

3/21/20 - Passover

The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. - Ex. 12:13

As I've been pondering this time in history, I just can't stop thinking about the original Passover event. While the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God sent Moses and Aaron to tell Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. Every time Pharaoh refused, God acted to convince him that God was real and that God was in control of this situation. And after rivers of blood, swarms of locust and frogs and gnats, sickness and darkness, the final plague was the Angel of Death. But God was watching over His people and gave them a way to be spared from it. Taking a lamb, they were to sacrifice it and put its blood on the doorposts of their home. Then the Angel of Death would Pass-over their house and they would be saved. This was the first Passover, celebrated every year with a Seder meal and celebration.

Now stop and listen to this: it's important. COVID-19 is NOT a judgement from God. It is NOT a deadly plague that will wipe us all out, or target our firstborn. And we don't have to go killing sheep as a deterrent. Physical distancing, good hygiene, and following the advice of the CDC is enough right now. Let the sheep be.

But there are some important lessons for us in this story, some specific to today's events. As you read this story again (basically, Ex. 1-12 which is long but foundational to both the Jewish and Christian faiths), be sure you read it from the perspective for which it was written: that of the enslaved Jews. This is their story.

Lesson #1: God is not subject to anyone.

Pharaoh had his own gods he worshipped, represented in this story by each of the 10 plagues. Each plague displayed God's power over every one of Egypt's gods. Our God is the god of creation, of humanity, of life and death, whether we recognize it or not. God is not subject to Pharaohs, past or present. God is not subject to our will or even our belief in Him. God is not subject to anyone. He is in control.

Lesson #2: God is watching out for His people.

While the Egyptians were subject to frogs in their toilets and flies in their food, the Israelites were spared most if not all of the plagues. God was watching out for them. In fact, the whole disaster was for the express purpose of freeing His people and forming them into the promised community. God acts for the good of His people, though not always in ways that please us.

Lesson #3: God saves us from lots of things in lots of ways.

God saved us from slavery in Egypt through the plagues. In so doing, God foreshadowed another salvation we received, from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ who is called the Lamb of God. God has saved us through plagues, rulers good and bad, circumstances, and of course through the cross.

So as we face this health crisis, let's not equate it to the Passover story, but rather learn from that story some things that will see us through this time. God is in control and subject to nothing, not even COVID-19. God is watching out for us as His people. And God saves us from many things and in many ways. We can rely on Him, because come what may, God is still God and has saved us from death itself. What have we to fear?

Questions to ponder: How have you seen God in control? How have you seen God looking out for us? How have you seen God save you? Do you believe He can do it again?