

## The Redemption of the Firstborn

### Exodus 13:1-2, 11-16

*The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”*

*“When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.” (ESV)*

We must believe we are loved, because God proves it by adoption and redemption.

#### I. Adoption (vv. 1-2)

We must believe we are loved because God has adopted us.

*Knowing:* The Lord told Pharaoh that if he refused to release his “firstborn son,” Israel, he would kill Pharaoh’s firstborn son (Exodus 4:22-23). Israel only became God’s son by election. Purely out of love, God decided to adopt Israel as his people. It was not because they were “more in number than any other people”; it was only because he chose to make them his children (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

*Being:* Your Creator, the Holy God of the universe, has set his love on you in his Son and declared you are his heir. No one can take that away from you. And what higher name could God call you than what he calls the second person of the Trinity! This includes all women as well. The descriptor “firstborn son” is given to all to show that every believer’s inheritance in Christ is the of the same quality and quantity as a firstborn son. There is no birth order in the family of God.

*Doing:* Think about how meaningful this would have been for the Israelite people who had been told they were less than by their captors their entire lives. *In what ways might you be tempted to believe someone else’s estimation of you rather than God’s? What does the fact that God chose to adopt you say to that?*

#### II. Redemption (vv. 11-13)

We must believe we are loved because God has redeemed us.

*Knowing:* To fully appreciate the generosity of God’s grace requires not only knowing the fact he has chosen us to be his children, but also realizing what it cost him to do so. Revelation 13:8 says, “The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.” Though Jesus Christ’s personal sacrifice would not be made in history for another 1500 years, in God’s mind it had been made from all eternity.

*Being:* There is no past or future for God. There is only present. Therefore, when he pardoned an Israelite’s sin and allowed him or her to live rather than die in judgment, he did so by applying that person’s sin to Christ and substituting it with Jesus’ righteousness which the Old Testament believer had to receive by faith alone. In other words, there has never been a time when God has not been suffering the pain of sacrificing his Son for our sin.

*Doing:* Think about the lifetime of hardship the Israelites had faced. For God to redeem them at the cost of his son proved he was willing to experience it with them. *What reassurance does this give you when you are suffering, struggling with sin, etc. and tempted to question if God really loves you?*