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**The Exodus**

**Freedom and Its Cost**

***Exodus 12:29–13:16***

**Purpose:** To grasp the implications of God's gift of spiritual freedom.

Freedom has a high price. For some political refugees today it means a perilous sea journey along the coast of Southeast Asia. For others, a dangerous trek over Central American mountains. In Europe it often costs job and even family. In this study we find what Israel's freedom cost—both the losers and the winners. God secured the liberation of his people, but this in turn cost them the rights to their most precious possessions.

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**1.** In what ways are we accountable to God for the freedom he gives us?

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**2.** Read Exodus 12:29–51. What contrasts do you observe between Pharaoh's attitude and behavior now and his earlier encounters with Moses and Aaron (vv.29–32)?

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***Question 2.*** *For earlier encounters see, for example, 8:25–32; 9:27–35; 10:10–11, 16–20, 27–29; 11:10.*

*“Six hundred thousand on foot that were men” (v. 37) means those who could bear arms. On the basis of general population statistics, this figure would imply a total of more than two million Israelites—men, women and children. “a mixed multitude” (v. 38) refers to Egyptians who had married Israelites, plus other Semites who had migrated to Egypt. “Four hundred and thirty years” (vv. 40–41) begins with the entry of Jacob into Egypt (46:6–7).*

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**3.** How would you describe the emotional intensity of Egyptians (vv. 29–36)?

Why were the Israelites “driven out” of Egypt (v. 39)?

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**4.** God fulfilled his warnings and promises (see Ex 3:20–22; 4:23). What significance would this have for Israel's understanding of God's nature and character?

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***Question 4.*** *Take time to trace the earlier passages, so you get an overall understanding of the revelation of God. Your knowledge depends on the accumulation of evidence.*

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**5.** In what ways have you found God's warnings and promises to be true?

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***Question 5.*** *Look for specific comments, not vague generalizations.*

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**6.** How would the Passover restrictions (vv. 43–49) encourage foreigners and others to worship God and, at the same time, preserve Israel from religious compromise and contamination?

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**7.** What message is God sending to the Israelites by these rules at the outset of their independence?

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**8.** How can we guard the essential elements of our faith in Jesus Christ and, at the same time, extend his offer of salvation to all people?

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**Question 8.** Perhaps you will have to summarize for some what are the distinctive, essential elements of the Christian faith: the deity of Christ, salvation only through faith in his name, and the necessity of repentance and faith for salvation.

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**9.** Read Exodus 13:1–16. God calls Israel to dedicate to him that which he has just delivered—the whole nation, not just the firstborn of man and beast. What plan does God have for perpetuating this ordinance (vv. 8–10, 14–15)?

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***Question 9.*** *“Consecrate unto me” (v. 2) means to set apart for God, as, for example, a soldier is recruited for duty. Because God had delivered the firstborn from judgment, he had a claim on them. In the New Testament the same basic logic is applied to Christians, who are set apart to be holy to God because they have been saved from the judgment of their sin by the death and resurrection of Christ (see Heb 10:10–14).*

*“ …It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes,” (vv. 9, 16) are metaphorical references to the Egyptian custom of wearing amulets containing written words. Later, the Jews had a similar practice while at prayer. Phylacteries bound on the head and the left hand contained handwritten copies of Exodus 13:1–16 (see Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21).*

*The donkey (v. 13), a representative of unclean animals, was valuable as a beast of burden. It was to be redeemed or destroyed.*

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**10.** To keep the ritual from becoming sterile, what was required of the worshiper?

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**11.** How do you maintain fresh impressions of your own deliverance from the guilt and enslavement of sin?

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**Question 11.** Allow time for thoughtful reflection and practical answers.

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**12.** What was the basis of God's authority to claim the first-born as his own?

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**13.**  On what basis does he claim Christians as living sacrifices (see Rom 12:1–2)?

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**14.** In what ways have you responded to his claim on your life?