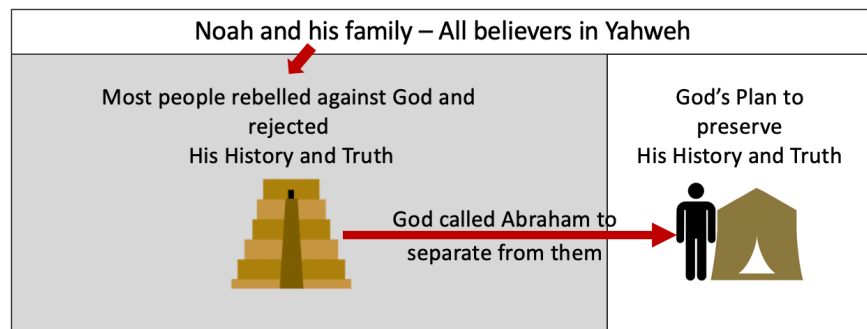


# 8. God's Plan to Reach the World – Part 2

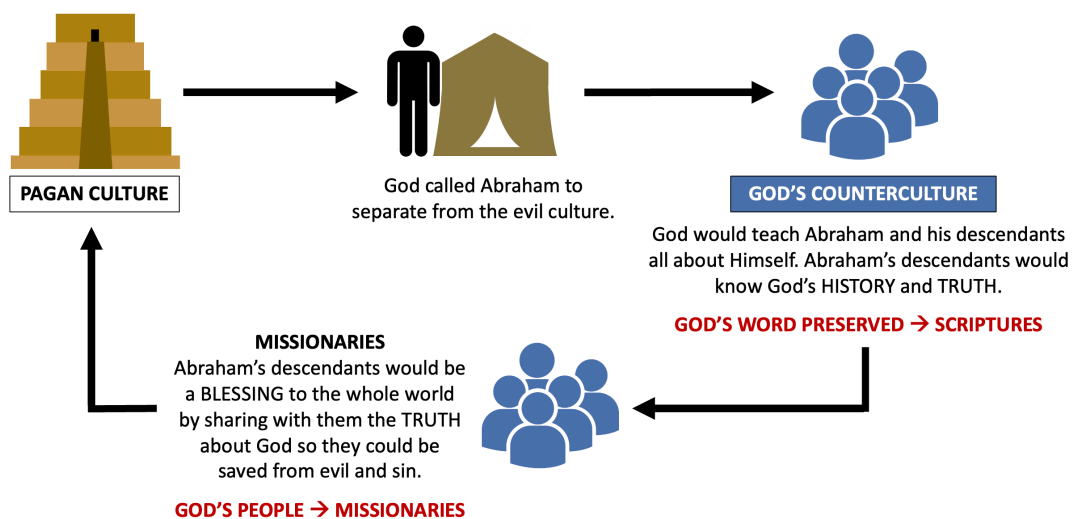
## Previously...

Both before and after the Global Flood, mankind chose to rebel against Yahweh. Rebelling against the all-good Creator-God means they would be separated from Him forever. In order to provide mankind an opportunity to be saved from this eternal separation, God called Abraham and began working His plan through him.



Even though Abraham lived among people who worshipped handmade, man-made idols, he chose to put his faith and trust in Yahweh.

Yahweh had a special plan for Abraham. The plan was for Abraham and his family to preserve God's history and truth in the form of written Scriptures that all mankind would have access to. Abraham's family would also have the job of taking God's message of rescue to the rest of the world so everyone could be saved from evil and sin.







In addition, God's plan was for the Saviour to come through Abraham's family line. The promised rescuer would be one of Abraham's own descendants.

After the Fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, Yahweh had promised to send a rescuer, a Saviour for all mankind. Even though mankind after Adam and Eve continued to rebel against Him, He did not change this plan.

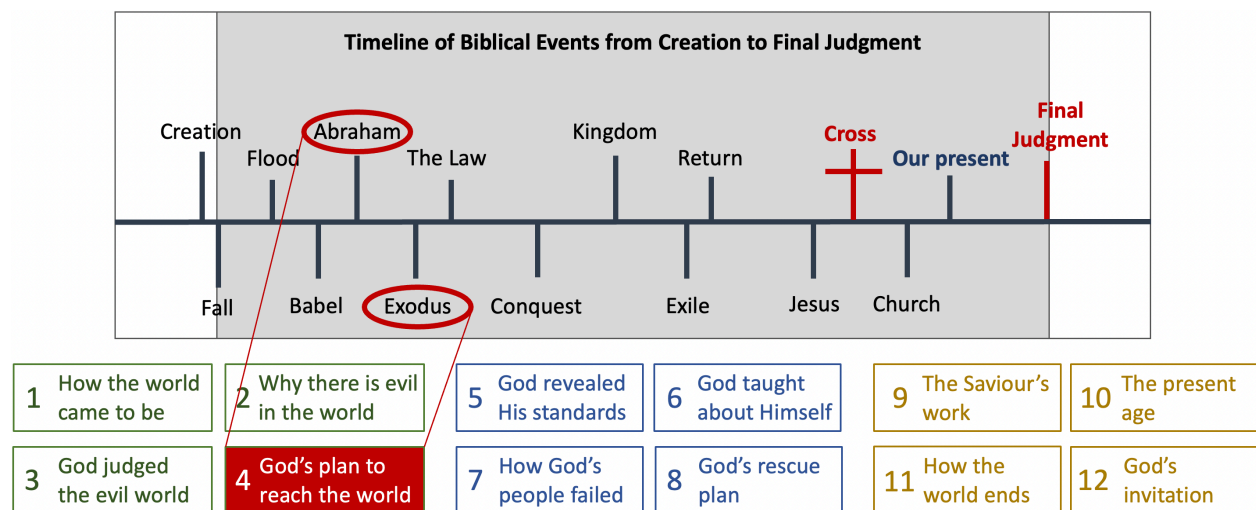
God made sure that the plan to send the Saviour would proceed. God was so serious about this plan to reach and save the world that He made a solemn contract with Abraham.

Contracts are important to God because from the terms of the contract, people would be able to observe the kind of God He is. Is Yahweh a promise-maker and a promise-keeper? What is Yahweh like? Can He be trusted?



Abrahamic Covenant	
 <b>Parties</b>	God, Abraham and descendants
 <b>Promises</b>	Land, descendants, worldwide blessing
 <b>Signatories</b>	God alone (by passing between the animal halves)
 <b>Type</b>	Unconditional

In this lesson, we will see what happened after Yahweh made the contract with Abraham.

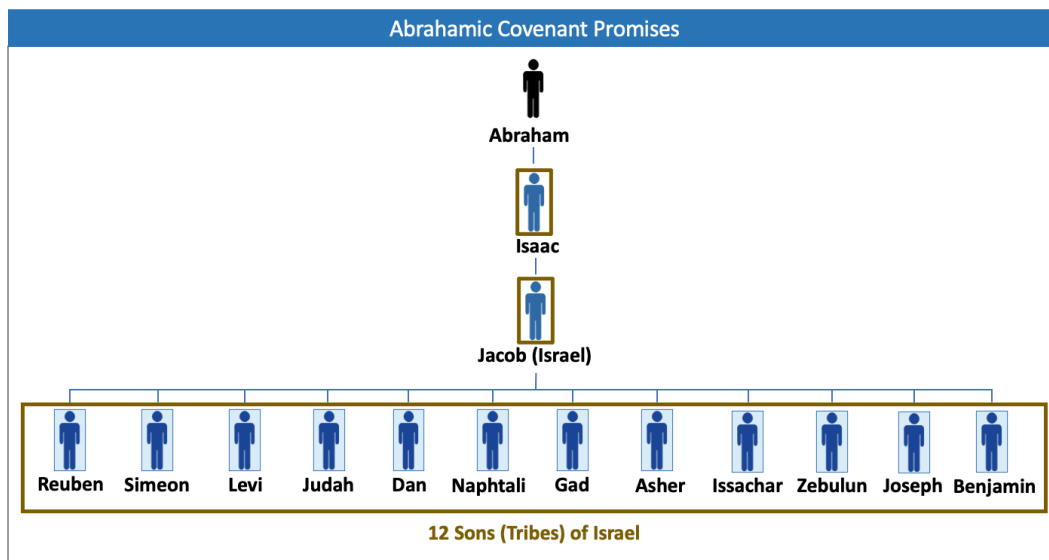


## GOD GREW ABRAHAM'S FAMILY TO BECOME ISRAEL

Just as God had promised, years later, Abraham and his wife had their very own son. This was a supernatural act that God did in their lives because both of them were actually already way past their child-bearing years. But God indeed kept His promise. They named the boy Isaac.

Yahweh told Abraham that His covenantal promises were going to be fulfilled through Isaac. God also spoke to Isaac to reaffirm these promises. Then later, God spoke to Isaac's son, Jacob, and told him that it would be through him that He would fulfil the Abrahamic Covenant promises. The Bible records that, like Abraham, both Isaac and Jacob trusted Yahweh.

Although both Abraham and Isaac had other children, God chose to work specifically through Isaac and Jacob. God built an entire nation from Jacob's 12 sons. Because Jacob's other name was Israel, his descendants became known as the nation of Israel or the Israelites.

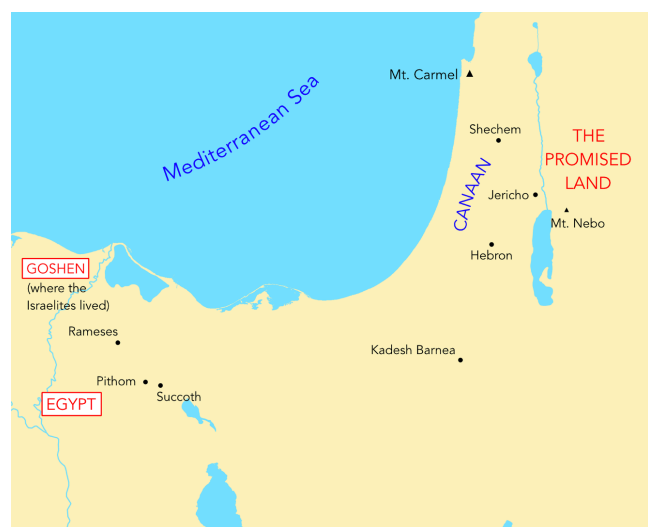


After living in the Promised Land for many years, Abraham and Isaac died.

Some time later, a great famine came upon the whole area. To save the lives of Jacob's family, God orchestrated for them to move to Egypt, where there was food.

It was in Egypt that God grew Abraham's family from a group of 70 people to approximately 2.4 million in about 430 years.

God indeed kept His promise to Abraham to make his descendants into a great nation.



## YAHWEH SHOWED HE IS THE CREATOR-GOD

In the early years of living in Egypt, the reigning Pharaoh and the Egyptians treated the Israelites well. But later on, a subsequent Pharaoh severely mistreated them and made them slaves. They suffered so much that they cried out to Yahweh for help.

### Exodus 2:24–25

<sup>24</sup> God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>25</sup> He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.

When Yahweh “remembered” His covenant promise, it was not because He had forgotten. God does not forget. Rather, the Hebrew word for “remember” includes the actions one takes to keep a promise.



Recall that years earlier, before Isaac or Jacob was even born, God had told Abraham this:

### Genesis 15:13–14

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. <sup>14</sup> But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth.

It turns out that this foreign land that God was referring to was Egypt. How was it that Yahweh was able to tell Abraham what would happen hundreds of years before the event occurred? God Himself says that it is because He is God. He is on a totally different level from mankind.

### Isaiah 46:9–10a

<sup>9</sup> Remember the things I have done in the past.

For I alone am God!

I am God, and there is none like me.

<sup>10</sup> Only I can tell you the future before it even happens.

Yahweh chose a Hebrew shepherd named Moses to save His people from slavery in Egypt. Moses did not live in Egypt but in the desert. God appeared to Moses while he was tending to his flock of sheep. (Note: in the below passage, the phrase “the angel of the LORD” refers to God appearing in a physical form to people.)

### Exodus 3:2–10

<sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn’t burn up.

<sup>3</sup> “This is amazing,” Moses said to himself. “Why isn’t that bush burning up? I must go see it.” <sup>4</sup> When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, “Moses! Moses!” “Here I am!”

Moses replied.

<sup>5</sup> “Do not come any closer,” the LORD warned.

“Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. <sup>6</sup> I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”



When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD told him, “I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering.

<sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. <sup>9</sup> Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. <sup>10</sup> Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”

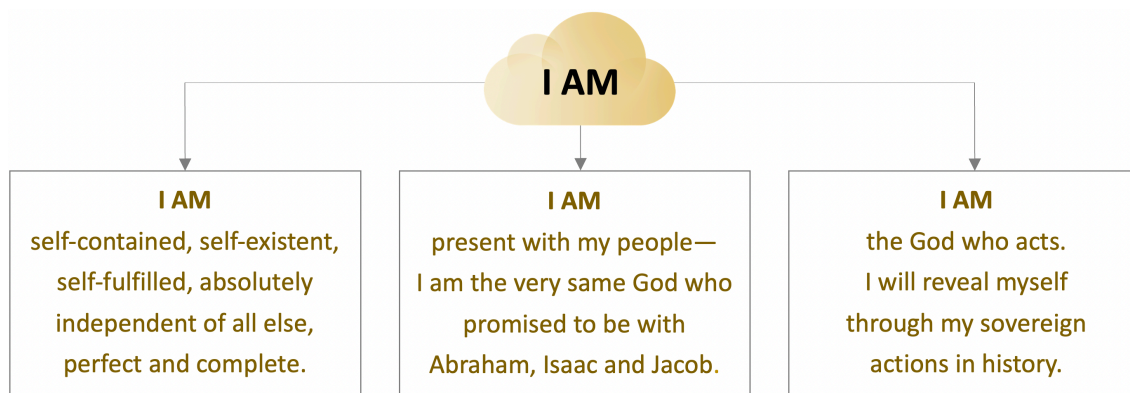
God deliberately identified Himself as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”. This was because Yahweh wanted Moses to know that the reason He was meeting him was because of the covenant promises He had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God would not hesitate to interrupt history and intervene in people’s lives to make sure that every single one of His promises would come true.

Moses responded by asking specifically for God’s personal name.

### Exodus 3:13–15

<sup>13</sup> But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?” <sup>14</sup> God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I am has sent me to you.” <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.”

God identified himself as “I AM” or YAHWEH in Hebrew. That is a very unusual name. What does the name mean? His personal name encompasses a lot.



When God told Moses His name, it was not just for Moses’ sake. God was telling His name to all the people. He was inviting the nation of Israel, Abraham’s descendants, to get to know Him personally.

Following God's instructions, Moses and his brother Aaron went to speak to Pharaoh after they had spoken to all the people.

### Exodus 5:1–2

<sup>1</sup> After this presentation to Israel's leaders, Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness." <sup>2</sup> "Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go."



Pharaoh did not know who Yahweh was. In Egypt, Pharaoh himself was worshipped as a god. This was in addition to the many different gods that the Egyptians had created for themselves to worship. Each god was a "provincial" god, meaning that god was only in charge of one area of the earth or one aspect of nature, like "god of the desert". or "god of the sun", etc.



So now, Yahweh was going to show both the Israelites and the Egyptians who the real Creator-God of the universe was and what He was like. Yahweh planned for Moses to be His representative and to speak to them on His behalf.

To make sure the people knew that Moses was speaking on His behalf, Yahweh gave Moses the ability to perform supernatural acts or miracles. Specifically, Moses was able to send plagues, meaning disastrous calamities.

When Pharaoh first refused to let the Israelites go, God told Moses to turn all the water in Egypt into blood. But this did not change Pharaoh's mind.

So God sent a plague of frogs. Pharaoh told Moses to remove the frogs, and then he would let the Israelites go. But when Yahweh removed the frogs, Pharaoh changed his mind and did not release the people.

Then God sent a plague of gnats.

With the first two plagues, Pharaoh's magicians (or diviners), with the help of Satan and his demonic powers, were able to mimic turning water into blood and calling forth frogs. But they were unable to imitate the plague of the gnats. In fact, they told Pharaoh that Yahweh was the One who sent the gnats.



Plague 1:  
Water to blood



Plague 2:  
Frogs



Plague 3:  
Lice (gnats)

### Exodus 8:16–19

<sup>16</sup> So the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Raise your staff and strike the ground. The dust will turn into swarms of gnats throughout the land of Egypt.'" <sup>17</sup> So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. When Aaron raised his hand and struck the ground with his staff, gnats infested the entire land, covering the Egyptians and their animals. All the dust in the land of Egypt turned into gnats. <sup>18</sup> Pharaoh's magicians tried to

do the same thing with their secret arts, but this time they failed. And the gnats covered everyone, people and animals alike.

<sup>19</sup> “This is the finger of God!” the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh’s heart remained hard. He wouldn’t listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

Though they simply said, “This is the finger of God”, it’s clear from the context that the magicians were referring to the God that Moses was representing—Yahweh. Demonic powers are no match for Yahweh.

Next, God sent a plague of flies. But He sent the flies to terrorise only the Egyptians. The flies did not affect the places where the Israelites lived. God was showing that He could make a clear distinction between two groups of people. Once again, Pharaoh said if Moses removed the flies, he would let the people go. But again, he went back on his word once God removed the flies.



Plague 4:  
Flies

Then God killed all the livestock of the Egyptians, but spared the Israelites’ livestock.



Plague 5:  
Death of livestock

And He sent painful sores to afflict the Egyptians but spared the Israelites.



Plague 6:  
Boils

Despite all this, Pharaoh remained hard-hearted towards the Israelites. So before the next plague of hail, God told Moses to issue this warning to Pharaoh.

#### **Exodus 9:17–21**

<sup>17</sup> But you still lord it over my people and refuse to let them go. <sup>18</sup> So tomorrow at this time I will send a hailstorm more devastating than any in all the history of Egypt. <sup>19</sup> Quick! Order your livestock and servants to come in from the fields to find shelter. Any person or animal left outside will die when the hail falls.”



Plague 7:  
Hail

<sup>20</sup> Some of Pharaoh’s officials were afraid because of what the LORD had said. They quickly brought their servants and livestock in from the fields. <sup>21</sup> But those who paid no attention to the word of the LORD left theirs out in the open.

The Egyptians who believed that Yahweh was really going to send hail heeded the warning and protected their livestock and servants. God was showing that those who trusted what He said would escape this judgment.

The next plague, which was locusts, devastated the land.



Plague 8:  
Locusts

This was followed by the plague of darkness where a supernatural darkness covered the land of the Egyptians.



Plague 9:  
Darkness











But the last plague was the worst. Yahweh would take away the life of all firstborns, human and livestock. It was not an uncontrolled plague that killed everyone, nor was it a disease that the Egyptians could not contain. This plague killed only the firstborn son of every family as well as the firstborn among the cattle. It was so supernatural that there was no mistaking that God was the One doing this.



Plague 10:  
Death of firstborn

Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go after these ten devastating plagues that totally destroyed Egypt. This event came to be known as the Exodus.

Some people wonder why Yahweh chose these particular plagues—why frogs, hail, darkness, etc. It was because the Egyptians worshipped a series of gods whom they believed controlled different aspects of nature. But Yahweh proved that they were not gods at all. And neither was Pharaoh. Instead, it was Yahweh who had total control over the whole earth.

Plague	Bible Reference	Egyptian god that Yahweh was targeting
 1. Water turned to blood	Exodus 7:14–25	<b>Gods linked to the Nile:</b> Khnum, Hapi, Osiris
 2. Frogs	Exodus 8:1–15	<b>Frog goddesses:</b> Hapi, Heqt
 3. Lice (gnats)	Exodus 8:16–19	<b>Earth god:</b> Seb
 4. Flies	Exodus 8:20–32	<b>Fly god:</b> Uatchit
 5. Death of livestock	Exodus 9:1–7	<b>Gods linked to cows/bulls:</b> Ptah, Hathor, Mnevis, Amon
 6. Boils	Exodus 9:8–12	<b>Goddess of epidemics:</b> Sekhmet <b>Gods of healing:</b> Serapis, Imhotep
 7. Hail	Exodus 9:13–35	<b>Sky goddess and god of the atmosphere:</b> Nut, Shu <b>Gods of agriculture:</b> Isis, Seth
 8. Locusts	Exodus 10:1–20	<b>Protector god from locusts:</b> Serapia
 9. Darkness	Exodus 10:21–29	<b>Sun gods:</b> Re, Amon-re, Aten, Atum, Horus <b>Moon god:</b> Thoth
 10. Death of the firstborn	Exodus 12:29–36	<b>All Egyptian gods, including Pharaoh himself.</b>

Through this event, the Israelites, the Egyptians and even those who lived in other lands learnt more about who Yahweh was and how all-powerful He was. They also learnt how serious He was about keeping the promises He had made.

However, God particularly used the tenth plague, which was the death of the firstborn, to teach mankind specific lessons about Himself and how He planned to save people.

## Yahweh gave more information about how He would save mankind through the tenth plague

The tenth plague would affect everyone in the land of Egypt, both the Egyptians and the Israelites. This was different from some of the earlier plagues that affected only the Egyptians. The only way to be saved was to trust Yahweh and His instructions on how to escape it. So before Yahweh sent this final plague, He instructed Moses to speak to the nation of Israel. Yahweh gave very specific instructions on how their firstborn sons could avoid the death-curse that was coming.



## The substitute

### Exodus 12:3–7, 22, 46

<sup>3</sup> Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household.

<sup>4</sup> If a family is too small to eat a whole animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood. Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how much they can eat.

<sup>5</sup> The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects. <sup>6</sup> “Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight.



<sup>7</sup> They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal.



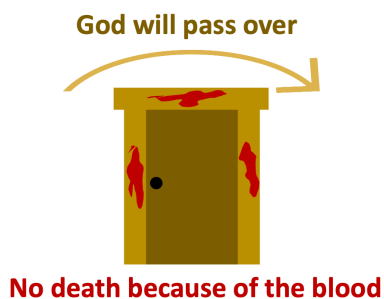
<sup>22</sup> Drain the blood into a basin. Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood. Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning.

<sup>46</sup> Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of its bones.

The only way of avoiding the death of the firstborn was to do exactly as Yahweh had instructed. God said if He saw blood on the doorframe of a house, He would pass over that family and their firstborn son would not die.

### Exodus 12:12–13

<sup>12</sup> On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! <sup>13</sup> But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.



God's judgment was that there would be a death in every house: either the firstborn son would die or a lamb would die.

What exactly was God teaching the Israelites?

1. God was saying that His judgment of death would be on the firstborn of every household.
2. But God would accept the death of a substitute (a lamb) in place of the firstborn.



That night, in every household in Egypt, there was a death. In households that did not trust God, the firstborns died. In households where the people trusted God, their firstborns did not die because there was already the death of the lamb substitute. This lamb sacrifice was the only way that God provided for the firstborns to escape judgment.

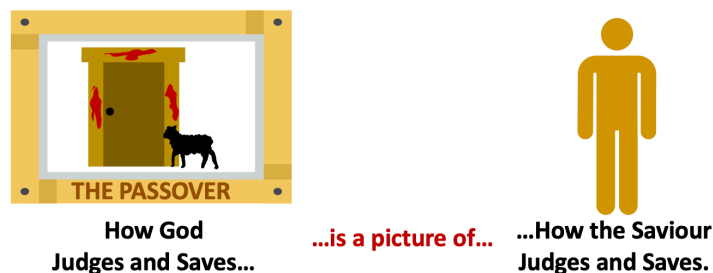
This tenth plague also came to be known as the Passover. This is because that night, God passed over the houses of those who offered up a sacrificial lamb as He had instructed.

The Passover was a very bloody affair. Some people find the whole picture very sickening. However, it is very important to understand the lesson that God was teaching: just as He accepted the death of the innocent substitute lamb in place of the firstborn who was meant to die, God would likewise accept the death of an innocent substitute in place of mankind who was headed for eternal death.



What does this mean? If an innocent substitute who was not under the death-curse, shed blood or died in the place of the one under the death-curse, God was willing to treat the death of the innocent as a substitute death for the one under the curse.

The Passover was a picture of how God would punish man's sin but spare man from eternal death. We will learn more about this as we go along.

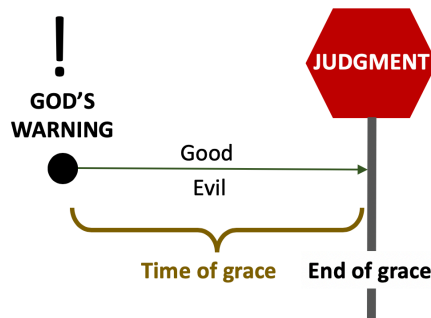


## Grace before judgment

Moses warned the people about what God was going to do. Before the tenth plague, God gave Pharaoh many opportunities to respond positively to Him. Pharaoh could have changed his mind at any time during the first nine plagues, which took place over a period of many months.

These many months before the tenth plague were the period of grace. It is important to understand that God's grace, His "undeserved love", is temporary. God will not tolerate evil forever. There is a limit.

A day will come when God no longer offers His grace. Instead, He will put an end to evil.



For the rebellious Egyptians, the Exodus ended not only with the death of their firstborns, but also with the destruction of the Egyptian economy, the death of Pharaoh and the leaders and the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. Grace to them had ended.

## Whom to save, whom to judge

When God judges, He does not make any mistakes: there are no accidents and no victims. God shows the He can choose perfectly between two groups of people.

It is important to note that everyone who believed Yahweh responded positively to Him and had their firstborns saved.

Earlier on, the Egyptians who believed God's warning about the seventh plague, hail, had managed to save their servants and livestock as they had brought them in from the fields.



Likewise, those who believed God's warning regarding the firstborns would also have managed to save their own.

In fact, the Bible says that when the approximately 2.4 million Israelites left Egypt, some Egyptians and other non-Israelites, who believed God, also went with them.

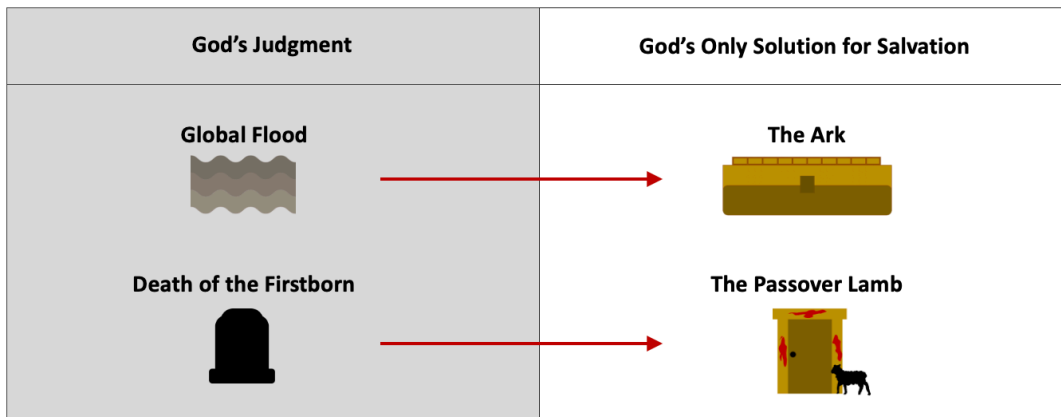
### Exodus 12:37–38

<sup>37</sup> That night the people of Israel left Rameses and started for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men, plus all the women and children. <sup>38</sup> A rabble of non-Israelites went with them, along with great flocks and herds of livestock.

## Only one way of salvation

Previously, when we studied the event of the Global Flood, we saw that when God was going to bring judgment on the world, He provided one way of salvation: the ark.

Now, we see that Yahweh also provided only one way of salvation from the death of the firstborn: the death of the substitute lamb.



Some people think that having only one way to be saved is unfair, and that there should be many different ways. However, Yahweh is the Creator-God and He chose one way to save mankind from the Global Flood and one way to save people from the death of their firstborns.

Later on, we will learn that, thankfully, as He promised, Yahweh also provides one way to be saved from eternal death. It is not that there is no way to be saved. God does provide a way. But people would need to accept His solution, just as Noah and the Israelites in Egypt did.

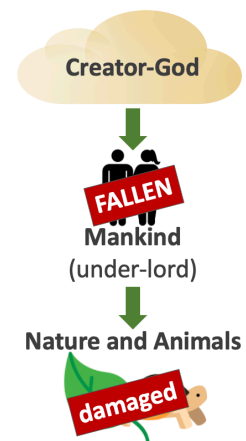
## Man and nature impacted

When Adam and Eve rebelled, God cursed the ground because of their sin. Evil damaged both man and nature.

In the Exodus, God saved the Israelites from slavery by judging the Egyptians. In saving them, nature was also severely impacted, including:

- the waterways of Egypt
- animal life
- crops, trees and other plants
- and even the weather.

The landscape of Egypt was ruined by God's judgment against evil mankind.



## How to be saved: by faith

There was nothing the Israelites could do to help themselves be set free from slavery. This saving work had to be done entirely by Yahweh.

The people had to believe that the slaughter of the lamb and its blood on their doorframes would save their firstborns from death. And the people had to believe that Yahweh would keep His promise to rescue them.

## Summary

The Global Flood was Yahweh's first worldwide judgment on evil mankind. Through it, we learnt about God's character and how He judges and saves. The Passover also taught these same five lessons. Here is a summary.

How God Judges and Saves	The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn
1. <b>Grace before judgment</b>	Moses warned the people. They could respond positively to God any time before the tenth plague.
2. <b>Whom to save, whom to judge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Saved:</b> the firstborns whose families slaughtered the lamb and applied its blood to the doorframe of the house.</li> <li>• <b>Judged:</b> the firstborns whose families did not slaughter the lamb.</li> </ul>
3. <b>Only one way of salvation</b>	Slaughtering the substitute lamb was the only way to be saved.
4. <b>Man and nature impacted</b>	The physical environment of Egypt was destroyed.
5. <b>How to be saved: by faith</b>	The Israelites trusted Yahweh for salvation.

## What happened next?

Just as Yahweh had promised, He gave Abraham a son, grew his descendants into a great nation and rescued them from Egypt. In the next lesson, we will see what God did to prepare the nation of Israel to be a counterculture and how God used them to preserve His history and truth for all generations of mankind.



### Bible reading for review

Genesis 15–17; Exodus 1–14. (All numbers refer to complete chapters.)

## Is God being cruel to animals by using them for sacrifice?

Some people feel that to kill an animal, whether for sacrifice, or even for food, is evil and cruel. They believe animals should be treated in the same way as humans.

We need to remember that God does not view animals the same way He views man.

- Mankind was made in the image of God. This means people are unique among all of God's creation. Mankind was created to have a relationship with Him. And man was to rule animals in a responsible way, according to God's instructions.



- Animals were not created in God's image. They were not designed to have a personal relationship with Him like man was. Man and animals are not equals.

### Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

One reason animals were given to man was for food. But God gave specific instructions on how animals were to be killed: the animal's blood had to be drained from the flesh.

### Genesis 9:3–4

<sup>3</sup> I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.

<sup>4</sup> But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

Why did God do this? Killing an animal in this way was merciful because the animal would faint quickly from the blood loss. Also, it forced mankind to recognise and respect that the animal's life had been sacrificed so that they might eat and live.

God also gave instructions for certain animals to be used as a blood sacrifice, as a substitute for man. (We will learn more about this in Lesson 10.)

**Leviticus 17:11**

for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.

God was saying that blood represented life. And God placed greater value on the life of a person. He allowed the animal to die in the place of the person.

At the Passover, the firstborn could live but only if the lamb died. The Israelites could certainly choose not to kill the lamb. However, it was either going to be the death of their firstborn, or the death of a lamb. The choice was theirs. There had to be a death. Which life would they value more?

**God's Judgment:****Death in every house****EITHER...**

the firstborn dies

**OR...**

a substitute dies



Would they value the life of a person in the way God values man? Or, based on their own ideas, would they deem an animal of greater worth than a man?

The Israelites agreed with Yahweh that the lives of their firstborns were more valuable.