

## Exodus 11:1-13:16

### Introduction

Here in Exodus, we've been witnessing a divine drama in a divine theater. It's a drama of liberation, and deliverance, and redemption. In a very real sense, that's the story and the drama of all the Scriptures, from beginning to end. But here in these chapters we have a focused microcosm – a vivid, beautiful picture in miniature of the bigger, grander, ultimate work of redemption that all of Scripture tells. In one sense, these chapters are a picture in miniature of the Big Story. But in another sense, we'll see that they are themselves just one part of that Big Story. The story of God's liberation, and deliverance, and redemption of His people.

These chapters are rich beyond our comprehension, and beautiful beyond our imagining. They truly are. So, as is always the case, we need God to help us, and His Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and open our hearts. Not only are these chapters rich and beautiful, but in some senses they're also complex. When one first reads these chapters, they might appear to be all jumbled up and very haphazardly put together. And yet nothing could be further from the truth. All three chapters are really very intricately woven together, so that *together* they might communicate in the best possible way the wonderful realities of the redemption of God's people.

And so before we dive into the text, I want to pull back—*way* back—for an aerial view from above of the landscape of these three chapters – so we can see *how* they have been woven together and have something of a preview of everything that's to come. So here we go.

### I. Exodus 11:1-12:36

In Act I of this divine “drama” we witnessed the nine plagues. As Moses recounts for us the story of each one of these plagues, he follows one basic pattern – every single time. First, there's the announcement and description of the coming plague – whether to Moses, or to Pharaoh, or to both.<sup>1</sup> And then this announcement of the coming plague is followed immediately by a second description of the plague, but this time as it actually happens and comes to pass.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the basic pattern of the plague accounts so far has been ***announcement*** followed immediately by ***fulfillment***. For example:

- ✓ Exodus 9:8–9 — The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.”
- ✓ Exodus 9:10 — So they *took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast.*

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<sup>1</sup> Exod. 7:14-19; 8:1-5; 8:16; 8:20-23; 9:1-5; 9:8-9; 9:13-22; 10:1-12; 10:21

<sup>2</sup> Exod. 7:20-25; 8:6-15; 8:17-19; 8:24-32; 9:6-7; 9:10-12; 9:23-35; 10:13-20; 10:22-29

That's been the pattern every time. Announcement... followed immediately by Fulfillment.

Now let's just take a brief detour for a moment. Did you notice that the fulfillment uses much of the *exact same language* as the opening announcement? This happens not only here, but throughout the first nine plagues. Whenever we see this, we need to know that the point is not to bore us with monotony and repetition. The point is to emphasize to us that God is always true to His Word. Whatever it is that He says He will do, we can know that He is *able and powerful to do exactly as He has said He will do*. So as another example, Moses says to Pharaoh:

- ✓ Exodus 7:17–18 — Thus says the LORD, “Behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”

If this is what the *Lord* has *said*, we should expect that He is *able* to do, and *will do exactly* as He has said.

- ✓ Exodus 7:20–21 — [Moses] lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile.

This *careful repeating* of the *same language* of the announcement now in the fulfillment is a vivid way of emphasizing the truth of these verses in Isaiah fifty-five:

- ✓ Isaiah 55:10–11 — “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, *so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*”

God's words are never empty words. Not only does He never lie, or change His mind, but He is omnipotent, all-powerful, the Almighty. In all of these ways, He's completely *unlike* us – we who do change our minds, and who are weak and frail. And so it can be hard for us to really take hold of this truth: If God has *ever once* spoken, we can know that it's already as good as done. It's in the full light of that powerful reality that we ought to be reading the Scriptures – and reading especially all the warnings, *and* promises, of God. If God's words—His warnings and His promises—are never empty words, then do we always tremble and rejoice to take Him at His word – to heed His warnings and to believe His promises?

We've seen, then, the pattern throughout the first nine plagues: Announcement, followed immediately by Fulfillment, using much of the exact same language. Last week, we saw the *announcement* of the tenth plague – the death of all the firstborn in Egypt. So what do we expect

to immediately follow? Fulfillment – right? That’s the way it’s been the last nine times. But this time is different.

After the *announcement* in chapter eleven, we have a break of twenty-eight verses before we finally come back to the *fulfillment*. It’s very clear where the fulfillment starts because it picks up with all of the exact same language as the announcement.

**(See chart on page 6)**

But *sandwiched in between* the *announcement* of the tenth plague and the Exodus and the *fulfillment* of the tenth plague and the Exodus we have 28 verses of instruction about a feast called Passover and another feast called Unleavened Bread.

**(See chart on page 7)**

The bookend structure, or the sandwich structure of the filling between the two slices of bread is obvious (especially given the already established pattern of the first nine plagues). And it’s this God-given design—this sandwich design—that helps us to rightly read and understand these verses. What this design emphasizes to us is that the historical events of the Tenth Plague and Israel’s Exodus from Egypt (the slices of bread) are *explained* and *rightly understood* only in light of the theology of the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. The theology of the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread (the filling) can only be fully understood and made sense of in light of the historical events of the Tenth Plague and Israel’s Exodus from Egypt. These two things are so intricately tied and woven together that the one can never be fully grasped and understood apart from the other. And so we have this unique “sandwich” design. Not only will seeing this help to shed light on the meaning of these verses, but it will also help us not to get lost in the text. It helps us to see the forest, and not just the trees!

## **II. Exodus 12:37-51**

Now this “sandwich” that we’ve just talked about only takes us part way through Act II (which is the Tenth Plague and Exodus from Egypt). So what happens in the rest of Act II? Well, what we find is that as soon as we’re finished with the first “sandwich,” we get *another* one.

**(See chart on page 8)**

Notice once again the two bookends, and how they both describe the historical event of Israel’s exodus from Egypt. Notice the identical language. And then notice that sandwiched between these two bookends we have seven more verses of instruction relating to the Passover – instructions about who is allowed, and who is not allowed to eat of the Passover meal.

Once again, the sandwich design is obvious. And it’s this God-given design that enables us to read and rightly understand these verses. The historical event of Israel’s exodus from Egypt (the slices of bread) is explained and rightly understood only in light of the theology of Passover

(who's allowed to eat of the Passover meal). We could also say it the other way around: Who's allowed to eat of the Passover meal (the filling) can only be understood and made sense of in light of the historical event of Israel's exodus from Egypt. These two things are so intricately tied and woven together that the one can never be fully grasped and understood apart from the other. And so we have this second unique sandwich design.

### **III. Exodus 13:1-16**

But these two “sandwiches” still don't get us to the end of Act II (which is the Tenth Plague and Exodus from Egypt). So what happens in the rest of Act II? Well, maybe you won't be too surprised now to find, of all things, yet *another* sandwich!

**(See chart on page 9)**

Notice how the first set of bookends speaks of the consecration to the Lord of all the firstborn in Israel. Notice the identical language. Then notice that there's a second set of bookends inside the first which calls to mind once again Israel's exodus from Egypt. Notice the identical language. And then, finally, we see that sandwiched between these two sets of bookends are some repeated instructions regarding the feast of Unleavened Bread.

And so for the third time in a row, the sandwich design is obvious. And it will be this God-given *design* that helps us to grasp more fully and more wonderfully the *meaning* of these verses. The consecration of the firstborn, the Exodus from Egypt, and the feast of Unleavened Bread are all intricately tied and woven together, so that *one* can never be fully explained or understood apart from the other two. And so we have this third unique sandwich design – which brings us to the end of Act II. But is it the last “sandwich”?

### **IV. Exodus 11:1-13:16**

At the very end of this entire section we have a kind of Post Script. And here in this Post Script there's something mentioned that hasn't been mentioned since the *first* of our three “sandwiches” — and that's the Tenth Plague and the death of all the firstborn in Egypt.

**(See chart on page 10)**

Notice, *again*, the identical language.

And so the third sandwich ends by tying everything back again to the “beginning,” and so tying all of Act II together in one big “sandwich” design. What does this mean?

### **Conclusion**

The Death of the Egyptian Firstborn, Israel's Exodus from Egypt, the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Consecration of the Firstborn in Israel – all of these things

are intricately woven together, revealing to us the power, and the wisdom, and the beauty, and the glory of Yahweh's redemption of His people. This is true *especially today* because we have this awesome privilege of reading these chapters in the full light of the coming of Christ. We'll see in the coming weeks how Christ actually "*fulfills*" the Tenth Plague. He *fulfills* the Exodus from Egypt. He *fulfills* the Feast of Passover. He *fulfills* the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And He *fulfills* the Consecration of the Firstborn! We'll see all of this in the coming weeks. And we'll also see how now, since we are all *in Christ*, we are all *partakers* in all of this fulfillment.

What does that mean? What does it look like? What difference will all of this make in our lives? Let's ask God, together, to give us His Holy Spirit in the coming weeks to enlighten our minds and open our eyes, and change our hearts, and equip us to live more and more faithfully as His people *in this world*.

## The Tenth Plague – ANNOUNCEMENT and FULFILLMENT

### Exodus 11:1-10 – ANNOUNCEMENT of TENTH PLAGUE and the EXODUS

2 Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.” 3 And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

4 About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, 5 and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. 6 There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt.

7 And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.”

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### Exodus 12:29-36 – FULFILLMENT of TENTH PLAGUE and the EXODUS

29 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 there was a great cry in Egypt.

30 Then [Pharaoh] 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. 31 Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone.

32 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. 33 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.

## **PART I – The 1<sup>st</sup> “Sandwich”**

### **Exodus 11:1-10 – ANNOUNCEMENT of Tenth Plague and the EXODUS**

#### **Exodus 12:1-29 – PASSOVER and UNLEAVENED BREAD**

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.” Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’ ” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. 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.

### **Exodus 12:29-36 – FULFILLMENT of Tenth Plague and the EXODUS**

## PART II – The 2<sup>nd</sup> “Sandwich”

### Exodus 12:37-42 – Joyful Description and Statement of the EXODUS

**41** At the end of 430 years, **on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.**

### Exodus 12:43-49 – PASSOVER Participants

**43** And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no **foreigner** shall eat of it, **44** but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. **45** No **foreigner** or hired worker may eat of it. **46** It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. **47** All the **congregation** of Israel shall keep it. **48** If a **stranger** shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no **uncircumcised person** shall eat of it. **49** There shall be one law for the native and for the **stranger** who sojourns among you.”

### Exodus 12:50-51 – Joyful Statement of the EXODUS

**50** All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. **51** **And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.**

## **PART III – The 3<sup>rd</sup> “Sandwich”**

### **Exodus 13:1-2 – Consecration of the FIRSTBORN**

**1** The LORD said to Moses, **2** “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.”

### **Exodus 13:3a – Remember the EXODUS**

**3** Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place.

### **Exodus 13b-7 – UNLEAVENED BREAD**

No leavened bread shall be eaten. **4** Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. **5** And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. **6** Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. **7** Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory.

### **Exodus 13:8-10 – Remember the EXODUS**

**8** You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ **9** And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes... For with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.

### **Exodus 13:11-13 – Consecration of the FIRSTBORN**

**12** 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. **13** 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.

**Exodus 11:1-13:16 – Three “Sandwiches” In One**

**Exodus 11:1-10 – ANNOUNCEMENT of TENTH PLAGUE and the EXODUS**

**4** I will go out in the midst of Egypt, **5** and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle [behemah].

**Exodus 12:1-29 – PASSOVER and UNLEAVENED BREAD**

**12** I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast [behemah]

**Exodus 12:29-36 – FULFILLMENT of TENTH PLAGUE and the EXODUS**

**29** 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 [behemah].

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**Exodus 12:37-42** – Joyful Description and Statement of the EXODUS

**Exodus 12:43-49** – PASSOVER Participants

**Exodus 12:50-51** – Joyful Statement of the EXODUS

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**Exodus 13:1-2** – CONSECRATION of the FIRSTBORN

**Exodus 13:3a** – Remember the EXODUS

**Exodus 13b-7** – UNLEAVENED BREAD

**Exodus 13:8-10** – Remember the EXODUS

**Exodus 13:11-13** – CONSECRATION of the FIRSTBORN

**Exodus 13:14-16 – Consecration of the FIRSTBORN, the TENTH PLAGUE, and the EXODUS**

**15** The LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals [behemah].