

**God will Make a Way**  
**Ex 11-14**

Well brothers and sisters, that is the triumphant finish to the story of Moses. The people of Israel have been freed from slavery in Egypt and are safely on the other side of the Red Sea and Pharaoh and his army have been destroyed.

Now, you know and I know that Moses' story continues on from here, but the events we saw enacted in this morning's drama cause the story of Moses' - to transform into the story of Israel... with Moses as their leader.

And indeed, that reality is reflected in the closing words of Ex 14:31 *"When the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant."*

That's a significant change that has taken place, remember how they rejected Moses when he tried to settle a dispute between two of them?

Remember how Moses was worried Israel would not listen to him or believe him. Remember how they blamed him for making their situation worse with Pharaoh?

Even when they had left Egypt, when Pharaoh pursued them, they turned on Moses and said *"leaving Egypt was your stupid idea and its going to get us killed!"*

So, a profound change has occurred for Israel to accept Moses as God's servant and their leader. So, let's take a closer look at the two events; the death of the firstborn and the parting of the Red Sea, which helped to facilitate this.

So, the first event, the death of the firstborn, is the tenth mighty act of God and the culmination of the previous nine. But don't think it's simply a continuation of the plagues, there are a few important characteristics which set it apart.

First, this act would be successful in liberating the people, because God had decreed that it would be so (Ex 11:1), just as God decreed the previous acts would not.

Second, this act of judgement would be performed by God himself - without any symbolic act performed by Moses or Aaron with their staffs or hands stretched out over Egypt.

This is inverted from the three prior mighty acts where there is no announcement to Pharaoh but they are still enacted through a symbolic action from Moses or Aaron. And just as those unannounced acts completed the three groupings of three plagues, this act, announced by Moses but performed by God, brings the whole group of mighty acts to a close.

With the prior nine acts God has given Pharaoh and Egypt ample warning and sufficient time to heed His command and let His people go, but they have not. Pharaoh's heart was hardened to give God the opportunity to display His mighty power to His people, showing He is greater than all that was vital and sacred to life in Egypt.

But now, it is time to bring judgement on Pharaoh and deliverance for Israel, it is time for God's final mighty act. So,

in Ex 11:4 Yahweh says to Moses *"about midnight, I... will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die..."*

Now it's easy to confuse the results of the final mighty act with the act itself – so to clarify, the mighty act is Yahweh himself coming down and walking the land. The result will be the death of all firstborn both human and livestock. Yahweh's presence is the judgement.

And it's not about showing His power is superior. He's done that already. The purpose is as He says in Ex 12:12 *"I will pass through Egypt... strike down the firstborn of both people and animals and I will bring judgement on all the gods of Egypt!"*

This is significant because Pharaoh was believed to be the son of the sun-god Ra. incarnate presence of the gods, the son of Ra the sun-god, and many animals in Egypt were believe to represent the gods as well – especially cattle.

You see all the previous nine mighty acts made use of some aspect of nature; the river, frogs, flies, darkness... as a very

visible medium or a means of illustrating Yahweh's power. But now Yahweh's presence will descend and simply take back the spirit of life that is gifted from Him.

So, this is the third characteristic that sets this mighty act apart. It's a spiritual unseen immaterial judgement, which is why it happens at midnight when no one can see. It's hidden, secret, shrouded in mystery. There's no medium by which we see it happen. Because Yahweh is I AM who I AM, who not only controls all nature but is completely beyond it.

So, it's impossible to symbolize His presence through some aspect of nature... the way the inferior gods of Egypt were symbolized, and this how Yahweh judges those gods.

However, continuing with the inverting trend, the tenth mighty act requires a symbol to identify those who belong to God's people, for Yahweh had promised that this judgment, like the previous six mighty acts, would not fall on the Israelites. And this is the fourth distinguishing characteristic.

You see in the previous six plagues God utilized the forces of nature and simply set a boundary to contain those natural forces and spare His people.

However, the tenth plague is not some natural force – it is the presence of Yahweh himself, and it not brings justice upon Pharaoh and Egypt, it also establishes that belonging to God's people is more than just a geographical distinction, it's a matter of their obedience, faith and trust in His promise.

So, God commands each Israelite household must sacrifice a lamb, take its blood and paint it on the door frames of their houses. This is the symbol which identifies the residents of that house as God's people and God will pass-over that house.

The Israelites do as God commands and their firstborn sons and animals are protected from Yahweh's presence and judgement, but perhaps more importantly they've confirmed they belong to Yahweh through their response of obedience and faith and trust.

Egypt however is judged and punished for what it had done to Israel, for Pharaoh's policy of infanticide. Remember how he commanded the death of all Hebrew baby boys? And when the midwives refused to cooperate, he conscripted the Egyptian people to carry it out... Take any of the Hebrew baby boys they saw and throw them into the Nile River.

Egypt had killed the descendants of Abraham, the recipients of God's promise that he would "*curse the one who curses you...*" So, the Egyptians are now paid back, as God promised - with the death of their own firstborn sons.

And it's important to remember this brothers and sisters, in case we think it was the severity of God's tenth and final mighty act that secured Israel's freedom... That the strategy to free Israel was sending plagues of increasing severity until Pharaoh finally gave in... and unfortunately it had to take the death of his firstborn son to finally break Pharaoh's resolve.

But that's not correct. Yahweh has said many times in this story that his mighty acts would not bring Israel's freedom but

would display His mighty power... but this tenth and final mighty act would succeed, not from severity, but because Yahweh has decreed it would. So, there is a lot we can learn from this tenth mighty act.

It highlights God's sovereignty, His distinctive Holiness, His justice, what it means to belong to God, and perhaps most pertinent for ourselves... that the final judgement is not cataclysmic natural disaster but standing in the presence of God Himself and that without something which distinguishes us as His people – we will not be spared in His presence.

Now, the second event we need to look at is the parting of the Red Sea. This is another awesome display of Yahweh's control over powerful natural forces, just as the previous nine mighty acts were. But this time it occurs in such a way that all of Israel can witness it and experience it as deliverance.

Because if you think about the previous mighty acts, Israel didn't experience them in a direct and significant way. Unless they lived close to the Nile River, they would have only heard

about the first plague that turned the river to blood. They may have experienced a shortage of fish afterwards, like we experience supply chain disruption because of some far-off natural disaster, but it wasn't a local experience for them.

And if you think about what was local for them, it would have been only plagues the frogs and the gnats that Israel would have experienced. But it would have been similar to how we might experience some record-breaking snowfall or heatwave where we live. Sure, its impressive, we've never seen the like, But you don't really get the full scope of all the frogs and all the gnats in all the land, you only hear about it.

So, while the plagues were significant, and effectively made the point that Yahweh - not the gods of Egypt - were in control of natural forces, they were primarily experienced by the Egyptians and Pharaoh - while Israel would have only heard about them, especially with the last plague that resulted in their release.

So Israel actually needs a first-hand demonstration and experience of God's mighty power because they have only heard about and not really seen it first-hand. This becomes very evident when they see Pharaoh and his army pursuing them. They do not have enough experience with Yahweh to draw on in order to stay calm and trust that He will save them.

For all they have heard about Yahweh's power over natural forces, a man with a sword standing in front of you ready to kill you is a bit more intimidating.

So Yahweh has arranged this whole scenario to give Israel an experience of His deliverance and saving power. He has Moses turn them around, and take the long and winding route out of Egypt – that leads to a dead end by the Red Sea. He hardens Pharaoh's heart one more time so that Pharaoh comes out with the army to try and capture them.

He even lets the tension build up for Israel by moving the pillar of Cloud in between His people and the Egyptians and He

takes all evening using the wind to blow in and part the Red Sea... it wasn't an instant parting of the waters.

And even when the way through was clear, God lets the Egyptians to pursue them and chased after them into the sea. Of course, this only increased Israel's anxiety and fear, but it was all part of God's plan, moving all the pieces into place... and then at just the right time God intervenes.

The wheels on the chariots inexplicably jam up, military precision and co-ordination break down and confusion breaks out – but... it becomes very clear to the Egyptians that Yahweh himself is fighting against them, and they attempt to flee out of the sea. But Yahweh tells Moses to raise his hand and bring the waters back over the dry land and Pharaoh and his entire army are swept away and drown.

Up to this point Israel had been released from slavery but... they weren't completely free – now not only have they experienced being released, but before their very eyes they have seen Yahweh obliterate the power which had kept them

enslaved. It is there face down in the water, washing up on the shore of the sea... they are truly free!

They are freed to respond to Yahweh, and they are no longer afraid of the power of Egypt, instead as the scripture says *"They feared Yahweh... and put their trust in Him and in His servant Moses"*

And this is how God has gained glory for Himself through Pharaoh. Not only did the Egyptians acknowledge His greatness as they fled in defeat, but now Israel feared God instead of fearing Egypt.

And I pray brothers and sisters that as you have heard about these great and mighty acts of Yahweh this morning, as you have seen them presented to you, that the Holy Spirit would use this to stir up the reverence, respect, and awestruck wonder that is the fear of Yahweh within your hearts. That you would be amazed at what God can do and how He works all things together to achieve His plans and purposes.

And I want to encourage you this morning to have faith and trust in Yahweh that He will work through all things in your life in order to bring you, just as He brought the Israelites, into a situation where you go from simply hearing about the great and mighty power of God to experiencing it and seeing it demonstrated firsthand for yourself.

But – its not quite a direct and straightforward application of this story to your life as you might think. We can't simply identify the struggles and difficult people our lives as our own personal Egypt and Pharoah and take this story as an assurance that God will somehow part the waters of difficulty for us and lead us to success and bring misfortune and destruction on our enemies.

Just as God had Israel take the long and winding route out of Egypt to bring them to the place where He had determined how He would show them His power, there is a longer and winding road we must take to apply this story to our lives.

Starting with the fact that these events have already been memorialized in order to pass on the experience from the first generation of Israelites to every generation after that.

Not only have they been recorded in scripture, but there was a song composed about Yahweh's victory at the Red Sea. Moses' sister Miriam put this event to song, and the people would sing about it and remember it and pass on what they had experienced to the next generation through this song.

And it was effective – because we see references to this event showing up in other songs in the scripture, like the Psalms... such as Psalm 77, 106, and 136. And Israel didn't just remember this event, it became an event which defined who they were as a people.

In Acts 7, when Stephen is testifying to God's work in the past this whole story is recounted in great detail and these events are recalled in vs. 36 as the "*wonders and signs that God performed in Egypt and at the Red Sea,*" and everyone knew exactly what he was speaking of.

And this is not just because Moses' sister Miriam wrote a song about it... but because there was a sacred meal that God had instituted to go along with it.

When God gave Moses and Aaron the instructions to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the doorframe, He also commanded that Israel prepare and eat a very specific meal that evening... and God commanded that this Passover meal was to be eaten every year at the same time once they arrived in the Promised Land.

And as testimony to the effectiveness with which this meal has shaped the identity of what it means to be a part of the people of Israel – to this day everyone knows the Jewish people celebrate the Passover meal.

So both of these events were used for hundreds of years as memorial events to shape and form the identity of the people of Israel and help them understand where they came from and who they were and what Yahweh had done for them.

And when God eventually sent Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus – who is fully God himself – celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples, and then transformed it into the Lord's Supper. Just like Moses story transforms into Israel's story – the Passover meal becomes the Lord's Supper.

And we know how this happened, because when we celebrate the Lord's supper we say *“Jesus took the Passover bread and he broke it and said this is my body broken for you, and after supper He took the Passover cup and said this cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood”*

But its good to be reminded that this means the blood of the Passover lamb becomes Jesus blood, and painting it on the door frame of the house becomes Jesus' blood on the cross, the presence of Yahweh walking through the land becomes standing in the presence of Yahweh on judgement day when we die... And if we have the blood of Jesus on us, then God's judgement on our sin will pass over us, because our sins are forgiven and we are released from slavery to sin, and we will pass through His final judgement unharmed.



So, this is the longer winding road which it takes to apply this story to our lives this morning.

And it's as good a time as any to ask ourselves – have we responded in obedience and faith and trust in God's command to believe in His Son Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins... how have we demonstrated that?

Well brothers and sisters, it starts with praying to the Lord Jesus to confess our sins – our sins of unbelief in Him, disobedience to His ten commandments, and things like anger, greed, pride, lust, laziness, gluttony, and enviousness that we have in our thoughts, or feelings, or actions.

But its also good to understand – and this is part of the application this morning... just as the Israelites showed their obedience and faith and trust through painting the blood of the lamb on their doorframe, we show our obedience and faith and trust in the effectiveness of Jesus' blood to forgive us and protect us by making sure that we eat and drink the Lord's Supper.

And then we are released from the grip of sin which holds us back from worshiping God, just as Pharoah prevented Israel from going to worship God. Remember that brothers and sisters – when you don't want to worship God... that is sin holding you back, enslaving you!

Which is why we need the application of the second event at the Red Sea, which follows the protection from God's judgement, forgiveness from sin, and the release to worship God... where we experience God breaking the power that sin and the enemy has over our lives.

So let me speak something in faith over your lives this morning brothers and sisters.

The Lord Jesus is going to work through your life circumstances to bring about an experience of having the Holy Spirit break the power of sin over a particular area of your life. So, I want to encourage you, if you are in a situation where it seems like God is leading you the long way or the wrong way around to where you thought you were going...

Or if your circumstances seem to have brought you up against a dead end where you are trapped, or you're in a place where you are caught between what is pursuing you and blocked by what is preventing you from moving forward...

I want to encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see the way forward that the Lord will open up for you, and the courage to step into it.

And I especially want to encourage you to walk by faith and not by sight because we might be seeing things wrong. We might be thinking God's leading us the wrong way when it's exactly where we need to be going...

We might be thinking it's our circumstances that need to change in order for us to find healing or peace or happiness when those circumstances are revealing our failings and brokenness...

We might be thinking someone is an enemy but we need to forgive them as Christ forgave us...

Whatever your life situations and circumstances make be, the Lord Jesus is going to open a way in it – so pay attention... pray – attention, watch for it, discern it, confirm it with your pastor if you are wondering about it, and then step into it and pass through it so that the Holy Spirit can flood into you and break the power of sin that keeps dragging you back to disobedience and unbelief and preventing you from worshipping the Lord.

And then you, like the people of Israel in the story today, will be free to fear Yahweh – and put your trust in Him and follow His Son – our Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord make a way for this to happen in your lives brothers and sisters. Amen