

Exodus 12

1. Introduction

☞ *William Lane Craig event*

☞ *“there is a probably no Dawkins”*

Mirrored British Humanist society

☞ *“there is probably no god... so stop worry and enjoy yourself”*

☞ *Implication 1: Life without God is necessarily enjoyable*

Eduard Munch’s “The Scream”

Trivial pleasures and deep horror

Douglas Coupland – “Life After God”

☞ *Implication 2: There might be a god!*

Dawkins wanted “there is almost certainly no god” – BUT HIS
FELLOW HUMANISTS DIDN’T AGREE!

Blaise Pascale – philosopher – people choose to be atheists for reasons
other than pure logic. Logically – if there is even the slightest
chance that there might be a god it is massively important that we
take him seriously.

☞ *Implication 3: If there is a god he is going to stop you enjoying yourself.*

But religious people consistently report themselves being happier than
average – Christians at the top of the list.

☞ *Implication 4: People worry about there being a god*

Interesting – most claim to want there to be a god.

Humanists suggest people are worried about there being a god.

Alternative version of what they are saying:

There could be a god, and if so you have every reason to be
worried.

What does the book of Exodus have to say about this?

A major theme of Exodus – “who is God?”

Starts – apparently absent but working in the background

Ch 3 – God shows up

Burning the bush

Moses says: Who are you?

His name “I am”

The people say: Who is this god?

Ch 5 – Pharaoh – “Who is the LORD”

Chs 5-11 – he demonstrates who he is

2. Should we be worried about God?

☞ *Should we be worried about God?*

☞ *The answer for the Egyptians: Yes*

The answer for the Egyptians: Yes

- Not my intention to unnecessarily frighten you:
 - “Wailing and gnashing of teeth”
 - “What if we have no teeth?”
 - “Teeth will be provided”

Interactions with Pharaoh – Dan was showing us.

Starts – proud, imperious, “who is the LORD

Exodus 5:2 (NIV)

² Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”

Begins to wobble

Exodus 8:8 (NIV)

⁸ Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD.”

But hardens his heart

Exodus 8:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

Confesses his sin

Exodus 9:27 (NIV)

²⁷ Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. “This time I have sinned,” he said to them. “The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong.

But it is not true repentance

Exodus 9:34 (NIV)

³⁴ When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts.

And finally death is on the way

Exodus 11:4–6 (NIV)

⁴ So Moses said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. ⁵ Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. ⁶ There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again.

Pharaoh ends a broken man



Exo 12:31-32

“Up! Leave!” – not royal command – abject terror

“Go! Worship!” – complete capitulation – “as you have requested”

“And also bless me” – pleading of a broken man

- The atheists are right – the prospect of the existence of God is something to worry about
 - Not saying that flippantly – deeply serious
 - Because I do believe that this God exists and that makes me deeply serious
- This is not the only side of God
 - “God is love” – the heart of his character is love
 - God’s anger is “God’s strange work”
 - Luther
 - Isaiah 28:21 – strange, alien.
 - God’s strange work of anger is parasitic, or adventitious on his proper work
 - Justice!
- The reason people are instinctively worried about God is because they instinctively sense his justice!

☞ *The answer for Israel: YES!*

The answer for Israel: YES!

Already seen the edge in his relationship with Moses

Burning bush – take off your shoes

“God’s anger burned”

But seems to be selective –

Plague of darkness

Exodus 10:23 (NIV)

²³ No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

Plague on firstborn

Exodus 11:7 (NIV)

⁷ But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal.’ Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

- What everyone suspects about Christians
 - The others are heading for hellfire
 - We alone are God’s favoured people
 - But this is a caricature - not so simple

Israel is in danger too

Exodus 12:13 (NIV)

¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

Repeated

Exodus 12:23 (NIV)

²³ When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

- God is a God of absolute, impartial justice
 - This is one of his perfections
 - He is determined the ultimately, in eternity there should be not a scintilla of injustice
 - In the short term there is injustice, innocent suffering.
 - In the short term even God's actions are imperfect and incomplete – no one is trying to claim that the firstborn sons in this story are somehow more guilty than anyone else
 - In the long term
 - No sin unpunished
 - No injustice un-rectified
 - No-one will escape – not Egypt, not the world, not Israel!
- And that should rightly worry people
 - The British Humanist Society should think carefully about what they have said.
 - Christians should rightly have a sense of awe, and “the fear of the Lord”

3. What is the solution to this problem?

☞ *The solution for Israel and the Egyptians: A SUBSTITUTE*

A Passover lamb

It was a lamb's blood which had to be smeared on the doorposts to save the family inside v13

Instructions about the lamb

The right amount – v4

Perfect – v5

The blood on the doorposts – vv7

Eaten in the prescribed way – vv8-9

Eaten ready for action – v11

- Some protest that this is just a bit of magic
 - No! Symbolic action – to teach

What does it teach?

The need for a substitute

God is perfectly just – all sin must be punished

No automatic escape for Israel

But we cannot bear the consequences of our sin – so a substitute must bear it.

Of course a lamb of not a suitable substitute

Serves as a picture of what is necessary

What kind of substitute is necessary?

Perfect – without defect

Tailored to our need – just enough for each family

Identified with by us – eat

- On its own still leaves god open to the accusation of injustice
 - How can a lamb pay?
 - How is it ever fair for a third party to pay?

The lamb anticipates Jesus

Perfect, made man to be perfectly tailored to our need

Now a human being pays for human sins by his death – closer to justice

But this human not a third party – God himself paying.

- Now the perfect justice of God and the perfect mercy of God meet – in the cross

Who is this substitute for?

Obviously – for Israel. For God's people!

Less obviously – potentially for Egyptians!

Many travelled out of Egypt with the Israelites



Exo 12:38

It required a personal identification with God's people

By circumcision – the sign that they were committed to God for life



Exo:12:48-49

And by eating the meal



Exo 12:47

- It is for members of the British Humanist Society who take their own poster campaign seriously
 - God is a god to worry about because he is perfectly just BUT HE HAS PROVIDED A SUBSTITUTE!
- It is for the peoples of East Oxford, Oxford, the world
- It is for anyone here who has not yet identified with Jesus
- But we must identify with him
 - Put our faith in Jesus – as the substitute
 - Baptism – our personal identification with Jesus

- And we must be ready to respond



Exo 12:11