



Today's message sets up where we will be next week on Easter. Today and again next week, on Easter, we'll be in the book of Exodus. You'll see the sacrifice of Jesus Christ displayed large and loud in the Old Testament. We've titled today's study: "The Anticipation of Hope." Over the past several weeks, we have been walking through the book of Exodus, studying how God brought about the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt. For over 400 years, they have lived in slavery under the Egyptian rule. God raised a Hebrew man named Moses to go to Pharaoh and to bring the Jews out of their slavery. Pharaoh refused, and over the last few weeks, we have discussed how God poured out his wrath through 9 different plagues upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Each one of these was a horrible thing with much suffering, but they pale in comparison with the pain of the final consequence of Pharaoh's hardened heart.

**Key Passage:** Exodus 11

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Last week, it was pointed out that the plagues were not primarily aimed at the people of Egypt but rather the false gods they worshipped. Discuss the significance of the final plague in Exodus 11 and its impact on the Egyptians and the Israelites. How does this event shape their respective futures?

Not only would this be devastating in a family sense, but it would be devastating in a religious sense. The Egyptians believed in and worshipped many false gods. One of those was a goddess named Isis, known as a mother who had magical, healing powers and supposedly protected children. They believed she could even bring back the dead to life. This plague would show, as many others have, that the false gods of Egypt, including Isis, are precisely that – false – and have no power compared with the One Sovereign God of Israel.

2. What insights can be gained from Moses' perspective on responsibility and accountability for rebellion against God, particularly concerning Pharaoh?

There are times when God is hardening Pharaoh's heart, and there are times when the Bible says Pharaoh hardens his own heart. Today's passage gives us a glimpse into how Moses viewed the situation. He viewed Pharaoh as fully responsible and accountable for his rebellion towards God. Moses would likely have felt the same way about the Egyptians, living in rebellion against God through worshipping false gods.

3. Discuss the significance of the distinction between the judgment upon Egypt and the favor shown to Israel. What does it reveal about God's covenantal relationship with His people?

When God sent flies upon Egypt, the Jews were spared. When God sent death upon livestock, the Jews' livestock were spared. Here, God will again show a distinction: the firstborn of all of Egypt will die, but Israel will again be spared. In this passage, God reveals the absolute distinction between what will happen in Egyptian households and what will happen in Hebrew households. While there is chaos in the Egyptian households, grief unimaginable, crying out in pain over death and the excruciating reality of the situation – there will be peace in the Hebrew's homes.

4. How does the "anticipation of hope" in Exodus 11 connect with the broader theme of redemption and salvation, particularly during Easter?

This passage is quite a paradox. While Egypt has been and is about to be further devastated, Israel is about to be set free. Israel has the anticipation of hope; God is about to change their trajectory. The history of the nation of Israel would never be the same after what God was about to do. How does this connect to Palm Sunday? Palm Sunday is all about anticipation – the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt. The people of Israel saw Jesus as a Savior King coming to bring freedom. Their anticipation was wrong, thinking He was coming to free them from Roman rule. What Jesus came to do was much more profound than freeing Israel from Roman rule. Jesus came to free His people from their slavery to sin and a destiny apart from God. Our story parallels the story of Israel when we put our faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ leads to an exodus of the soul. We are set free from our bondage to sin. One day, Jesus takes us to the real Promised Land, Heaven, a real place of rest.

5. Reflect on the significance of the Lord's Supper in relation to both looking back on Christ's sacrifice and looking forward with hope for believers. How does the Lord's Supper symbolize looking back on Christ's sacrifice and looking forward with hope?

The Lord's Supper looks back, but it also looks forward. We look forward with hope and eagerly anticipate Christ's return together. Present, continuing, and future realities of our salvation in Christ exist. We are saved, we are being saved, we will be saved. We are saved from past sins, we are being saved from present sin, and we will be saved from the judgment of God when we die. Because of all of this, we have the anticipation of hope!

6. What role do you think faith played in the anticipation of hope for the Israelites during their time of slavery and oppression in Egypt? In what ways do you see parallels between the anticipation of hope in today's passage and the anticipation associated with our daily lives, especially during challenging times or periods of uncertainty?
7. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?