

Title: **GOD — THE GREAT DIVIDER OF MEN**

Text: Exodus 8:22-24

Subject: *God's Distinguishing Grace*

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Tape # Exodus 51

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Introduction:

God is the great divider of men. When the Lord God sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh, he commanded Moses to tell Pharaoh that he would divide his people from the Egyptians in a demonstrably clear and undeniable way, that he would make the division so apparent that the king of Egypt would be made to know that he is God alone in the midst of the earth. Open your Bibles to Exodus 8:22 and hear his Word. Tonight, I am going to tell about the one true and living God, God who rules in the midst of the earth, — **GOD — THE GREAT DIVIDER OF MEN**.

(Exodus 8:22-24) “And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the earth. (23) And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. (24) And the LORD did so.”

God has always put a difference between men. He has from everlasting put a difference between Israel and

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Egypt. He has maintained that division throughout the ages of time. And he will maintain it forever. He always puts a distinction between Israel and Egypt. Every time he sent Moses to Pharaoh, he spoke of Israel as “*my people.*” The Egyptians he called, “*thy people.*”

The Lord God said, “*I will put a division between my people and thy people...And (blessed be his name) the Lord did so!*” There is a continual and eternal distinction observed in the Word of God between the chosen seed of promise and the world, between God’s elect and the children of the wicked one, between Christ’s seed and the serpent’s seed. It is a distinction God made and a distinction God maintains.

Who can trace out the wonders of distinguishing grace? What a vast distinction God has made and makes daily between the sons of men, between his people and the rest of Adam’s fallen race! How vast that difference will be in the eternal world! We ought to make this a matter unceasing meditation and thanksgiving. You cannot awake in the morning, walk through the day, or lay down at night without experiencing the difference God puts between Israel and Egypt. Everything proclaims it. Every event confirms it. Our God says, “*Against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast:that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel*” (Exodus 11:7).

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God's object and purpose in everything he did with Egypt and Pharaoh was the deliverance of his people for the praise of his glory. He raised up the nation, that he might use that nation to protect, provide for, and increase his people Israel, until the appointed time came for him to fulfill his covenant with Abraham and glorify himself in the delivering his chosen from their cruel oppressor, for the glory of his own great name.

- No mercy was intended for Egypt.
- No blessing was bestowed upon Egypt.
- And Israel suffered no harm, but only great good, by their 400 years in Egypt.

So it is to this day. That is exactly what God is doing with the world now. He is gathering out his elect out of the nations of the earth, just as he gathered his Israel out of Egypt. He is separating the precious from the vile. He is separating the wheat from the tares, gathering his wheat into his barn and binding the tares in bundles for the burning. Egypt will always be Egypt, the world will always be the world, and God's elect will always be his Israel. And between the two, between Egypt and Israel, God has made and constantly makes a division.

NOT OBVIOUS

Though the division was made between Israel and Egypt long before Israel went down into Egypt, and though the division was made and maintained in Israel's favor, until the appointed day of deliverance came, it appeared to

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greatly favor the Egyptians. Judging by everything the eye could see and reason could observe, it appeared that Egypt must have been God's chosen nation and Israel the reprobate people.

- Egypt had the whip and Israel felt the lash.
- Egypt owned everything. The Israelites performed the labor.
- The sons of Jacob made bricks and built houses. The Egyptians lived in them.
- The Egyptians drank wine from golden goblets. The children of Israel drank water from clay cups.

But that all changed in a heartbeat! God turned the tables in one night! And even before he brought Israel out of Egypt he made it obvious that Egypt was marked for destruction and Israel was divinely protected. When the Lord God wrought his plagues in Egypt, the land of Goshen was spared.

- He sent a thick darkness over all the land, felt darkness; but in all the land of Goshen there was light.
- He swarms of flies and lice through all the borders of Egypt; but there was not a fly nor any lice were to be seen in Goshen.
- God sent hail and a murrain upon all the cattle of the Egyptians; but the cattle of the children of Israel were spared, and on their fields fell no desolating shower from heaven.
- At last, when the destroying angel unsheathed his glittering sword to smite his last decisive blow, in

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every house throughout the land of Egypt there was weeping and wailing, because the firstborn was killed in every dwelling of Egypt; but not one died in Israel that night.

- God provided a sacrifice for Israel; but for the Egyptians not sacrifice was provided.

The Lord God led the chosen nation forth like sheep, like a huge flock through the wilderness, by the hands of Moses and Aaron. When they came to the Red Sea, he divided the sea and made a path for his chosen. There they sang his praise, rejoicing in his salvation. The flood stood upright like a wall. The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. Israel passed through the depths as through a wilderness, and the Egyptians were drowned in the flood. In all these things, the Lord God put a glorious division between Israel and Egypt. The fiery cloudy pillar which gave light to Israel was darkness to the Egyptians. In everything God blessed Israel; and in everything he cursed Egypt. So it ever has been. So it is now. So it shall ever be, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

THE DIVISION

The Lord God said to Pharaoh, “*I will put a division between my people and thy people...And the LORD did so.*” — The Lord God almighty has put a division between those who are his people and those who are not. There are many divisions among men that will one day

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be blotted out; but this is an eternal division that is immutable and abiding. This is division so wide that we may truly say, “Between Israel and Egypt there is a great gulf fixed; and none can pass from one side of the chasm to the other.” It is a division of infinite proportion made by the infinite God from eternity. That which distinguishes God’s elect from the reprobate of this world is the distinguishing grace of God. It is written, “*The LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.*” The distinction which grace makes is a fivefold distinction.

1. The Distinction of God’s Sovereign Election

(John 15:16) “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In the eternal covenant the Lord God wrote the names of his elect in the book of life. The Lord Jesus Christ,

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God's darling Son, became their Surety, and stood forth as our substitute to suffer in our room and stead. Covenant engagements were made for Israel, and for Israel alone. Our names were from of old inscribed in the book of God, and engraved upon the precious stones of our great High Priest's breastplate. Before the starry sky was spread, or the foundations of the earth were dug, the Lord had made a division between Israel and Egypt. Hear this, and rejoice, all you who trust Christ, "*God hath from the beginning chosen you!*"

2. The Distinction of Christ's Blood Redemption

(Revelation 5:9) "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

As the Lord God made a division between Israel and Egypt in his eternal decrees of election and predestination, so to he made a division at Calvary. There, upon the cursed tree, as the Lord Jesus Christ hung between two thieves, he divided the two.

- For the one he made atonement; for the other none.
- For the one he made intercession; for the other none.
- To the one he gave a promise; to the other none.

3. The Distinction of the New Birth

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Our God has made another division, a vital one. It is an essential distinction of nature. There are some who imagine that the only division God makes between men is outward. But that is not the case. If sinners are saved, a distinction of nature must be made. We cannot enter into heaven with that nature that caused God to drive Adam out of the garden. “*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 15:50; Revelation 21:27).

(Revelation 21:27) “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Concerning all his chosen, the Lord Jesus says, “*Ye must be born again!*” But the division and distinction of grace does not end with the new birth. This distinction is carried out in providence.

4. The Distinction of God’s Gracious Providence

(Romans 8:28-31) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many

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brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

To the naked eye of flesh all things appear to happen to Israel and Egypt alike. The righteous suffer as well as the wicked. We all must soon go to the grave. But there is a vast difference. God’s providence draws a line like a laser between the sons of men.

- To his chosen, every providence is a blessing. A blessing is wrapped up in all our curses and in all our crosses. Our cups are sometimes bitter, but they are always healthy. Our woe is our weal. We are never losers by our losses, but we grow rich towards God when we become poor towards men.
- To Egypt, all things work together for evil. Is he prosperous? He is as the beast that is fattened for the slaughter. Is he healthy? He is as the blooming flower that is soon to be mowed down. Does he suffer? His sufferings are the first drops of the eternal hail-storm-of divine vengeance. Everything is blackness and darkness.

(Psalms 57:2) “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.”

(Psalms 73:18) “Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into

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destruction.”

(Psalms 92:5-7) “O LORD, how great are thy works! *and* thy thoughts are very deep. (6) A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. (7) When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; *it is* that they shall be destroyed for ever:”

5. The Distinction of Resurrection Glory

(John 5:28-29) “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

That division will be manifest to all in the last day. Then, when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, God our Savior shall Israel from Egypt, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. He shall cry unto his angels, and say, “*Gather out of my kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity.*” Then, with the sharp sickle in his hand, will the angel fly through the midst of heaven and reap the tares, and gather them together in bundles to burn. But, stepping from his throne, not delegating the delightful task to an angel, the King himself, the crowned Reaper, shall take his own golden sickle, and shall gather the wheat into his barn. Oh! then, when hell

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shall open wide its mouth, and swallow up the impenitent, when they shall go down alive into the pit, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did of old — then, when they shall see the righteous streaming up to heaven, like a stream of light, in their bright and glistening garments, shouting triumphant hymns one glorious symphony of praise, then shall it be seen that the Lord has put a division between. When across the impassable gulf the rich man shall see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom — when from the lowest pit of hell the condemned one shall see the accepted one glorified in bliss — then shall the truth stand out written in letters of fire — *“The Lord hath put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.”*

THE DIVISION MANIFEST

But is the division unknown until the last day? Oh, no. God makes the division manifest day by day. We see it manifest in the deliverance of his chosen in the sweet experience of grace. Two sinners come into the house of God. They take their seats side by side. Both hear the gospel preached. But one goes down to his house justified, the other goes home like he came, unmoved. Why? Because God made a difference.

- The man who came to hear Whitefield with rocks in his pocket.
- The boys who came in to check the clock.
- The man in Australia.
- Fred Evans.

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(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

- The division God makes is manifest in his gracious preservation of his chosen.
- It is manifest in the sweet restoration of his fallen saints.
- It is manifest upon the death-beds of his chosen.

(1 Corinthians 4:7) “For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*”

(Psalms 115:1) “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake.”

When I read these three, humbling questions, “*Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*” my heart is humbled within me before my God and Savior, and cries, “*By the grace of God, I am what I am:*

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and,.” I rejoice to confidently add, “his grace was not bestowed upon me in vain.” That which he has begun in me, he will finish “to the praise of the glory of his grace.”

Amen.