

Week 4: The LORD alone is God

Exodus 7-10

Aim: To see the LORD is the God of supreme power, sovereign power, and saving power. He ought to be worshipped and obeyed, and when his enemies stand against him, no matter how great their power, he is powerful in judgement over them, and just. But through judgement he brings salvation for the children of his promises – those who fear him.

Getting Started:

Share a big event in history that you remember, along with others?

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

Read Exodus 9:13-35

This is the seventh of the ten plagues sent upon Egypt

LEADERS – It's worth encouraging people to read all of chs 7-10 after the group if they haven't already, and to notice the repetition of key elements we'll draw attention to here in this plague.

Who are the key players in this episode?

The LORD, and Pharaoh are the key identities in conflict.

But also Moses as the LORD's instrument, and the people also

And also Pharaoh's officials who feared the LORD v20-21, and the land/nation of Egypt experiencing the plague of hail

What does the LORD demand, and why (vv13-14)?

Let my people go, so that they may worship me (repeated 8 times in Exodus – you can search this online using bible gateway or similar)

Why 1 – v13 in context - because of Egypt's oppression, so they may be freed from that service to Egypt and her false Gods, and so they may worship the true God as is befitting the true God

Why 2 – v14 – or the LORD will judge Egypt in order that they may know that he is God over all (starting with Egypt and Pharaoh!)

What is his bigger purpose (vv16-17)?

The LORD is sovereign in raising Pharaoh up, these events must unfold this way, back in v15 he could have sorted it out in an instant, but the LORD is revealing his power to Pharaoh and all the earth according to his plan so he may be proclaimed and known across the earth

When the LORD's judgement comes – who is judged and who is spared?

Egypt, her officials and Pharaoh are judged

Spared -

V20-21 note the contrast – the officials of Pharaoh – expecting these along with Pharaoh heard the LORD's command through Moses directly or indirectly in 'court' – those who feared his word by acting were spared.

V26 the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived

How would you describe Pharaoh's response?

Vv27-34 - He's a 'fair weather friend'. He recognizes the LORD and his power and his own sin against the LORD during the awfulness of judgement, but once he's relieved of it (as he asked for Moses to pray to the LORD) he hardens his heart again. Notice how the LORD already expected this.

If you have time, read Romans 9:14-24, where Paul picks up on these episodes and God's purpose. What are Paul's insights?

On the one hand, don't spend long here and not get to the next section, and on the other, your group will probably want to tackle this issue of God's sovereignty and our responsibility ☺

Paul's insights - notice the connection to these events in Exodus, and that it is by virtue of being God that he determines what is just, and on whom he will have mercy, and that no one is 'deserving' of his mercy (otherwise it wouldn't be mercy!)

This may be a helpful reflection. We have responsibility and authority as people because God graciously made us in his image. But sin is opportunistic and so exploits even the very privileged shape in which God has made us. In that way we cry freedom from God to sin, and yet cry foul when held accountable by him!

Why is God saying this?

What do this and the other plagues show about the LORD and his judgement?

All people made by the LORD are accountable to him and his justice.

What do they show about the LORD and his salvation?

*He works his salvation **through** judgement.*

How do these episodes point us to the LORD's purposes in the Lord Jesus' cross and resurrection?

They reflect the pattern that is throughout salvation history. And in Jesus he judges the greatest and final enemies of sin, the world, and the devil, and defeats the power of death, by his experiencing our judgment so we need not

What difference does it make to how you calibrate your identity and actions for your week, year, and life ahead (Romans 12:1-2 is a great summary too)?

No matter how much hardship, suffering, or the good things of this life might seek to persuade us otherwise, our identity is found in the one who made us, rules us, and directs his mercy toward us. It's pause for thought. It should shape our every thought and action. That's true worship – living in light of who the LORD is, and who he has made us to be – remade us to be in Christ

Prayer Starters

- Praised God as the creator as supreme ruler over all
- Thank the LORD for his mighty works seen in salvation won through judgement
- Ask God to enable us to worship him in light of his majesty and mercy

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Plan for someone to share their story at the beginning of next week - of a significant time when Jesus' gospel changed them

Are there any people I should follow up this week?