

June 18th, 2023

Passover Pt. 1: The Beginning of a New World

Exodus 12:1-3

The De-creating of Egypt

9 plagues have passed—Moses now turns to the final plague where he gives the most attention. As we have seen the plagues not only represent judgment upon Egypt for enslaving and murdering God's people, not only do they represent judgment upon Egypt's gods, but these plagues represent the de-creating of Egypt itself. As one author put it

“The God who made the waters turned the Nile into blood. The God who made green things grow destroyed vegetation with hail and locusts. The God who made creatures swim in the sea and swarm on dry land brought death to fish and frogs. The God who made men and beasts sent them disease and even death...the God who brought light out of darkness made the light fade to black.”¹

We would add, the God who gave man dominion over the earth, was now disinheriting the Egyptians of the earth by killing their firstborn.

¹ Philip Graham Ryken, *Preaching the Word: Exodus, Saved for God's Glory*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2015), pg. 279

The Re-creating of Israel

If the plagues represent the de-creation of Egypt, then what does the Passover represent? The creation of Israel. God is tearing down the old world and raising up a new one. That's how the Bible speaks about the Israel coming out of Egypt—starting with the Passover—its the creation of a new world. And that is *precisely* how the gospel works. The old world that we used to be enslaved to only brought us misery and death. When Christ the True and Better Passover Lamb came into the world, we were delivered from the old world, and made entirely new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

The Big Idea...

Redemption is the re-creation of God's people, the old has passed away, the new has come

★ Our Doctrine

★ Our Duty

★ Our Delight

I. Our Doctrine

The unique Passover in the land of Egypt

Please look at v.1 “The LORD said to Moses and Aaron *in the land of Egypt*.” Some of the Passover requirements *here* were only for the land of Egypt, others

were perpetual. For instance, *in the land of Egypt* the lamb was to be sacrificed at each family's home, hereafter it was to be taken to the tabernacle (Deuteronomy 16:5). Additionally the smearing of the blood on the doorposts was only for this first Passover *in the land of Egypt*. This was a unique never to be repeated Passover. The subsequent celebrations of Passover were memorials—remembrance celebrations of the first Passover. That is why this first verse stresses that the LORD said this “in the land of Egypt.”²

Prepping them to depart

Apparently God spoke these words several days³ before this evening. According to v.6, Passover was to happen on the 14th day of the month. But according to v.3 they were to take the lamb to their homes on the 10th day. If God spoke the words of v.2 on the first day of the month, then this took place 2 weeks before Passover. Perhaps before the plague of the locusts. It's not until v.21 when Moses told the elders of Israel all these instructions. But remember the actual passover took place on the 14th night. Chapter 11 ended on the 14th night.⁴ God instructed them well before this evening so they could prepare accordingly. They were to leave in haste, they would have had to been ready.

Three beginnings

There are three beginnings in our passage 1) The beginning of time; 2) The beginning of Israel; 3) The beginning of redemption.

² Help here from James Jordan's 124 part series on Exodus on the Canon+ App, Exodus 12:1-7

³ I think probably exactly two weeks assuming v.2 was spoken at the beginning of the month. Moses gave these instructions to the elders of Israel in v.21

⁴ Exodus 11:4 “So Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt’”

I. The beginning of time

Please look at v.2 “This month shall be for you *the beginning of months*. It shall be the first month of the year for you.” The Hebrew word for beginning means more than *merely* first—it means source, head, top, chief—not only indicating the beginning of a new age, but the beginning or *source* of life itself. From here forward God wanted Israel’s calendar to reflect this very moment. Prior to this time, it is believed that the ancient world celebrated the new year during harvest time. Calvin, Edwards and others believed it was September.⁵ The reason being is that harvest *reflected* the creation of the world. In the beginning, Adam came into the garden that was ripe with fruits and vegetables—which is the time of harvest. So it was believed that time began—and thus the calendar began—at harvest.⁶ But now God is changing their beginning of months—He’s changing their calendar. This month which the Jews called the

⁵ John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. II*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 458-459. “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year unto you.” Because in this month God wrought out for them that great typical redemption out of Egypt, representing the redemption of Jesus Christ, and also because he intended at the same time of year actually to complete the work of spiritual and eternal redemption of his church by the death, resurrection, and ascension of the great Redeemer. It is probable that the Israelites, as well as other nations, had till now begun the year in autumn, about the autumnal equinox, about which time of year there is reason to think the world was created. But as now God at the time of the redemption changed the day of their sabbath, (as Mr. Bedford in his Scripture Chronology makes probable,) so he changed the beginning of this year from the autumnal equinox, the time when the old creation was wrought, to the spring, about the vernal equinox, the time of the new creation.” Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 719 “...while the Israelites were in Egypt they observed the same beginning of the year and course of months as the Egyptians, as Josephus (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 3.) intimates; and with the Egyptians, the month Thot was the first month, which answered to Tisri with the Jews, and both to our September, or a part of it, so that the beginning of the year was then in the autumnal equinox, at which season it is thought the world was created; but now to the Israelites it was changed unto the vernal equinox, for this month of Abib or Nisan answers to part of our March and part of April; though indeed both beginnings of the year were observed by them, the one on ecclesiastic, the other on civil accounts; or, as Josephus (a) expresses it, the month of Nisan was the beginning with respect to things divine, but in buying and selling, and such like things, the ancient order was observed.” Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible, Source: <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/12-2.htm> Accessed June 17, 2023

⁶ Exodus 8:22 suggests the existence of seasons as part of the natural order established by God from the very beginning of creation. After the Babylonian Captivity, the first month was called "Nisan" - Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7

month of Abib⁷ (March-April) would now be their first month, their chief month, the month which was the source of their life.

The reorientation of time itself

Michael Morales says here:

“the Passover is so significant that *God reorients time itself*, making the month of Passover the first or chief month of Israel's liturgical calendar⁸...Such a momentous paradigm shift served to define Israel's deliverance out of Egypt as inaugurating *a new beginning, not merely* in terms of a fresh start but as *a new creation—a new life* on the other side of their death to the old life. Indeed, every major festival of Israel was associated with the exodus, granting each generation an annual experience of Israel's redemption, intended to shape the nation's identity and vocation, and its knowledge of Yahweh, the God of the exodus.”⁹

The Passover would alter time itself—changing Israel's calendar forever. The Exodus was a re-enactment of creation. That's our **first beginning**: Passover represents *the beginning of a new age*.

2. The Beginning of Israel

Look at v.3 with me: “Tell *all the congregation of Israel*” Stop. If you look up the word *congregation* in a Hebrew Lexicon, you will discover this is the first time

⁷ Exodus 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1

⁸ "(Exodus 12:2; this month is called "Abib" in Israel's early history, then "Nisan" after the exile)"

⁹ L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, (Downers Grove, IL,: IVP Academic, 2020), pg. 67. See also David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion*, (Horn Lake, MS.,: Dominion Press, 2007), pg. 57

we read “the congregation of Israel.” John Currid says here “We are viewing for the first time the establishment of the Hebrews as a corporate entity.”¹⁰ Israel came into Egypt as a large family—a tribe. But now God is declaring her to be a nation. Passover marks the birthday of the nation of Israel. And the establishment of Israel as a nation was *the most significant event in the ancient world*.

The establishing of a new world

There are two places that show the significance of Israel’s birthday. **First**, please turn to Romans 9:4-5. The Apostle Paul helps us to see how significant the creation of Israel was: “They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, *is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.*” **Second**, please turn to Isaiah 51:16-17. Here the prophet looks back and likens Israel’s creation to the creating of a new heavens and a new earth: “I am the LORD your God, *who stirs up the sea* [other translations render this “Who divided the sea”¹¹ —recalling God parting the sea for Israel to leave Egypt] *so that its waves roar* the LORD of hosts is his name. ¹⁶ And I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, *establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth*, and saying to Zion, ‘You are my people.’” Puritan John Owen says here ‘

“The time...here mentioned, of [establishing] the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth, was performed by God, was when he "divided the sea," (v.15)¹²... that is, when he took the children of Israel out of Egypt, and

¹⁰ John D. Currid, *Exodus Vol. 1: Chapters 1-18*, (Auburn, MA.: Evangelical Press, 2000), pg. 239

¹¹ See KJV and NKJV

¹² “...and gave the law, verse 16, and said to Zion, ‘Thou art my people’”

formed them in the wilderness into a church and state. Then he planted the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, made the new world; that is, brought forth order, and government, and beauty, from the confusion wherein before they were. This is the planting of the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth in the world.”¹³

Passover marked the birth of Israel—what Scripture calls establishing the heavens and laying the foundation of the earth.¹⁴ The Exodus was a re-enactment of creation. That’s our **second beginning**: Passover represents *the beginning of a new world*.

3. The Beginning of Redemption

Let’s turn back to Exodus 12. The Israelites were not free from the last plague. A firstborn had to die. It would either be their own, or a firstborn lamb. v.3 “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.” Now, I don’t know what Israel knew, or what Moses and Aaron knew about this lamb, but the NT authors certainly knew who this Lamb was.

- When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he said “Behold *the Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)
- The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:7 “...Christ, *our Passover Lamb*, has been sacrificed.”

¹³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen Vol. 9*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 7th Printing, 2017), pg. 134

¹⁴ Isn’t that fascinating? When Israel was created, it was called the planting of the heavens. When Israel was judged in 70 AD, what do we find? The tearing down of the heavens. Matthew 24:29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”

- The Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 1:19 we were ransomed “...with the precious blood of Christ, *like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*”
- The Apostle John said in Revelation 5:13 speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ: “Worthy is *the Lamb who was slain*, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

This Lamb of God is the reason Israel entered into a new age—the reason Israel entered into a new world. The reason *why* the old passed away and the new had come. Israel’s being re-created is a foreshadow of all the redemption that we enjoy in the True and Better Passover Lamb—Jesus Christ. That’s our **third beginning**: Passover represents *the beginning of our redemption*.

Our Doctrine:

That brings us to **our doctrine**: *Redemption is the re-creation of God's people, the old has passed away, the new has come.* Scripture identifies redemption with being re-created. Israel wasn’t *merely* being freed from Egyptian slavery. Israel was being recreated—she was entering a new age, a new world. Israel’s redemption is a type of what our redemption in Jesus Christ accomplished. We have entered into a new life, a new age, and a new world. Consider three proofs from Scripture.

Proof #1: The New Birth

Children, boys and girls, when was the first time you breathed air? When your mother gave birth to you. You were given life at conception, and then you came into this world at birth. What does the Bible call getting saved? The new birth—being born again. 1 Peter 1:3 “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be *born again* to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus

Christ from the dead.” The new birth teaches us that Jesus Christ has ushered in a new life, a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 “...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Proof #2: The New Sabbath

Why do we rest on the 1st day of the week when Israel rested on the 7th day? Israel rested on the 7th day to glory in God’s creating all things. Exodus 20:11 “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.” But the Church from the very beginning has rested on the 1st day because Jesus Christ—the 2nd Adam, the Head of the New Creation—rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Just as Israel’s calendar changed from remembering creation to remembering their redemption from Egypt, so has ours. The new Sabbath teaches us that Jesus Christ has ushered in a new age.¹⁵

Proof #3: The New World

Please turn to Isaiah 65. Look at v.1 “I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, “Here I am, here I am,” to a nation that was not called by my name.” What is the LORD talking about here? We don’t have to guess, Paul tells us in Romans 10:20—He’s talking about bringing salvation to the Gentiles through the death

¹⁵ This changes is seen in five clear truths from the new testament. 1) The resurrection of Christ happened on the first day of the week - Matthew 28:1; 2) The global church was birthed on the first day of the week - Acts 2:1. Pentecost is exactly 50 days from the Passover Sabbath (Lev. 23:15-16) That’s seven weeks plus 1 day, which is the first day of the week. 3) The Apostle Paul commanded worship to happen on the first day of the week - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. 4) The practice of the early church was to meet on the first day of the week - Acts 20:7. 5) John’s apocalyptic vision called the first day of the week “the Lord’s Day” - Revelation 1:10. cf. my message entitled “The Gospel Changes Everything: The Sabbath in Redemption.”

burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹⁶ How does God describe this salvation brought to the Gentile world? *The same way* He described salvation brought to the Jews in Egypt. Look at v.17 “For behold, *I create new heavens and a new earth*, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.”¹⁷ Some people mistake this language for Heaven here. Certainly there is a new heavens and a new earth coming *still coming* in glory. But look at this passage later, you’ll see there are things included here such as birth and death that don’t belong to Heaven.¹⁸ When the Lamb of God came into the world, it was more radical than the Exodus, such that the Scripture likens it to a new heavens and a new earth.

Summa Theologica

That’s **our doctrine**: *Redemption is the re-creation of God's people, the old has passed away, the new has come.*

¹⁶ What about the Jews? They are the rebellious people mentioned in v.2. What’s going to happen to them? Like God judged Egypt, He would judge Israel because they forsook Him (v.11) therefore He would hand them over to the sword (v.12) and put them to death (v.15). This was ultimately fulfilled in 70 AD, when Christ punished Israel (Matthew 23:33-24:35) and took the kingdom away from them and gave it to the church (Matthew 21:43).

¹⁷ If someone argues that this is only speaking about Jerusalem in the purely ethnic sense because of v.18, I would say two things. 1) The church is identified with the Jerusalem that is above (Galatians 4:26-31) the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16); the being Jewish (Romans 2:28) having an inward circumcision (Romans 2:29) as children of Abraham (Galatians 3:29) being united into one man with the Jewish church (Ephesians 2:14-16). 2) Certainly this would include ethnic Jews because there has always been a remnant of saved Jews (Romans 11:5) and there will come a time when all Israel (ethnic) will be saved (Romans 11:25-27)

¹⁸ Some have asked “Can one imagine death without weeping” - referring to v.19-20 (Hoekema, *Bible and the Future*, 202). But the more difficult question is “Can you image a Heaven that still has death?” Chilton says here in his commentary on Revelation 21:4-5 “We can look forward to the absolute and perfect fulfillment of his promise at the Last Day, when the last enemy is destroyed. But, in principle, it is true already. Jesus said: “I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25-26). God has wiped away our tears, for we are par-takers of His First Resurrection. One striking evidence of this is the obvious difference between Christian and pagan funerals: We grieve, but not as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). God has taken away the sting of death (1 Cor. 15:55-58).” David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, (Tyler, TX.: Dominion Press, 1987), pg. 547

II. Our Duty

Informatory Use

Our **first duty** is *think about how we should read the Bible*. Some of us are newer Christians who don't yet know how to read the Bible and some of us older Christians who haven't been taught rightly how to read the Scriptures. The OT is filled with types. A type is a prophecy in picture form. Romans 5:14 says that Adam was a *type* of Christ. Hebrews 8:5 says the tabernacle was a *type* of Heaven. Likewise Israel is *type* of the church (Acts 7:38), and her redemption from Egypt is a *type* of our redemption from sin (1 Corinthians 5:7). To read about Israel's deliverance and her passover and not directly apply it to us, is to misread the Bible. Israel's deliverance was recreation—the beginning a new age, and a new world—and that is precisely how we are to see our redemption. If you are looking for a good book on typology, I would recommend Jonathan Edwards' *A History of Redemption*. A kid's version that you could read during family worship would be Starr Meade's book called "*Grandpa's Box: Retelling the Biblical Story of Redemption*."

Elencitic Use

That brings us to our **second duty** to *answer an objection*. Someone might say "Why use this fantastical language? Why compare redemption to recreation? Why liken Christ's gospel work to creating a new heavens and a new earth? Why so fantastical?" I have two answers. **First**, this is the language the Bible uses. Apparently God wants us to think about what Christ has done in terms of creating a new cosmos. **Secondly**, I would say this language is not fantastical enough. Which is easier? Creating a New Heavens and a New Earth

or creating a Christian?¹⁹ Dear congregation, the work of creation is an unfathomable work of God. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Psalm 19:1) We will be studying and glorying in God’s creation for eternal ages. But the work of redemption far exceeds it. Oh think of it.

- In creation, God simply spoke “let there be.” But in redemption, God the Son forever united Himself to a human nature. Jonathan Edwards says here:

“[This] shows the great and inconceivable power of God to unite natures so infinitely different, as the divine and human nature into one person. If God can make one who is truly God , and one that is truly man, the self-same person, what is it that He cannot do? This is a far greater and more marvelous work than creation.”²⁰

- In creation, and God brought something out of nothing. He created ex nihilo—out of nothing. No human being can or ever will created ex nihilo. It is unparalleled power. But in redemption, God brings men out of sin and death and conforms them to the image of His blessed Son. Again Edwards says here :

“Making a holy creature, a creature in the spiritual image of God, in the image of the divine excellencies, and a partaker of the divine nature—is

¹⁹ In Egypt, God was not merely setting prisoners free. Israel was given over to demonic idol worship just like Egypt. To redeem them would cost God dearly. Likewise, the price of your freedom wasn’t purchased by worthless things such as silver or gold, but by the precious blood of the Lamb.

²⁰ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 144

a greater [work] than merely to give [life]...[to bring a sinner] to a holy and happy being, [is] a state infinitely better than mere [life].”²¹

- In creation, there was no opposition God faced, because “...‘nothing’ makes no opposition to the creation power of God.”²² But in redemption, God faces every opposition. In Egypt, God faced opposition from Pharaoh, from the demon gods Egypt worshipped, and from the Israelites themselves who didn’t want to leave. Likewise in our redemption, Jesus Christ had to face the strong man—Satan himself—who held dominion over the kingdoms of this world.²³ Matthew 12:29 “...how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.” Jesus conquered the strongest enemy in Satan. But he also conquered his entire demon army. Colossians 2:15 “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”²⁴ Furthermore, Jesus had to overcome the opposition of every sinner He ever has or ever will save. Just as Israel was opposed to leaving Egypt, so all of mankind opposed the saving advance of Jesus Christ. John 3:19 “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”

²¹ *Ibid*, pg. 144

²² *Ibid*

²³ Luke 4:6

²⁴ NIV

Dear congregation, it is not fantastical language to compare the work of Jesus Christ to the beginning of a new age, or the beginning of a new world. It's understatement.

Admonitory Use

Our **third duty** is *rebuke*. They are rebuked by this message who are still under the calendar of Egypt. These are those who have no time for the One True and Living God. God is not at the center of their calendar. Calendars are religious things. Calendars are like checkbooks. Checkbooks reveal what are the most important things in our lives. Matthew 6:21 says “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Our money shows us who we worship. Likewise, our calendars show us who are god is. Who controls our time is our god.²⁵ When Pharaoh was first confronted by Moses he said “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice.” His calendar was His own. When God redeemed Israel, He changed their calendar so that their very time reflected that they belonged to Him. If a person rejects God’s Lordship over their time, it’s because they reject God. They, like Pharaoh, say “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice—that I should give Him my time?” They live for themselves. Their calendar has no room for worship of the Living God, rather it is filled with wicked works. They think it no great sin to spend all their time on themselves and their own desires and leave no time for God. Dear friend, if that is you, then be warned, understand that those who were under Egypt’s calendar were cut off. They were on the outside of the Passover feast—outside of Christ—where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth as the angel of death visited each Egyptian home. You see the punishment of Egypt is a type of the punishment in

²⁵ Fascinating here that Calvin put this section under the 1st Commandment in his commentary.

hell. “The word for hell (Gehenna, or Hinnom) refers to a city dump, a place of junk and trash, of decay and worms and of fires to consume the piles of waste.”²⁶ Dear friend, if you choose the garbage dump over God, you are a fool. Turn away from your sins. You can find forgiveness and salvation if you turn to Him in faith. The blood of Jesus Christ—the Passover Lamb—can cleanse you from all sin. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Scripture says that “...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

III. Our Delight

Consolatory Use

Dear people of the Lord, our calendar is of the greatest comfort for our souls. When God redeemed Israel, He said in v.2 “this...shall be for you the beginning...” When Christ—our Passover Lamb redeemed you, God said “this... shall be for you the beginning...” A.W. Pink says it like this:

“All the years we lived before we became new creatures in Christ *are not reckoned to our account. The past is blotted out.* Our unregenerate days were so much lost time. Our past lives in the service of sin and Satan, were wasted.

²⁶ Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law Vol. 3: The Intent of the Law*, (Vallecito, CA.,: Ross House Books, 2009), pg.

But when we became new creatures in Christ "old things passed away" and all things became new."²⁷

Think of all the saints whose past Christ blotted out.

- Abraham was a pagan moon worshipper, but the Lamb of God took hold of him and said *this shall be for you the beginning*. And God in Christ made him the father of Israel.
- Mary Magdalene was filled with seven devils, but Christ our Passover Lamb took hold of her and said *this shall be for you the beginning*. And Jesus made her one of his disciples.
- Paul was a persecutor of church, and the blood of many saint was on his hands, but the Lord took hold of him and said *this shall be for you the beginning*. And the Lord made him an apostle and shepherd of the church.

Loved ones, when Christ took hold of you, God said *this shall be for you the beginning*. A new age began, a new birth was given, a new world was created for you. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."²⁸ Oh think of what you were when you were in Egypt and how God in Christ has given you a new beginning.

²⁷ A.W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*, pg. 153, Source: <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pink/Gleanings%20In%20Exodus%20-%20Arthur%20W.%20Pink.pdf> Accessed June 18, 2023

²⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:17

You were a slave to sin. You were in bondage to Satan. You were separated from Christ, a stranger to the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Death was all that was in your future.

But God took hold of you and brought you under the blood of the Passover Lamb Jesus Christ, and said *this is the beginning of life*. All things were made right. The Son set you free.

- You were child of disobedience, you became a child of God
- You were dead in your sins, but now you are alive in Christ
- You had an unclean spirit, but now you are filled with the Holy Spirit

You have been re-created. Dear congregation, God has wrought in you a greater work than creating the cosmos. For you, God united the Divine nature of His Son with a human nature—a work far greater than creating all the galaxies in the universe. God made you—a *sinner*—a partaker of His divine nature. God overcame the opposition of Satan, of the principalities and powers and your opposition to bring you to Himself.

Comfort yourselves in this truth. What Christ has done in you is the greatest work—the most excellent work—a work that will bring praise and honor and glory to God for all eternity.

Hortatory Use

What then is our charge this morning? I have two exhortations for you. **First** I charge you: count the day of your second birth the most honorable day of your life. Count *that day* as the day when God said “this is the beginning of

life.” It matters not if you can remember that day or not, I don’t remember that day. What matters is you look on that day as the day when God brought you into a new age—brought you into a new world. As Charles Spurgeon says here:

“[That day] eclipses your natural birthday, for then you were born in sin...But now you are born into spiritual life, born unto eternal bliss. It eclipses your marriage day, for union to Christ shall bring you greater felicity than the happiest of conjugal bonds. If you have ever known a day in which you received the honors of the State, or gained distinction in learning, or attained to a position in society, or arrived at a larger wealth, all these were but dim, cloudy, foggy days compared with this “morning without clouds.” On that day your sun rose never to go down again, the die was cast; your destiny for glory was openly declared.”²⁹

This is how we get discouraged because we forget the true beginning of our days. We forget that God has reset our calendar, that our identity and calling and everlasting joy is in Him and not in the calendar of this world.

Secondly I charge you: *fight to have God be the priority in your calendar.* In our passage, God put Himself as the priority in Israel’s calendar. The first month Abib was to be the head month, the source month, the chief month. There is a lesson here. God wants the firstfruits of our time. This of course means that we give the first day of the week to Him—it is the Lord’s Day. But it means more, it means that He has the priority in all our time. He would have us seek *first* the Kingdom of God in our marriages, in our parenting, in our jobs, in our celebrating, in our sorrow, in our trials, in our sicknesses, in all things. In

²⁹ Source: <http://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1637.pdf> Accessed June 18, 2023

the world's calendar, God is forgotten, He is a footnote. But to the Christian, God is to be the first consideration in how we spend our days. He has given us a new beginning. How can we not live for Him all the days of our life? Giving God control over our calendar is not a miserable thing. We left that behind in Egypt. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."³⁰ May He bless us and enable us to that end.

³⁰ John 10:10