

"The LORD Makes A Distinction"

A West London Sunday with "baby dedications." Six babies featured today. And the intentions of the parents regarding these children -- and regarding their own parenting -- are some of the things that set each of these little ones apart. In the providence of God, the next piece of the story in "exiting Egypt" brings us to **God's 10th "act of judgment" ~ the most terrible of the ten ~ Exodus 11:1-7**. The Lord said to Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. 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. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people. So Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, 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. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that **the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.**"

Notice some things about this text.

NOTICE

- i) **the total control of God over all the people in the story:**
 - * over Pharaoh, who let the slaves go "completely"
 - * over the neighbors of the Israelite slaves, who thought well of the slaves and lent them their jewelry
 - * over Moses He now was considered "very great," nation-wide
 - * over the dogs in Egypt, who didn't growl at the slaves or at the slaves' animals!
 - * over all the firstborn children of the Egyptians, who all died, one night about midnight

- ii) **how inappropriate a Bible story this is for a "Baby Sunday"** → a brutal story of life and death! Not a story of God our compassionate father who art in heaven but God the judge of all the earth, "in whose hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind," the God who "kills and makes alive."

- iii) **that we are looking at it all the same!** As the guy who decided we would, let me explain why I think it is a good idea. These six babies, and all their fellow West London babies, have been born into a dangerous, brutal world, and have been born into the West London church family. These six pairs of parents, and all their fellow West London parents of young children, have brought these babies into the world at a dangerous, brutal time. They have done so with some measure of confidence in God to help them in their parenting, and to care for their babies through them. It is my hope that this study of God's Word will increase that confidence and will strengthen their faith in God.

WHAT TO KNOW:

Exodus 11:7 ... , that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

1. **The LORD makes a distinction between his people and everyone else.** It's a distinction that shows up in the lives of their children.

This distinction is nothing to brag about.

Romans 9:21 out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

But neither should this distinction be ignored. It is something we should know and strive to remember.

This distinction is designed to show up in the lives of our children. **Exodus 20:5-6** You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the

children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.

2. **This distinction is to be made known to the next generation.**

Exodus 12:14 "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.

Exodus 12:25-27 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.

Exodus 13:8 You shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.'

Exodus 13:14 And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.'

NOTICE SOMETHING ELSE: This instruction to Israel to explain to their children what God had done gets generalized. **Deuteronomy 6:1-7** Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, **you and your son and your son's son**, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. **You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.**

WHAT TO DO:

a) **Make this distinction actually true in your life.**

Get free of all other enslavements so that you can actually be a good and faithful slave of Christ.

Galatians 5:1,13 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery... For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

This requires us to develop and maintain a distinction between us and the people of this world.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

This distinction is, in the first place, a distinction in character: **2 Corinthians 7:1** Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

b) Make this distinction known to the next generation.

- i) **To your own children** One of your most important God-given tasks, if you are parenting children.
- ii) **To other children in the church** → What our children's ministry is all about! [Not just so that you parents have some support in your great task. ALSO, so that some of you have the privilege of passing the truth and the power and the reality of the gospel to the next generation.]

NEXT EXODUS SERMON: (November 15): **"By a Strong Hand"** [Exodus 12:33-13:16]