which they were delivered, was to be the first month of the year for them from now on. It is an “in the beginning” moment: *“in the beginning God created the nation of Israel”,* so to speak.

**The Passover Lamb** – The Israelites were to choose a spotless lamb or baby goat for sacrifice and bring it into their homes for four days, probably for observation to make sure it truly was without blemish of any kind. At the end of the four days, at exactly the same time, people in every home in Israel will raise the knife to kill their sacrifice and shed its blood.

**Marking the Doorposts and the Lintel** – Each home was to have some of the blood from the sacrifice placed on the two doorposts and the lintel above the door. (Note that in doing so, the people were essentially making the sign of the cross.) Remember that we are reading a “birth narrative”. When the Israelites leave Egypt, they will literally go through a doorway that is covered in blood. Not only that, but we will see later in the narrative that a sprig of hyssop was used to apply the blood. Hyssop is referred to in the Old Testament in cleansing rituals and other similar contexts—but the *only* place that it is mentioned in the New Testament is at the crucifixion of Christ, when the soldiers lifted up a sprig of hyssop dipped in wine for Him to drink.

**Bitter Herbs** – Bitter herbs were to be included in the Passover meal. These were meant to be a regular reminder to them of the bitterness of bondage. This seems a little strange to us because who wants to be reminded of slavery? Just remember how prone *we* are to forget how bad our own particular “bondage” was; when difficulties come our way, we can look back at our previous way of life with rose colored glasses. This is precisely what the Israelites will be tempted to do during the upcoming years of wilderness wandering. They needed the constant reminder of how hard it had been during the years of slavery so they would not forget what God had delivered them out of.

**Unleavened Bread** – Another component of the Passover meal was unleavened bread. Moses went to some length to say that the people were to search their houses diligently for seven days to make sure that there was absolutely no yeast left lying around. Why? Yeast always represented sin in the Old Testament and in most places in the New Testament as well. In particular, the Israelites were to leave behind the “leaven of Egypt”. Yeast in this instance was a metaphor for how the sinfulness of Egypt spreads. So the Lord was telling them not to allow the sinfulness of Egypt to come with them when they left. [Jesus took the metaphor and turned it around in the New Testament: He used yeast as a metaphor for how the kingdom of Heaven spreads and grows, i.e. yeast was a picture of the fruitfulness and multiplication of the good yeast of the New Covenant, which is often associated with the Holy Spirit.] They were to be free from any taint of sin…just as Jesus Christ would be free from any taint of sin.

**Pictures of Christ** – So we see that the elements involved in the Passover meal were symbolic of Christ. He is the spotless Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the Door, opening the way to God. It is His blood applied to our lives that allows God to “pass over” our sin.