

(God is Great,)

God is Good

(and wants us to be good)

worshipweekly.com/God-is-Good.html

There was good reason for the ditty sung at the dinner table. Repetition and remembering are important. One can argue good is better than love. Love is a feeling. Whether love is good or evil depends on who or what you love and how you express it. Good, is good. "God is love" is not in the Hebrew Bible. "I will make all my goodness pass before you" (God says to Moses when Moses asks to behold His presence), Exodus 33:19. Let that be a teaser...

The Exodus and Moses, Part 2

Exodus 11-19

Questions/Comments

**Jot down and send to me by email
before next class**



What if
God
revealed
himself
at the
Super
Bowl

Probably wouldn't make much difference. Those who believe will continue to believe. Those who don't will dismiss it as special effects.

Israelites gave up on God, went to golden idols, just after seeing the Red Sea parted! If God revealed himself in a 100%-can't-argue-with manner, freedom to believe would go away.

God is ONLY reachable through belief.



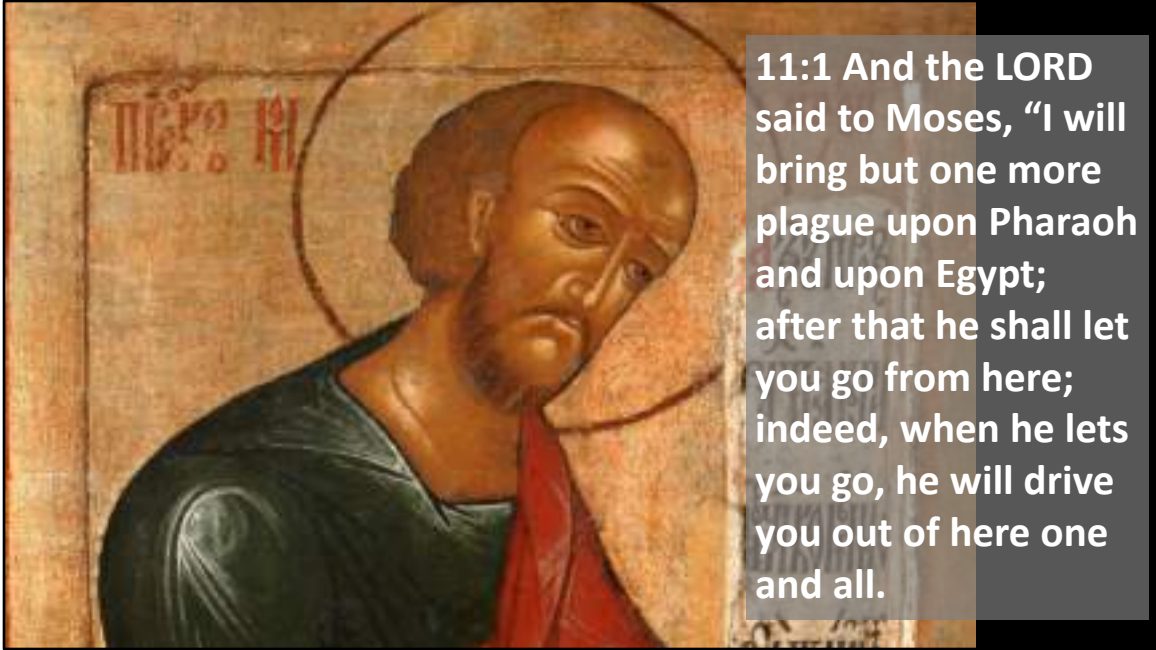
Purpose of the Plagues:

1. Force release of Israel.
2. Punish Pharaoh/Egyptians.
3. Demonstrate that the God of the Torah is THE God. The first 9 plagues all aimed at Egyptian nature gods.

The 10th was aimed at all the other gods.



Is there such thing? Yes. It took all the Egyptians to let/make it happen. Cannot deny national evil simply because a few didn't participate. American slavery, the nation was guilty. And 700,000 people paid the price in the Civil War.



11:1 And the LORD said to Moses, “I will bring but one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; after that he shall let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you out of here one and all.

Note the word “I”. God alone does #10. Not Moses, not winds, not rods. God is fully accountable, and only God is accountable.



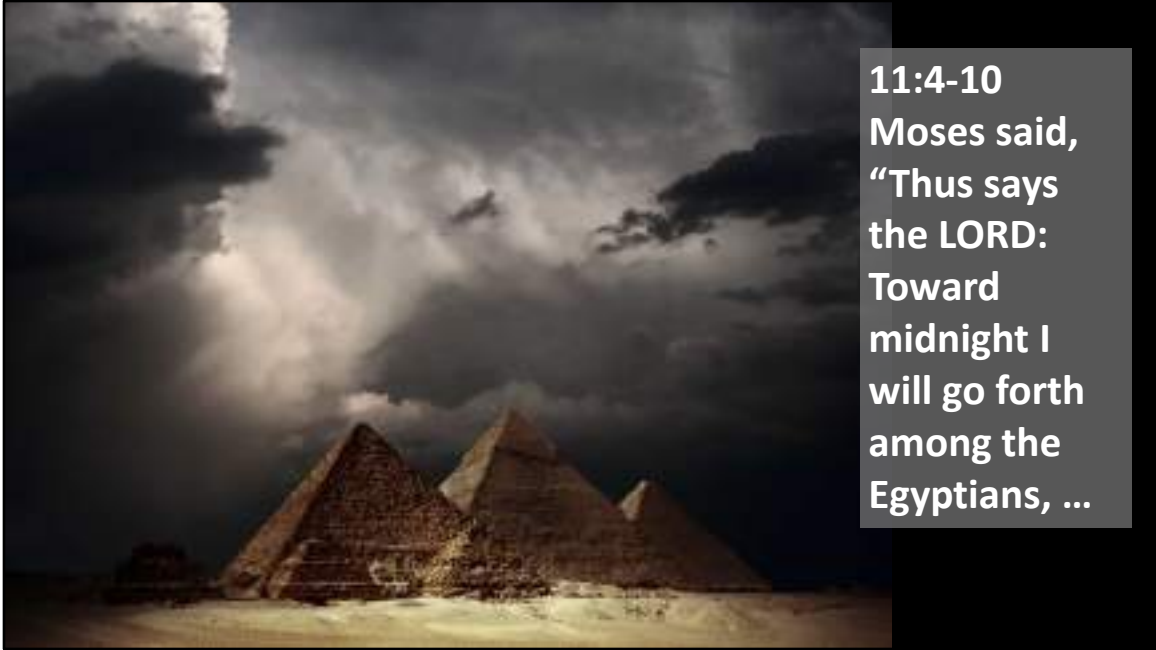
11:2 Tell the people to borrow, each man from his neighbor and each woman from hers, objects of silver and gold.”

Missing in the translation is the Hebrew word “please.” Please tell the people. Lesson for people in authority. Saying please preserves dignity, enabling the lesser to feel more like a partner than a servant or employee.

Borrow? The Hebrew verb is ambiguous, could be “ask” or “borrow”. Even if “borrow” could be like borrowing a cigarette or a tissue. In any case, there is virtually no chance the wealth will be returned.

Why? Compensation, severance? Punishment to Egypt.

Ironically, this is the silver and gold with which the Golden Calf will be built in the wilderness. Having the silver/gold made this option even possible.



Again, only God is at work for the 10th Plague.

In these 7 verses, God tells Moses what's going to happen.

Perhaps the cruelest indignity suffered by slaves is not being able to protect their children. Sold as property.

Likewise, the Hebrews had their first borns killed by the Egyptians.

In act of measure-for-measure, the Egyptian 1st-borns will now be killed.



12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

Chapter 12 starts a whole new Torah, switching from mostly narrative to law. Goes thru chapter 13.

And it comes right at the height of the drama of freeing the slaves – the 10th plague.

1. An interlude
2. Before I take you out of Egypt, understand this...
3. You (Jews) will have to do something for your freedom, not just survive.

These laws are given in Egypt, not the wilderness:

Passover. Unleavened bread. Be dressed. Have your rods. Be ready.



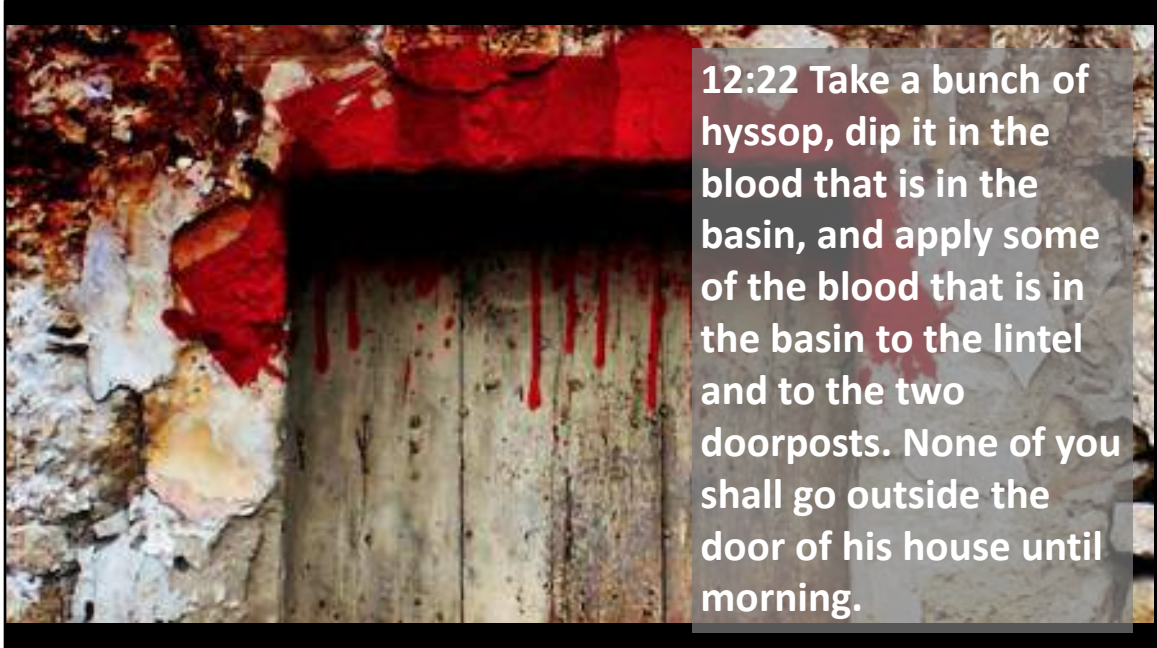
12:14 This day shall be to you one of remembrance: you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD throughout the ages; you shall celebrate it as an institution for all time.

The obligation to remember Passover is a permanent law.

First of many to characterize distinctive Jewish way of life.

Pasach = Passover. Also, is most common root of languages names for Easter.

Only "Easter" is very different, most likely a borrowed pagan term of some sort.



12:22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.

The lamb/goat was an Egyptian god. This act would have been abhorrent to Egypt, capital crime.

In 12:6 the Jews were told to watch over the lamb/goat 3 days. Another huge risk of being seen.

This is a test of the Hebrews. Would they risk being stoned to obey their own God? It also removed psychological barrier to freedom. Slaves develop a slavery mentality. These Jews never get over slave mentality. Never enter the Promised Land. Never "de-enslaved."

Blood = "I have slaughtered your God, and eaten it." No doubt some didn't have it in them to be so brave, and they perished.

A bit like poking a wasps' nest with a stick.



12:26 And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?'

God instructs the Jews to teach their children about the Exodus.
Passover Seder.

Children are taught to ask questions.

God tells adults how to answer, at least get things started.

Exodus was when Jews began to learn how to be Jews, "**Children** of the Torah."



12:49
**There shall
be one law
for the
citizen and
for the
stranger
who
dwells
among
you.**

One of the first laws as soon as they left Egypt.

Unlike most other nations with no protections at all for strangers, here's a law equating member and stranger.

Unique in ancient Near East and presumably the world.



**14:6 He
ordered
his chariot
and took
his men
with him;**

So the Hebrews have been sent out.

Then Pharaoh has 2nd thoughts.

The Hebrew says “hitched”, not “ordered.” Commentators suggest this indicates Pharaoh’s anxiousness to get going, he hitched up the horses himself rather than wait for servants. Archeological evidence suggest chariots were invented not much before this event, making chariots the most advanced military weapons of the time.

14:10 As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the LORD.



Two verses earlier they were defiantly leaving Egypt. Now they cower. Understandable after centuries of servitude. Still have slave mentality. Again, this may be why God let this generation die off before entering the Holy Land. They would not have the gumption to fight the Canaanites. Weren't ready for the burdens and responsibilities of freedom. They even claim later they'd rather return to Egypt and be taken care of than die in the wilderness. Is it "better red than dead" or "better dead than red." Another choice.



14:21 Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split,

Why a wind? God could have done it with a thought.

God controls nature. Nature is not a god.

Also allow room for the skeptic. This is God's general approach.

He wants humans to be free to choose rather than compelled through incontrovertible evidence.



14:27 Moses held out his arm over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal state, and the Egyptians fled at its approach. But the LORD hurled the Egyptians into the sea.

Crushing the Egyptian army was done at a time of day when the Hebrews could see it. They needed to see their oppressors destroyed. Part of de-enslaving (or at least attempting to).



15:1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said: I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver He has hurled into the sea.

In the Talmud, angels sang, too. But God rebuked the angels for rejoicing in death of His creatures.

He did not rebuke Moses and Israelites.

It was overwhelming relief.

Maybe it was a victory for morality, not so much about the Egyptians per se.

Perhaps one should not celebrate the fall of one's enemy, rather fall of evil.

Even soldiers on the evil side left behind families, etc.

Bottomline, though, if no Egyptians had been killed and no Nazi soldiers killed, the Jews would not have been freed.



15:22 Then Moses caused Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds. They went on into the wilderness of Shur; they traveled three days in the wilderness and found no water.

First of four crises in the wilderness: no water, no food, no water again, an attack from a desert tribe.

Precarious nature of their survival, and God's providential care.

Perhaps with some reason, the Israelites do a lot of complaining. God does not get angry.

But the story does point to ingratitude and lack of faith.

Most people complain far more than praise.

People frequently register complaints but less often offer thanks. Write a thank you note to a company.

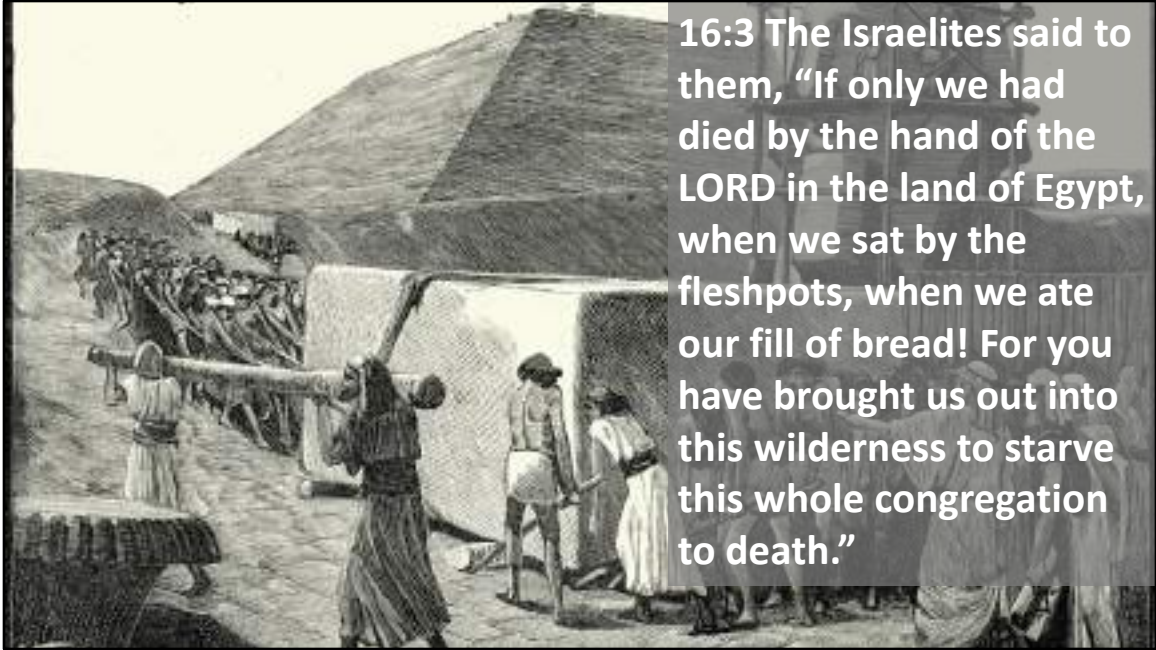


15:26 He said, “If you will heed the LORD your God diligently, doing what is upright in His sight, giving ear to His commandments and keeping all His laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians, for I the LORD am your healer.”

God does not guarantee protection from illness. Only protection from what he brought upon the Egyptians.

Obviously, God does not protect religious people from illness.

God does not judge the Jews the same as others. He holds them to a HIGHER standard.



16:3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve this whole congregation to death.”

Liberty -or- Be Taken Care Of

As slaves they did not have to provide for themselves.

People do not yearn (in their nature to want) freedom, they yearn to be taken care of.



16:4-36 And the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people shall go out and gather each day that day’s portion—that I may thus test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not.

God, almost literally, nursed his people for 40 years.

Double portion on Friday for Shabbat (Sabbath). 6 out 7 days also made clear it was not nature.

Moses reminds his people it is God, not Moses or Aaron.

When later he does take credit, God punishes him by not allowing him into the Promised Land.

Moses gets angry sometimes, sometimes for good reasons, sometimes not. He’s human.

17:8 Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.



Joshua goes to defend the Israelites from Amalek. The Israelites are supported when Moses has his rod held high. But Moses tires, and when he lowers the rod, Amalek begins to win. The Israelites prop up Moses with stones, and the Israelites prevail. Was it really Moses actions, divine intervention, or when the Israelites looked up (to God) when looking at Moses raised staff they prevailed.



17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Inscribe this in a document as a reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven!”

Which is it, remember or blot out (forget).

Both: remember great evil, but forget the evil-doer(s) name(s).

18:1 Jethro priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the LORD had brought Israel out from Egypt.



Another non-Jew hero. Juxtaposition with Amalek – don't be an Amalek.
Jethro is Moses' father-in-law, gets funny how often that is stated.
Torah is in sections by people's names. This starts the Jethro section. 3 of the 4 sections are named after non-Jews.
The Torah is about the world, not any one nation.
Jethro is a good man, recognizes one God.
Offers Moses great advice, which Moses immediately accepts and implements. A great man heeds valuable advice.

18:10 “Blessed be the LORD,” Jethro said, “who delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.



Baruch Hashem, blessed be the Lord. One of the most common Jewish expressions. “How are you?”, reply: Baruch Hashem!”. Like our “Praise God.”

It came from a Midianite pagan, not even a Hebrew.

It’s said two other times in the Torah, once by Noah and once by Abraham’s servant, all non-Jews.

He goes on to tell Moses if he keeps handling all the problems of the people, he’ll tire out.

Tells him to select some “judges” like a court system to resolve disputes.

Requirements:

Strong/Capable, God-fearing, Men of Truth, Hating ill-gotten gain (incorruptible).

Note compassion is missing. Compassion subverts justice in society. At the personal level it is admirable.

19:4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me.



Rare instance in the Torah of God speaking poetically.

Two parts, 1st = God's existence, you saw me do this.

2nd = God's love.

To Prager, both are rational. How else could this world have been made? And how could an uncaring God create caring people?

A favorite hymn.

Since no bird flies higher than the eagle, the baby is safest on its back. All other birds carry young between their feet to protect from attack from above. And, mom will take the arrow first.



19:5 Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples...

The "if" is often overlooked. This agreement is conditional.

Hosea later teaches that God will take back the penitent, but that does not contradict this.

Remember, God of the Torah is obsessed with people doing good and not doing evil.

He is also obsessed with justice.

19:6 but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...



Just like societies need people doing all kinds of tasks, the world needs groups focusing on particular tasks.

God assigns to the Jews being the world's priests.

This is why the Jews are Chosen. They're not in any way better, they have a mission. And if they do not follow God's laws, they too will be punished.

Calling people to be holy is a Torah original.

This is not going off to a monastery and studying. This is not working at food banks and donating money.

This is getting out among the people and teaching them what God wants of them and how to do that.

The Jews have not been particularly good at this. Not many religious groups have been. Mormons?...

And with that and some final instructions, e.g. the people are to stay at the base of Mt. Sinai, the story goes on to the delivery of the Ten Commandments – next week.

The screenshot shows the PragerU website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Podcast, Unlisted, Prager Insider, Prager Mail, More, Help, Account, and Logout. The main content area features a course titled 'Exodus V: Chapters 16-20' under the heading 'Dennis Teaches the Torah'. To the left is a course cover image with the text 'EXODUS V CHAPTERS 16-20'. To the right is a video player interface showing a list of four parts: 'Exodus V: Chapters 16-20 (Part 1)', 'Exodus V: Chapters 16-20 (Part 2)', 'Exodus V: Chapters 16-20 (Part 3)', and 'Exodus V: Chapters 16-20 (Part 4)'. Below the video player, there is a prompt 'Want to purchase this program?' with an orange 'Purchase' button.

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So that you're certain, I make no money or anything else on your purchase(s) with Prager.

Homework for Next Time

1. Watch "Do Not Steal" 5-Minute Video Before Class
(Follow the link on the "God Is Good" webpage.)

Think about:

2. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

- 2a. Is this a commandment?
- 2b. If so, what is it commanding?
- 2c. Is it a commandment to believe in God?

3. Why does God refer to himself as a Liberator rather than the Creator of the world?

- 3a. Which is more compelling to you?

4. Why did God describe Egypt as a land of slavery? Wouldn't they know?

Next session: October 6th, 6pm PDT

The Ten Commandments

Genesis 20-24

Watch “Do Not Steal” 5-Minute Video Before Class
(link on God Is Good webpage)

Watch the 5-minute video “Do Not Steal” before next week’s final session. There’s a link on the God Is Good webpage.