

## **Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 6, Exodus 11-12**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

#### **1. Abstract of Oswalt, Exodus, Session 6, Exodus 11-12, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This is a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus chapters 11 and 12, focusing on the tenth plague and the Passover. **Oswalt interprets the plagues as attacks on Egyptian gods**, culminating in the death of the firstborn, which he connects to the sacrifice of Jesus. He **emphasizes the interwoven themes of Passover, worship, and the nature of God's relationship with humanity**. The lecture also **discusses the significance of unleavened bread**, symbolizing sin and the need for complete surrender to God, and explores the distinctions between belief and faith. Finally, Oswalt clarifies God's role in causing events, differentiating between primary and secondary causes.

**2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Oswalt, Exodus, Session 6 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →  
Pentateuch → Exodus).**



**Oswalt\_Exodus\_Ses  
sion06.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 6, Exodus 11-12

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on Exodus 11-12:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus 11-12**

##### **Overview:**

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on the events leading up to the Exodus, specifically the 10th plague (the death of the firstborn) and the establishment of the Passover. He emphasizes that these events are not just historical narratives, but have profound theological significance relating to God's power, the nature of sin, and the foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice. He also stresses that the ultimate purpose of the Exodus, and indeed the Christian life, is worship.

##### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

#### **1. The Tenth Plague as an Attack on Life:**

- Dr. Oswalt emphasizes that the final plague is a direct attack on the Egyptian's obsession with preserving life, their gods were supposed to be sources of life, but God shows that they are sources of death. The death of the firstborn, the guarantee of continued lineage, shows that life apart from God leads to death.
- Quote: "And so, God is saying anything, anything that you put in place of me as a source of life is going to fail you."

#### **1. God's Overwhelming Victory & Driving Out of Egypt**

- The 10th plague results not merely in the Israelites being allowed to leave, but being forcefully driven out. This emphasizes that Yahweh has completely defeated the power of Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt.
- Quote: "It's not merely a case of acquiescence in what God has been saying. It's, in fact, forcefully driving them out. Yahweh has, in fact, been the victor in every sense of the word."

## 1. Repetition and the Plundering of Egypt:

- The repeated commands (Exodus 3:21-22, 11:2, 12:35-36) for the Israelites to request gold and silver from the Egyptians is significant. It highlights God's purposeful action in enabling the Israelites to gain wealth and resources, which they later use to build the tabernacle and for worship.
- Quote: "If something is repeated, it's significant. And God is trying to get our attention, and he's trying to make a point."
- This plundering is directly tied to their ultimate purpose, which is not simply freedom from slavery, but the opportunity to worship God.
- Quote: "And what is the ultimate purpose of getting out of Egypt? Worship."

## 1. The True Goal: Relationship & Worship, Not Just Freedom or Canaan:

- The lecture stresses that the ultimate goal of the Exodus and of the Christian life is not primarily freedom from bondage or reaching Canaan (or Heaven), but rather having an intimate relationship with God, that manifests as worship.
- Quote: "The ultimate purpose is not Canaan. The ultimate purpose is God in their presence, and that relates squarely to the Christian life."
- Worship is not simply ritual action but a relational response based on recognizing God's identity as creator and our own position as creatures. True worship involves acknowledging this creator/creature relationship.
- Quote: "Ultimately, what God wants is that relationship with us... if we truly understand that we're the creature and he's the creator. So that worship must flow through this relationship."
- Worship has a physical component (e.g., falling on one's face). However, if the actions are not connected to one's spirit and reverence for God, they're vain.

## 1. God's Justice and the Firstborn:

- Oswalt addresses the apparent harshness of the death of the firstborn by pointing out that Pharaoh had first decreed the deaths of all Israelite male children. God's actions are thus placed in context and also tied to God's repeated declaration that Israel is his firstborn son, and a warning in Exodus 4 of God slaying Pharaoh's firstborn if Israel is not released.

- Quote: "So, who's more cruel, Pharaoh or Yahweh? Yahweh only took the firstborn sons. Pharaoh was taking all the sons."
- The concept of the firstborn is further connected to the ultimate sacrifice of God's own son, Jesus, who is referred to as the firstborn.
- Quote: "So, this firstborn son thing is running through here, and in the end, for the sins of the world, God is going to give His firstborn son."

#### 1. **The Purpose of the Passover Ritual:**

- The lecture explores why God did not just exempt the Israelites without a ritual. The Passover lamb sacrifice is a way of establishing a memorial and providing teaching, but also most importantly, it is a pointer forward to the work of Christ in dying for sin.
- Quote: "And the answer is because of where we're headed here. It's not just that they should remember what God has done. It's remembered every year with a dead lamb whose blood is put on the doorpost."
- The Passover points to the issue of death in the world caused by sin. God is not simply making an arbitrary intervention but is addressing the underlying issue of sin and death that would cause the creation to fall apart without his intervention.
- Quote: "So, what's to be done? What's to be done about death in the world? Pharaoh's firstborn son dies. And God's firstborn son dies."

#### 1. **The Nature of the Lamb and "Tamim":**

- The Passover lamb must be "without blemish" (tamim), meaning complete and whole, all that could reasonably be expected. This emphasizes that Jesus is the perfect sacrifice.
- Oswalt criticizes the tendency of modern Bible versions to soften the meaning of "perfect" in this context. He emphasizes it does not mean "infallible", but "whole" and "complete."
- Quote: "It's the word tamim. The basic root is tam, which is to be whole, to be complete, all that is expected."
- This concept of the lamb being all that is expected applies to Christians as well - they should strive to be all that could reasonably be expected of a Christian.

### 1. **Unleavened Bread as a Symbol of Purity:**

- The unleavened bread is not just a practical reminder of the haste of the Exodus, but is a symbol of righteousness and freedom from sin.
- Quote: "Throughout the Bible, leaven represents unrighteousness. It represents sin."
- Leaven spreads, corrupting everything it touches, like sin. It also promotes decay. As such, the feast of unleavened bread points to putting off the old self and not dwelling in sin.
- Quote: "I'm not going to live in what killed the Lamb."

### 1. **God as the Primary Cause:**

- Oswalt discusses the concept of God as the primary cause of all things, while not always the immediate cause. God allows secondary causes and events to happen in a world gone astray by sin, and works through these means, although he could prevent any of it if he chose to do so. This contrasts with Islamic theology, where Allah directly causes all events.
- Quote: "It says, yes, yes, Yahweh is ultimately the cause of everything that is. There are no causes in opposition to his will."

### 1. **Faith vs. Belief:**

- Dr. Oswalt distinguishes between belief (intellectual assent) and faith (risking everything based on convictions about truth). The demons believe, but they do not have faith, as they will not submit to God.
- Quote: "Belief is intellectual assent... Faith is risking everything on the basis of certain convictions about truth."

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Oswalt's lecture provides a deep theological understanding of Exodus 11-12. He moves beyond the historical narrative to explore the themes of God's power, justice, and the relationship between God and his people. He emphasizes the importance of true worship as the ultimate goal of the Exodus and the Christian life, and the significance of the Passover as a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice. The lecture also challenges listeners to live out their faith by striving to be "tamim" - all that could be expected of a Christian, living out a relationship with God rather than a checklist of things to do.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 6, Exodus 11-12

### Exodus 11-12 Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. Why is the Passover narrative interwoven with the account of the tenth plague?
2. How does the tenth plague specifically target the Egyptian gods?
3. What is significant about the repetition of God's command for the Israelites to ask for gold and silver from the Egyptians?
4. How does the ultimate goal of the Exodus (worship) relate to the Christian life, according to the lecture?
5. What is the significance of the Hebrew word for "worship" and how does it relate to the modern understanding of worship?
6. How does the death of the firstborn in Egypt relate to God's declaration that Israel is His firstborn son?
7. Why did God require the Israelites to perform the ritual of the Passover instead of just exempting them from the tenth plague?
8. What does the term *tamim* mean in the context of the Passover lamb, and why is it important?
9. What do leaven and unleavened bread represent in the Passover narrative?
10. What is the distinction between primary and secondary cause, and how does it apply to the tenth plague?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The Passover is interwoven because it's more than just a historical event; it's a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice and a symbol of redemption. It emphasizes the ultimate purpose of the Exodus, which is worship and a relationship with God.
2. The tenth plague attacks the Egyptian gods by targeting life itself, which was highly valued in their culture and symbolized by the firstborn son. It demonstrates that the gods, thought to preserve life, were powerless against the God of Israel.

3. The repetition emphasizes the importance of the plundering of the Egyptians, which is not just about material wealth but about equipping the Israelites for worship. It also highlights God's provision and planning for their future.
4. The ultimate goal of the Christian life, similar to the Exodus, is not simply going to heaven, but cultivating a relationship with God through worship. Just as the Israelites journeyed to worship in the desert, Christians should focus on their relationship with God above all else.
5. The Hebrew word for "worship" literally means to fall flat on one's face. It suggests a complete surrender and recognition of God's authority, which is contrasted with a more performative understanding of worship.
6. The death of the firstborn in Egypt is presented as a direct consequence of Pharaoh's refusal to let God's firstborn son, Israel, go free. This is further amplified by God's eventual sacrifice of His own firstborn.
7. God required the ritual as a memorial, not only for the Israelites but also to point towards Christ's sacrifice. It's a teaching tool about sin, redemption, and God's provision for salvation.
8. *Tamim* means whole, complete, or all that is expected of the animal, not necessarily flawless in a show sense. It represents a sacrifice that meets the standards of God, prefiguring Christ's sacrifice.
9. Leaven represents sin and unrighteousness, which spreads and decays, while unleavened bread represents purity and freedom from sin, highlighting the need to renounce that which killed the Lamb.
10. Primary cause is God's ultimate sovereignty over all things, while secondary cause involves the immediate actions of beings within that system. In the tenth plague, God is the primary cause, while the "destroyer" is the secondary cause.

## Essay Questions

1. Explore the theological significance of the tenth plague, considering its implications for the Egyptian worldview and its connection to the concept of life and death.
2. Discuss the interplay between the themes of justice and mercy in the context of the plagues, particularly the tenth plague, and how this connects to the sacrifice of God's firstborn son.
3. Analyze the concept of worship as presented in the Exodus narrative, differentiating between external acts and internal relationship, and how this relates to the life of faith.
4. Compare and contrast the nature and purpose of the Passover ritual with its fulfillment in the Christian tradition, with particular attention paid to the significance of the lamb and blood.
5. Evaluate the tension between human agency and divine sovereignty in the Exodus story, specifically in the context of God's actions and the Israelites' responsibility, and discuss the role of faith in navigating this tension.



## Glossary of Key Terms

**Acquiescence:** Accepting something without protest.

**Consecration:** The act of making or declaring something sacred.

**Firstborn:** The first male child born to a family, carrying special significance in ancient cultures and in the Bible.

**Leaven:** A substance, like yeast, that causes dough to rise and is symbolic of sin.

**Passover:** A major Jewish festival commemorating the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, which includes a sacrificial lamb.

**Primary Cause:** The ultimate and fundamental source or reason for something happening (God).

**Secondary Cause:** An intermediate cause or agent through which a primary cause operates.

**Tamim:** A Hebrew word meaning "whole," "complete," or "without blemish," referring to the required condition of the Passover lamb and a believer's standing before God.

**Unleavened Bread:** Bread made without leaven or yeast, symbolic of purity and freedom from sin, eaten during Passover.

**Worship:** An act of reverence and devotion to a deity. In the lecture, primarily a relational act rather than just external actions.

**Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Hebrew Bible.

## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, Exodus, Session 6, Exodus 11-12, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ on Exodus 11-12

1. **Why is the Passover interwoven with the events surrounding the final plague and the exodus?** The interweaving of the Passover with the tenth plague and exodus events is significant because it highlights God's focus on life and worship. The tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, is an attack on the Egyptian concept of life, as they placed immense importance on the continuation of life through their firstborn sons. The Passover, on the other hand, is the means by which God's people avoid death and are set free, pointing to the only true source of life. The Passover also shows that the ultimate goal of freedom from slavery was not simply to go to a new land, but to worship the true God, underscoring that the relationship with Yahweh is paramount.
2. **Why are the Israelites commanded multiple times to ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold and silver?** The repetition of the command to ask the Egyptians for valuables is significant. God is emphasizing that this was not a matter of the Israelites stealing from the Egyptians, but rather a divinely ordained act of justice and provision. The Egyptians had unjustly enslaved the Israelites, and the valuables served as compensation. Furthermore, the materials obtained through this command became the very materials used for the construction of the tabernacle, thereby setting the Israelites on the path of true worship, which was God's ultimate purpose.
3. **What is the ultimate purpose of the exodus from Egypt, and how does this relate to the Christian life?** The ultimate purpose of the exodus is not merely physical freedom or the acquisition of the promised land of Canaan, but to be in a right relationship with and to worship the true God. As Moses says he would rather stay in the desert with God, than Canaan without him. This is directly applicable to the Christian life, where the ultimate goal isn't simply heaven or rewards, but to be in relationship with God through Christ. The focus is on the relationship with the creator, not just on receiving benefits.

4. **How is worship defined in this context, and why is it more than just a physical act?** Worship is primarily relational, a response to who God is and what He has done. The word often translated "worship" means to fall flat on one's face before God. While physical acts can be part of worship, they are meaningless without the proper posture of the heart and spirit. Worship is not about seeing God as a "buddy" or a "prayer machine" but as the all-powerful Creator to whom we are the creature. It is about recognizing our dependence on Him and responding in humility and submission.
5. **How does the tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, relate to God's justice and Pharaoh's earlier actions?** While the death of the firstborn might seem harsh, it is presented as a response to Pharaoh's cruelty, which included killing all Hebrew male babies at birth. God is ultimately enacting justice for the innocent lives taken by the Egyptians, as well as demonstrating His power. The death of the firstborn of Egypt contrasts with God's earlier statement that Israel is his "firstborn son," demonstrating the severity of Pharaoh's refusal to release God's people, showing the consequences of rebellion, and foreshadowing the ultimate sacrifice of God's own firstborn, Jesus.
6. **What is the significance of the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts, and what does it represent?** The blood on the doorposts is more than just a symbolic act; it is a representation of the life given to secure salvation. The blood is the life force. It isn't magic or about the chemical makeup of the blood, but it symbolizes the ultimate surrender of life. Just as the blood of the lamb protected the Israelites from the final plague, the blood of Christ protects believers from spiritual death. The placing of the blood on the doorposts signifies that life, represented by both the blood and also the word of God (which should be written on the doorposts according to Deuteronomy), is lived under the protection and authority of God.
7. **What does the use of unleavened bread during Passover symbolize, and what is the lesson for believers?** The unleavened bread, used during Passover, initially is tied to the historical event of the hurried exodus when there was no time to allow bread to rise. However, it is a symbol for the removal of leaven, which represents sin. Leaven spreads throughout the dough just as sin spreads throughout a person's life, and also, leaven is the result of decay. The use of unleavened bread reminds believers to renounce sin and not live in ways that contributed to the death of the Passover Lamb, Jesus. It signifies a desire to live free from the decaying influence of sin.

8. **How does the text address the concept of God's role in causing suffering, and what's the distinction between primary and secondary causes?** The text acknowledges God as the ultimate cause of everything, however, it does not imply that God directly and immediately causes every event. There's a distinction between primary and secondary causes, where God is the ultimate originator, but He allows secondary causes, like human actions or natural laws to occur, even in trials. These trials, even the difficult ones, can be turned to good for the believer. This means that while God may allow suffering, it isn't always His direct intent. He creates the conditions that allow for events, but does not micromanage them. God does, however, always provide a way of escape.