

Choose Today Whom You Will Serve

Exodus 12:29-42

At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!" The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians. And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves. The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations. (ESV)

Exodus 12:29-42 teaches us that we must follow only one Master – Jesus. However, Jesus does not coerce us into following him through guilt or fear, he compels us to follow him alone by proving that he...

I. Keeps His Promises (vv. 29-32)

We must follow God as our only Master, because he keeps his promises.

The Lord mercifully tells his people the good that will happen to those who obey and the bad that will happen to those who disobey. God told both the Israelites and the Egyptians what would happen if they did not obey in Exodus 11:4. The tenth plague is a fulfillment of that promise. By graciously preserving those who put the blood of a lamb on the doorpost, God proves that he keeps his promises. Therefore, we can trust God's promises in scripture with absolute assurance.

Which of the practical categories for trusting God's promises resonated with you most and how can you trust God to keep his promises to you in this area of life?

- Marriage/Sexuality (Proverbs 5:1-23)
- Labor/Laziness (Proverbs 16:3, 28:19)
- Respect for Authority (Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:2, Hebrews 13:17)
- Honoring the Sabbath (Isaiah 22)
- Showing Kindness to the Stranger (Luke 6)

II. Supplies Provisions (vv. 33-39)

We must follow God as our only Master, because he provides all of our needs.

Just as God said they would in Exodus 3:21, the Egyptians gave the Israelites supplies for their journey as they left Egypt. By supplying his people's needs in this way, God proves his power over all people and his ability to provide, even in ways we would not have thought of. It's an illustration of what Jesus would later say in Matthew 6:33 – "seek first my kingdom and my righteousness and all these things will be added to you."

Because God supplies all we need to follow him, in following him we cannot lose. *What would you attempt for God if you knew you could not lose?*

III. Provides Protection (vv. 40-42)

We must follow God as our only Master, because he protects us from our enemies.

Immediately after reminding us they had been slaves for 430 years (v. 40), Moses uses military terminology (“hosts”) to describe how they left Egypt (v. 41). By his verbal artistry, Moses records the transformation of the children of Israel from victims into victors. God is not content to rescue us from our bondage to sin, death, and the devil. God’s work is not finished after he liberates us from the internment camp. His work of redemption will not be complete until he has seated us on thrones of victory and judgment with him.

Are there any areas of your life where you often feel less like a conquerer and more like a victim? How does this passage give you good news?

For further study:

- Reread verse 38. What does the fact that the people God brought out of Egypt were a “mixed multitude” tell us about God’s plan for his people from the beginning?
- From the opening of the sermon: Nicholas D. Kristof, “Bargaining for Freedom,” *The New York Times*, January 21, 2004, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/21/opinion/bargaining-for-freedom.html?searchResultPosition=1>.