

Passover Teaching – Passover in Egypt

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Passover and the Messianic Message

How many of you guys know—of course you already know Passover is coming up, right? And as I just said in the announcements, don't forget we have a free Messianic Yeshua-centered Passover Haggadah. It's a walkthrough of the Seder on the website under our resources tab. We've gotten a lot of great feedback from it, so take advantage of that free resource. It's available at foundedintruth.com under resources.

And because Passover is coming up, I wanted to shift gears and take the opportunity, and I felt it was appropriate to revisit what Passover means to us as believers. Because as believers, there's a completely different paradigm of the depth and the meaning and the sacrifice and the freedom—the message of freedom that goes along with Passover as demonstrated by Yeshua. And not just that, but also I want to take the time to remember the original Passover in Egypt. It meant something very, very, very special to the Israelites at that time. It meant redemption. It meant salvation. It meant a new status apart from slavery.

And the thing about Passover is it became a type of motif in the biblical narrative that was recurring. It became a pattern of what God's redemptive power looked like and felt like. This is the story that actually sets the foundation for Israelite identity apart from slavery in the Hebrew Bible. It's a story that sets the foundation for the giving of the constitution of the Israelite nation, the Torah at Mount Sinai. This story, I feel, is sometimes not given the emphasis it needs. And that's what I hope we're going to discover today.

The Macro and Micro of Scripture

If we think about it, I love getting into the details of the Bible. Everybody loves to get into the details, dig around and get their nails dirty with the Bible. I love to dissect Hebrew phrases and Hebrew words and being very intimate at a micro level of the Bible. But I've also come to appreciate the macro view of the narrative in the story. Viewing the Bible from a helicopter view, the big, broad narrative, seeing the broad strokes of where the biblical authors take us is a perspective that has honestly changed my life as a believer, as well as changed how I view and appreciate the Bible in a way that's helpful to further the vocation of being God's image bearers on earth.

And so we're going to get nerdy for a moment. And I promise you, this has to do with Passover. Everybody hear me? Promise.

Torah as Story, Not Just Law

The Torah. The Torah is the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And Torah is, debatably, translated as what word? Law. There we go. Law. The law. And I say debatably because I don't feel that that's a good translation necessarily. Instructions is a better translation, but Torah means instructions. We'll leave it at that. It means instructions. But even that's a bit general.

And the reason I bring this up is that many times in the West, in English, when we look at the Torah, we see law. Sometimes we end up looking at the Torah as only a collection of books that contain a bunch of laws. And the trap that many fundamentalists sometimes get caught up in is that they think it's easy to turn to the Torah and make it into a checklist of commandments. That if they can check off enough of them, then they have reached a righteous status of holiness before God and man, right? We've talked about this before.

And the issue with taking the Torah and simply turning it into just a checklist that you mark off is that the Torah is intentionally vague on most of the commandments it gives. It's hard to make an exact checklist to mark off and, poof, I'm righteous, right? Yeshua seemed to actually have a big problem with that, with viewing the Torah in that way. And he throws that back in the Pharisees' face because that's what they did. That's why you have different sects of Pharisees with different interpretations because they came together to discuss how to fulfill the Torah differently.

The Danger of Checklist Righteousness

And so, yeah, you have this mentality in the first century, possibly even today, where you make the Bible into a checklist that you can mark off, and if you mark it off well enough, you gain access to God's blessings. We sometimes have a yearning to exploit God's blessings by checking off a list. And that's exactly what the book of Job is dealing with, right?

Job is such a neat book, a daunting book if you're unprepared for it. What's the story of Job? Job is experiencing curses, right? Is his life a life that you would really want to live through? No, I'd rather not. And then the house falls. Everything just boils. And so Job is experiencing what we would call curses. But was Job disobedient? Was he unrighteous?

Job's friends in the story were right to suggest the things that they did. They said, "Job, you must have sinned. You must be disobedient to God." Why would they say this? Well, because the Torah says that these things only happen to you. You experience curses when you're disobedient to the law. And if you're obedient to the law, then you get what? Blessings, right? And of course, we know God has a huge issue with blanketing that type of logic. In the story, God says: "Who do you think you are? Don't you know who I am? Do you really think that you can simply exploit my blessings by making a list? Man, I'm the one who fishes out Leviathan. Anyway, you cannot exploit my grace and mercy and blessing. I am the giver of that. You are not the demander of it, right? If you're following me, I'm trying to articulate that in a way that's not confusing."

The Beauty of Biblical Ambiguity

And the one thing about the Torah—which is sometimes vague about most of its commandments, though not all—that I find so beautiful is that it's actually meant to prompt a discussion instead of giving a blanket answer. Do you ever realize that? It's actually meant to prompt a discussion among the communities to meditate on God's word, to come together and talk about it. Why do you think there are so many, even before Yeshua, so many different Jewish communities with different levels of halakha? Because they came together to discuss the Word of God, to bring out its beauty. How are we going to fulfill these commandments? And as we know even here, sometimes it doesn't always look exactly the same, right?

It's meant to prompt a conversation. And the New Testament also testifies to this. That's what the logic of the Pharisees was in the first century, right? Everyone had their different stances of how they're going to bring the fulfillment of the Torah. But here's the thing about the Torah. It's not just laws and instructions, right? It's not. The law isn't necessarily a law book. I would even submit that it shouldn't even be considered primarily legislative material.

The Torah contains laws and commandments and precepts that were given to the Israelites 5,000 years ago that still have absolutely edifying value today. But the Torah actually defines itself as the genre of narrative, I would submit, not legislation. The first 62 chapters of the Torah are not filled with God-given commandments. It's filled with a story, narrative. It starts as a story, and that's the context I would submit as the genre of Torah.

Commandments Within the Story

The story has commandments in it, good commandments. Lorenzo—don't kill anybody. Rick—don't kill anybody. David, is that a good commandment? That's a great commandment. Don't steal, right? Those are good ones that should be obeyed. Don't gossip, right? Oh man, do we go there? Because we never do that, right? Gossip is so easy to light the world on fire with the fires from hell itself through our tongues as [James 3](#) says. So easy. Miriam and Aaron—not only is there a commandment, there's a demonstration of how God feels about this, right? Thank God no one ever gets caught doing that one.

How about one of our favorites? The review of the Sabbath commandment and the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy: "You are no longer slaves." That's why God gives the commandment of Sabbath according to Deuteronomy. Because you're not slaves anymore. Because you're free. Stop working 24-7. Stop the pursuit of the world around you. The sign that you are mine is that you stop and find rest in one day a week. The Sabbath, which launches a trajectory that lands us in the eternal rest that is only found in Yeshua.

Commandments in the Torah are meant to be obeyed and are a blessing. But the Torah also lays the roadmap for the rest of the Bible. Did you know that the Torah actually starts out with poetry? It's a Hebrew poem. [Genesis 1](#). A beautiful poetic reenactment of creation where God's free act to commune with mankind births creation itself. To bring forth good and give mankind an actual mission to be co-rulers in this world as his images.

The Foundation of the Biblical Narrative

The climax of [Genesis 1](#) is not God creating the sea or the fish or the air or the planets or any of that. He creates all of that so that mankind can dwell there and he can have a place to commune with mankind. [Genesis 1](#) was always about mankind. And we're going to take a journey to the Exodus story, but we first have to review. There's something about the entire narrative before God starts giving commandments to Israel. There's something about this section of Scripture that is so important.

And we're going to quickly review these 62 chapters before it, before the Exodus event in [Exodus 12](#). Genesis is placed to preempt the Exodus story. It's intentional. And so the Bible begins on a very macro level, broadly telling the story of creation and broadly telling the story of a flood that wipes all of mankind out, which is filled with, in my opinion, a bit of irony because God sends a flood to wipe out violence, right? God sends divine violence to wipe out earthly violence. Did it work? It still kept coming.

I feel like the biblical author set a landmine early on, and we see a type of motivation where Yeshua gets a foothold for his daunting command. When Yeshua talks about loving his enemies, it makes some of us bitter.

The fact that they're my enemies means I don't like them. I would love for them to go. I would love for another flood. I petition to be on the ark for round two. No one else? Come on? You hook me up? What is it, 14 giraffes? We got a drag on the boat? Let me have them, let's go. I want to watch all that. But we see in the beginning that didn't work. It didn't solve the problem of violence. It didn't solve the problem of hatred amongst mankind. It didn't solve the problem of bitterness. Just killing everyone didn't solve the issue. Love your enemies—that's the actual solution that Yeshua gives. And oh, does it burn us up inside.

Love Your Enemies

When we move past the scene of the flood, we move toward the scene where the entire world ends up joining together in this centralized pursuit of power and building the Tower of Babel. And then they leave babbling. God scatters everyone, divides the languages up. And it's neat because I love talking about the Bible and the different sections of the Bible as being a film that's being directed, because maybe I like film. Whenever you watch film, it's an art to see how the film is directed, whether it's the music that's going along with it or the different camera angles. You ever notice how many camera angles are in a scene? It's very complicated. The authors—the directors of this story—are trying to direct this story for a reason.

And after the Tower of Babel, the camera lens is macro. It's dealing with floods. It's dealing with nations, creation, the big—all the nations of the world being scattered. And then the camera lens just zooms into earth, fast and heavy. And it comes up to focus on one man from everybody, all the nations, Abram. Amidst all of the chaos in the world with nations, the camera shifts to one man. And through this one man, God is going to bring forth his kingdom. His reign will once again be fully realized in creation. His kingdom—not of violence, might, and oppression in the name of worldly allegiance, but of a nation of blessing.

And it will make such an impact when it happens that every tongue and tribe would experience it. It would be so contagious that every tongue and every tribe would experience the blessing through Abram. It would impact all people in creation. The story of the Pentateuch sets the trajectory of the call for a people to live out God's kingdom from their hearts without a checklist of commandments. In the narrative of Abraham in [Genesis 12](#), that's what is built up. Abraham lived by faith. Paul speaks a lot about that, doesn't he? Many times people want to go back to Mount Sinai, and the truth is the biblical authors are calling us back to the promise in the heart of Abraham. The story at this point with Abraham is getting good.

The Biggest Story

But then a few generations later, the descendants of Abraham find themselves in slavery in a land called Egypt. We enter into the book of Exodus. All of the narrative—the 50 chapters or 62 leading up to when the commandments are beginning to be given to Israel for Passover—all of the prior chapters through Genesis have led us to this point. Just because it's a different book name and there's a page that we turn doesn't mean that it's not the same story. We're still continuing forward.

The author spent less than a page to describe the entire creation of the universe and the cosmos and the creation account in Genesis. Less than a page to describe how God did everything. Less than a page. It's like this big. But here in the book of Exodus, they spend an entire book telling us about Israel leaving Egypt. Do you see the emphasis? Where is the energy put? It's as if Genesis was the introduction, the very beginning of the movie, and now it's actually beginning. The bigger story, the bigger impact, the big point.

Chapter 12 in Exodus is when God begins to give Israel commandments, dealing with Passover. Before this, the story is leading us to this point. God hasn't given any commandments really to Israel yet. Not so much. Rashi, the famous rabbi from the Middle Ages, he argues that chapter 12 of Exodus should have been the true beginning of the Torah. And he ties that in because how does the chapter begin? "This is the beginning of months for you." Some argue it isn't until chapter 20, the Ten Commandments—the Decalogue. Regardless, this is the pinnacle story.

All of the stories in Genesis stop here and the narrative slows down. The tempo of the storytelling comes to a halt. There is slavery. Israel cries out. God answers. God redeems. God calls you His. And a redeemed Israel is now birthed from it all. They're birthed to become a nation of priests. The kingdom of God. The light that will infect all nations. The infectious

image bearers that would actually fulfill the commandments to be fruitful and multiply and take dominion over creation in the name of God's name.

It's a big moment in the story of the Bible. This is the biggest story in the Old Testament, I believe. Right here. The one we're about to memorialize in a few weeks when we sit down at the table. It's the biggest story. It's the one that had the most impact and shockwaves throughout the entire Bible. Every other story is either leading up to this one or is carried forward by the momentum or the shockwave of it—the Exodus story.

And the rest of the story of the Old Testament is how? Despite the Exodus story, despite having the Torah and hearing God's voice at Mount Sinai, this nation failed. The Torah was not enough to make them into the people that displayed God's kingdom. That's the story of the Old Testament, the story of the Hebrew Bible.

And then we turn the page, and there's a little blank page, I don't know why that's there, but we turn that one too, and then there's Matthew chapter 1. Here is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Jesus the King. I love that. I think we have a verse 17 of Matthew chapter 1. I think we have a slot for that. It says something that's really neat, and I think we've discussed it before. I'm not going to get too into it. But here's what it says: There were 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 from David to the exile to Babylon, and 14 from the exile to the Messiah—from Abraham to exile to Christ. That's the trajectory we're moving forward from, and something about Christ is going to fulfill that trajectory. That's what Paul talks about, circling back to Abraham. And here we are.

Joseph and Mordecai

And so the story of Passover begins when, of course, Joseph is sold into slavery. But through faithfulness, despite chaos, despite the unknown, despite temptation, he is elevated to second only to Pharaoh.

As we know, we celebrate Purim every year as a celebration of the story of Esther. But there have been some neat connections noted between the story of Esther and the story of Joseph. We have two men—Joseph and Mordecai—both were oppressed, both were faithful to their leaders, both would not yield. Of course, Joseph in that awkward moment when Potiphar's wife is like, "Hey, hey," and he resists her request. And Mordecai when he refuses to yield to the request of Haman. Both of them face persecution because of their decision to be faithful. Joseph is thrown into jail. Mordecai is told he's going to watch all of his people die as a result of his unyielding decision.

And a situation occurs when the king becomes sympathetic towards them as his servants. Joseph helps the Pharaoh out with his dream and the whole famine thing. And Mordecai is elevated through Esther, through her boldness. And both of them receive a signet ring from the king, and both are established as second to the king—the advisor. It's just neat. The authors of the Bible were not dumb farmers just making stuff up. They were incredibly skilled at telling the story that leads us to the fullness of our king, the Christ.

And Joseph becomes this high-position ruler in Egypt, and his two Egyptian sons get adopted into the fold of Jacob, his father. His two Egyptian sons become two of the tribes of Israel. Isn't that neat? That is neat. Joseph has an Egyptian wife. And his Egyptian children get grafted into Israel as authentic sons of Jacob. And that may trigger some of us who are still focused on politics right now. But if you're focused on the Bible, that should be exciting. It's a shadow of something great and big.

The Pharaoh's Fear

The tribes of Israel then settle in Egypt and they multiply. And they continue multiplying until they have this huge presence in Egypt.

But then something happens in this story. Exodus chapter 1, verse 8: "Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt." So a Pharaoh arises in the story, and he doesn't care about Joseph. He doesn't know Joseph. All he cares about is his own security as king. All he sees is a threat to his kingdom. He sees a threat to the security of his country. Man, the Bible hits home sometimes, doesn't it? So what does the king do? The king has power, but now he's vulnerable. His power is threatened.

So in the South, if you begin to acquire things—let's say assets, money—what's the next thing you tend to buy? A gun, right? If you have assets that you don't want people to mess with, you better go in, right? It's the way of the South.

It is what it is—to protect what you have acquired. It is a fleshly preventative measure to ensure you don't lose what you have. And stick a pin in these themes for me of Exodus because we're going to see them again in Israel and in the book of Matthew when we're going to discover another king that does the exact same thing.

Exodus 1, verse 11. So what happens next? So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor. And they built Pithom and Ramses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread. You're supposed to giggle. It's funny, right? So the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly. They made

their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields. The Egyptians worked them ruthlessly. So the king begins to oppress the Israelites so they cannot get too big to threaten him. He's using his power to oppress in order to resolve his fear and insecurity. It's the way of the world in all great nations, right? But what happens? They keep multiplying. Work them harder, make their lives miserable. But what are we going to do about them multiplying? We can't stop them?

The Midwives' Courage

Verse 15 is when the king has a solution. And the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives whose names are Shifra and Pua: "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth, on a delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him, but if it is a girl, let her live." The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do. They let the boys live.

Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, like, "Why have you done this thing? Why have you let the boys live?" And the midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women. They are vigorous and give birth before we even arrive."

So something I believe about the Bible is because we have authors of the Bible who didn't just scribble a bunch of junk down. They were very tactful in how they phrased things. And so when you feel an emotion while reading the Bible, it's appropriate to acknowledge that. This is kind of funny, and that's okay, right? It is the way the narrative goes. It is a mockery of the world power. It is a mockery of what is compared to the beast system later in the Psalms and in Daniel. The beast system that would overtake the world and use the allegiance that it has from its people to taunt them with greed so that it can gain power and oppress weaker nations or anyone that would threaten that type of power. Okay, so this is a hint of what Revelation is all about. The mocking of how small the beast system truly is to a kingdom that is not even of this earth. Right? And so I love it when we laugh. It's funny. Hebrew women, right? It's so neat.

So the midwives were asked about the children, and they kind of told a little fib—or maybe they weren't lying—but either way they saved the children. Again, we'll see this repeating theme elsewhere in the Bible in the coming weeks. Verse 22. So this king wants to protect his power so much that he would murder baby boys of the people he is trying to oppress. The children are acceptable collateral for his security.

The Ark and Divine Irony

And the story continues: We know when a baby boy who comes to be called Moshe or Moses is born. What happens with Moses is his mother places him in an ark. What it is called in Hebrew is the same word in Hebrew as the ark of Noah—the place where salvation and life will birth from amidst the chaos of the waters. And she places him in the river in an ark. And what happens next? Pharaoh's daughter, of course—no one else—Pharaoh's daughter, right? Pharaoh's daughter sees the little basket ark floating down the river and she finds a Hebrew boy in it. Again, the Bible is a narrative, which means it's a film being directed and articulated a certain way. It's taking you on a journey. If you see irony or something that makes you smirk, it's intentional and appropriate.

And what happens when, of all the women in Egypt, Pharaoh's daughter finds this baby boy? Exodus chapter 2, verse 7. This is so great! A baby. Go find a Hebrew woman to nurse him. She went and got his birth mother and paid her. It's so good. And it's just a neat thing in the text that I appreciate. So Moses grows older and becomes a son of Pharaoh's house. A type of adoption takes place. We have this theme where Moses kind of becomes a part of the world so that he can redeem or be the one that redeems those of the world, right?

Plagues and the Undoing of Order

Moses grows older. He sees a Hebrew slave being abused, and so he kills the Egyptian and runs away from his home to the land of Midian and becomes a shepherd. He sees a burning bush, and from the burning bush, God speaks to him and tells him he's going to free the Israelites from slavery. And we know the story. Moses comes back and tells Pharaoh, "Let my people go." And Pharaoh says, no, no. And then what happens? The plagues begin. The mighty acts of our God are on display in the narrative, in the story.

And I know today's message may or may not be different. Today we're talking about the words written to us by the amazing men and women of the Bible inspired by the Holy Spirit, right? Is that okay? So we're going to read some Bible. This collective Bible is a library that was God-ordained for us to look at, discuss, meditate on, and value for the purpose of showing us the grandness of who our King is. And so we might get a bit nerdy with the plagues. And if that's not your cup of tea, I apologize. So many layers. The plagues are just so neat. And I feel like the biblical authors had this intention when they wrote this.

So what some Jewish and Christian theologians and scholars have noticed in this section of Exodus that speaks about the 10 plagues is a number of what I would call hyperlinks—connections—these almost-intentional uses of uncommon Hebrew words that directly tie the

plagues on Egypt back to the creation story of [Genesis 1](#). And so I would like to display this. It's an opinion, and I find it valuable and neat, so I'm going to share it. But here in this story, despite the connections back to [Genesis 1](#), we're not seeing a creation story. We're going to see a de-creation story here, where creation is pulled back in all of the elements, a reversal of [Genesis 1](#). We've discussed this in the past, and I think we'll read it here in a little bit. God's wrath, as spoken about in Jeremiah chapter 4, for example, depicts the undoing of creation as a result of the sins of Judah. When God allows our sin to fall inward on us, as Romans speaks about, creation in our lives becomes undone. It's reversed. And that's what we're going to see in Egypt, I believe.

Water and Swarms: Creation Reversed

Starting in Exodus chapter 7, verse 19: This same word that appears in the opening chapters of Genesis when God creates the seas is the word mikvah. Well, we all know that word, mikvah. It refers to the gatherings of water. And it's unusual that it's used to depict the blood in the Exodus account, because it's as if he threw it in there at the end. He's describing all different types of water. But yeah, in [Genesis 1:20](#), I'm not sure if I even have a slide for that, but it says, "And God saw that it was good." The difference here is that in Genesis, God is not altering the primordial waters of the deep. He's organizing and managing them. In the Exodus account, the gatherings are subjected to something that is out of order. This isn't natural or orderly. This isn't how God created the world. The water has now turned into something it should not be. Blood. Chaos.

What are the next three plagues? Well, we have frogs, lice, and flies—three different types of creatures: one associated with water, one associated with the earth, and one associated with the air. In Exodus chapter 7, verse 3, we see with the frogs: the Nile shall swarm. It's an interesting word choice. The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and onto your bed and into your houses of your servants and your people and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. Right? The cover—golly—crawling up your leg.

So the word here for swarm is the same word that's used in [Genesis 1:20](#): "And God said, let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures, right?" It's just kind of neat, that word choice, in the water. Another thing here: where are the swarms in Genesis supposed to stay? In God's ordered creation account, where are they supposed to stay? In the water. In the water. This is like a scene out of Animal Farm. What are they doing in the house? They're moving in. No one's read that book? Never mind. That's a compelling book about politics I had to read in seventh grade. Okay. The animals are moving in. Disorder. Disorder. It's backwards. Order that we have

in the world and the cosmos in Hebrew thought is directly related to God's reign. And when he retracts, chaos falls in.

Another verse, and it's the same verse, [Genesis 1:20](#). "And God said..." So this word in Hebrew for birds is oph. Oph. You just want to say it.

Right? It's like when you stub your toe. And what's neat about this word is it means birds. And I was trying to reconcile some of these scholars that were suggesting this is the word choice, this is the connection to flies, the plague of flies. What are you talking about? It's birds. They're not the same thing. That's a stretch. I mean, do you ever call out someone's assertion on the Bible? That's a stretch. And then I look at the word. The word oaf can mean bird or insect, flying insect.

With the plague of flies, oaf. It says that the flies entered the homes and the palace everywhere. The flies overtook, the oaf overtook Egypt. What was the vocation given to mankind in [Genesis 1](#)? To rule, to tend, to rule over, take dominion over the animals and the creepy things. When you see that spider in your house, you have a God-given authority over it, the creepy things. Mankind was meant to be the co-rulers over creation. God gave and granted that authority. Bear his image throughout creation. And the image here, though, is the flies have taken dominion over Egypt. Vice versa. Egypt has no dominion over the flies right now. They're everywhere. They're crawling. They're in their homes. They're in chaos.

When the Flies Take Over

[Genesis 1](#), 24 says, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds, livestock and creepy things." The thing about the plague of lice that is so interesting is they literally came from the dust of the earth. The lice came out of the dust of the earth. That's why they're associated with the creepy things of [Genesis 1.24](#). Lice has overtaken the earth, the anti-order of creation. Not only that, one Jewish scholar points out that we know the wall paintings of the Egyptians, they were people that liked to shave their body hair. But they were plagued by the lice. I thought that was neat. I don't know if that's how deep that goes, but it's kind of neat. They were that bad. They didn't care if you had hair or not. You cannot tame, I have lice, I'll shave my hair. No, won't work because you have no dominion. You cannot tame any aspect of creation right now. It is falling in on you.

The plague of pestilence attacked the cattle. Again, the domesticated animals, mankind had dominion to rule over. It was taken away. You're helpless. Man. [Genesis 1](#), 12 speaks of the earth breaking forth with vegetation and all of the green. What specifically does the hail and the

locust take out? Oh, let's go to verse 15, [Exodus 10](#), 15. "Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt."

You have boils corrupting the aesthetic features of the God named Pharaoh and his family. You also have darkness. Darkness is neat plague. It's like something out of a sci-fi movie. I can't pull from my library of sci-fi movies to get a specific example, but the plague of darkness, according to the Torah, was not simply black and no light. Here's what it says, [Exodus 10](#), 21. "Then the Lord said to Moses, stretch your arm out towards the heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt." Okay, he's going to click and turn the sun off. "A darkness to be felt." In Hebrew, the darkness is palpable. You can feel it. That's claustrophobic. You can touch it. Something about it. I don't know, Bush. You can feel it.

Tohu Vavohu: Darkness and Disorder

And if your brain is having trouble comprehending a darkness you can feel, check out the very next verse. You ready? Verse 23. I mean, that's cool. Light and darkness have fallen back from an ordered state to disorder. Tohu Vavohu, right? As we've discussed before. Egypt is experiencing Tohu Vavohu, a time when the universe was not ordered by God, before he formed it. It was chaotic and unformed. You have light and darkness so intertwined with each other that light and darkness are submerged on one another. So I almost picture this Feely darkness around everywhere, but then there's a bubble of light. I don't picture it as light gradually fading into darkness. That's just what I see from the Hebrew—imagine a drop of oil in a glass of water, just light in darkness.

One of the first things God did after he called light forth in [Genesis 1:3](#) is he then separated them and he ordered the light and the darkness to be associated with a time, right? They don't coexist if they're in order. Egypt? Disorder.

The final plague, the death of the firstborn. You can almost hear the echo of [Genesis 1:26](#), God creating man in his image, but here man is not being created. Man is being destroyed. The first human was a male, the firstborn in creation, according to [Genesis 1](#). The retraction of that would, of course, be the firstborn males in Egypt. And then, of course, the army at the sea, all of Egypt.

Ten Utterances, Ten Undoings

If there is a connection between the ten plagues and the creation poem in [Genesis 1](#), I think it's pretty neat. In [Genesis 1](#), the narrator records God speaking throughout the creation account.

And then God said, and then God called—right there are specific moments in [Genesis 1](#) where it's recorded that God spoke. And here they are, I think I have them up here. Ten times God speaks in the opening chapters of the Bible in [Genesis 1](#). Ten divine utterances by which the world was created and ordered. Ten plagues by which creation was undone and disordered in Egypt.

Sin Undoes Creation

[Jeremiah 4](#) has a really neat section describing the conclusion of the sins of Judah. I love this pattern in the Bible. [Jeremiah 4](#) verse 23, here's what it says. It's coming to Judah because of their constant rebellion against God and his ways and his kingdom. It says, "I look at the earth, it is unformed and void. Tohu, v'vohu, at the skies, and their light is gone." When you refuse to allow God's reign in your life, the only next step is going to be the undoing of what his reign has ordered already. And that's the pattern, right? Our sin will always bring forth the undoing of creation in our lives. Why? Because when we hold on to our sin in our life, we make the choice to push God's presence away. We run from it, however that looks.

The Passover

We know what also happens at the evening of the final plague in Exodus chapter 12. Big moment, commandments are gonna start coming. God then commands Israel, he tells them, he says, "Listen, you need to prepare because I'm going to act." He's going to redeem them. His ultimate strength and power are going to be on full display on how he will impact creation for the sake of his kingdom and his people. This is the story that sent shockwaves through the rest of the Bible that we're going to see in the coming weeks. This is the story that the prophets, while Israel was in exile, refer to as the template of how God will finally impact the redemption of all of creation. This is the story that they were drawing off of. This is what to look for in the future. This is how God is going to turn it all around.

The New Testament authors were not shy about showing forth and declaring that this example has been fully realized on such a grander scale in the person of Yeshua. Israel was to take a lamb, don't break its bones, but kill it, and put its blood on the doorposts of your homes. It is through the blood of the lamb that death will not have claim to you. That's the Passover narrative.

But what's interesting is the killing of the lamb was not the fullness of the commandment. That wasn't the only part. It's the part we always focus on. God commanded Israel. He told Israel, he

said, "You must kill the lamb and you must eat its flesh in order for the sacrifice to be complete." They must literally consume the Pesach offering. That's part of the sacrifice. Something about the blood and the flesh completed the symbol of God's victory over slavery and the freedom for the Israelites.

Do you feel the echoes of that? They are to eat bitter herbs so they never forget the bitterness of slavery.

Forgetting Our Freedom

Just because you have been freed. How many of you know that sometimes we take our freedom and victory for granted? Guys, I love it. I love the Bible, and I think this is so beautiful. But I guess I love talking about all the cool stuff in the Bible because I feel like it was given to us, ordained by God, for us to dwell and meditate on and discover the beauty of what God has given to us in the stories. But I don't really care if you leave today knowing more about the Bible. All the neat stuff is cool. I want you to leave here knowing this.

Sometimes we take our freedom and victory in Christ for granted. And sometimes we forget the bitterness of sin. Sometimes we forget what the sound of the serpent is when it whispers in our ears. Sometimes we forget the bad parts of Egypt, but we sure remember what the watermelons taste like, right? How many of us sometimes find ourselves making our way back to Egypt because we have forgotten what we were freed from? We have forgotten the display of a mighty act of our God.

A Greater Redemption

What our God has done for us makes the plagues look so small, so small. Because as magnificent as the plagues were in Egypt, the decreation that took place in Egypt does not compare to the new creation that has taken place on the cross. And we're going to speak next week about how the prophet Jeremiah actually speaks about a time when the messianic Davidic king appears and establishes and rules in God's kingdom. And it will be so grand when this king declares victory over all of the enemies in this present evil age that no one will even refer to God as the God that brought us out of Egypt. That will be so insignificant compared to what this king does. That from that point moving forward, this will be the God that ended the exile once and for all from his presence.

But sometimes we forget. Sometimes I forget. We forget what the love of God is willing to do. We forget what the love of God has done. And I don't know where you're at today, but in this

time leading up to Passover and first fruits—the actualized conclusion to the Passover and Exodus events—I feel it's always appropriate to audit ourselves. [Exodus 12:2](#). This is Rashi's point, right? [Exodus 12:2](#) says, "This month is the beginning of months to you; it shall be the first month of the year." Man, I know some people who are so zealous about this verse they'll use it as a weapon. Golly, I would submit to you— isn't this similar language used in [Genesis 1](#)? The beginning. This is a new beginning. This is a time of a new beginning. This is a season of a new beginning. And the focus isn't about the new moon. The focus is that Pesach is once again here for us to remember the greatness of our God. It is a time to remember so that we do not forget and take for granted and go back to Egypt.

A Time to Remember

Worship team, you guys can come up as we conclude. This is a time of a new start, a new year, a new experience where we get to memorialize the Passover event once again. And maybe this past year has not been great for you. Maybe it's been hard. Hundreds of thousands of people have died. And even more are suffering from the debilitating life-altering effects of this virus we find ourselves still dealing with, even within our own community. Jobs were lost. Communities were shaken. Relationships have been torn apart directly or indirectly over the past year. What an opportunity for old ways to sneak back in. What an opportunity to grab hold of this as a distraction for the victory that we always celebrated before.

Forty Days of Preparation

One of the earliest Christian traditions that has existed since what—the second century? Third century?—is for 40 days leading up to first fruits, or later known as the Paschal, or Easter—we'll say Passover. For 40 days, early Christians felt compelled to fast in various ways to join in solidarity with Yeshua during his 40-day experience in the desert. And the more I study this tradition, the history of it, I find it absolutely beautiful. It's a beautiful reminder. And it's the same type of tradition that we have in the Messianic community when we have the 40 days leading up to Yom Kippur, right? It's the same thing. Same intentions. There is a season coming. We need to prepare ourselves for it. It's a time where we are about to engage in the feast that fully represents Yeshua's victory and our exodus from sin and death. Have we forgotten? Have we forgotten? Have you gone back to Egypt in one aspect or another?

Leave It Here Today

Guys, I want to encourage you—these few weeks leading up to Passover, I want to encourage you to spend time in meditation, meditating on what this new season brings and this new year brings. Not what the past has, not what the past may have distracted you with, not what the past feels like on your shoulders right now. Reflect on what's coming and what God has promised and what is here in this reality. So I ask that you would please stand as we conclude services with worship. But I want to invite you today: if that's you, if this past year has enabled you to reach back into Egypt and forget the magnificent display of God's right arm destroying the Egypt in your life, if the past year has held out a hand from the past and invited you to reach for it and come back, maybe you've allowed a type of anxiety or stress or sin back in your life—maybe you just need someone to pray with you while you approach a holy and gracious God. I would invite you to leave it here today.

Guys, we have a prayer team to our right and our left. And this prayer team is devoted to do one thing, and that is to stand with you, to lift you up before God in whatever your need might be. And so I would invite you to take advantage of that. We're in this season now and we're only a few weeks away from when we're gonna sit at the table and we're gonna break the bread and we're gonna take the cup. And we as believers aren't gonna remember an exodus from Egypt. We're gonna remember an exodus from sin and death and oppression and the weight of darkness in our lives. We're gonna remember that. Is your heart gonna be ready to eat of the bread and take of the cup once again?

The Closing Prayer

Avinu Malkenu—our Father, our King—Father, we thank you for this time together, that you've brought us into this season, that we are able to meet together. Not simply to corporately worship you and the throne of your Son, but to come before you, to jump into your word, to pray that the Spirit that you say is within us right now would prick our hearts, would force us to evolve into the type of image bearer that we should be, not where we're stuck currently. Father, we thank you for this time, and we ask that your presence, that can only supply us with love and beauty and light, would overtake areas in our life that we need to escape from. We ask that you would once again instill in us the reminder of the hope and the trust that we have in you. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

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