



Sunday, September 11, 2022

Lesson Text: Exodus 12:1-14; **Time of Action:** 1446 or 1445 B.C.; **Place of Action:** Egypt

Golden Text: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (Exodus 12:14).

I. INTRODUCTION. The Jewish holy days observed by Jews today are the Passover (combined with the Feast of Unleavened Bread), the Feasts of Weeks (Pentecost), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the Feast of Booths (Feast of Tabernacles), Hanukkah, and Purim. These last two feasts, Hanukkah and Purim were not commanded in the Law, but were added to commemorate later historical events of importance. All of these feasts except the Day of Atonement are joyful celebrations. The biblical account of Israel's first Passover is the subject we study this week. In preparation for their deliverance from Egypt, no doubt the fathers in every family had some explaining to do to their children as they watched them preparing to do what God told them to do. Lambs were being roasted outside on open fires. Blood from these unblemished male lambs was to be sprinkled on the sides and top of the door-frames of their houses. The family members needed to know that their fathers had received a message from God that He would actually kill the firstborn in every house that



was not marked by the blood on the door-frames. There is no parallel in history to the killing of the firstborn of Egypt, the Passover, and the nation of Israel being born in one day. These facts of history clearly show the hand of God in a dramatic way. Passover pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world, but crucified at the proper time on the cross.

II. BACKGROUND FOR THE LESSON. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Moses gave excuses for why he was not able to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let Israel go (see Exodus 3:11-13; 4:1-9). His last excuse was that he was "*not eloquent and was slow of speech*" (see Exodus 4:10-12). This response caused God to become angry with Moses (see Exodus 4:14). Then the LORD told him that Aaron, his brother was already on the way to meet him, and he would speak for him (see Exodus 4:14-16). Moses then returned to Jethro his father-in-law and asked for his permission to go back to Egypt to check on his family, and Jethro agreed. God also told Moses that it was okay to return to Egypt because those who sought to kill him were now dead (see Exodus 4:18-20). Moses then gathered his family, returned to Egypt and along with Aaron his brother, they told the Israelites what God said that He was going to do (see Exodus 4:27-31). In chapter 5, Moses and Aaron begin their contest with Pharaoh demanding that he let God's people go. Of course Pharaoh refused, and increased the work load on the Hebrew slaves. In chapter 6, God encouraged Moses and Aaron to continue to press Pharaoh while warning them that



Pharaoh would not release His people. In chapters 7-10, God brings nine of the ten plagues upon Egypt which included water turning to blood (see Exodus 7:14-25), frogs covering the land (see Exodus 8:1-15), lice and gnats (see Exodus 8:16-19), swarm of flies (see Exodus 8:20-32), diseased livestock (see Exodus 9:1-7), painful boils (see Exodus 9:8-12), hail and fire (Exodus 9:13-35), locusts (see Exodus 10:1-20), and three days of darkness (see Exodus 10:21-29). Then in chapter 11:1-10, God tells Moses that He will bring one last plague which would be the death of every firstborn in Egypt both humans and animals. But even then God said that when Moses tells Pharaoh of this last plague, he still wouldn't let the people go. This is where this week's lesson begins.

III. THE PASSOVER'S SETTING (Exodus 12:1-2)

A. The place of the first Passover (Exodus 12:1).

Our lesson begins with **"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying."** After **"Moses and Aaron"** gave Pharaoh his last chance to let the Israelites go, God spoke to both of them **"in the land of Egypt."**

Note: Acts 7:14 briefly tells us how the Hebrews ended up in Egypt. It says "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." Once Joseph became the second in command to Pharaoh, he sent to Canaan for His father, Jacob and all their relatives to join him in Egypt because of the famine in Canaan. Thus, the nation of



Israel began in Egypt with 85 Hebrews and during the 430 (see Exodus 12:40-41) years they were there in slavery, they grew into a large nation (see Numbers 1:45-46).

B. The time of the Passover (Exodus 12:2). In this verse God begins to speak to Moses and Aaron saying **"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."** We must remember that God was giving birth to the nation of Israel, so all of His instructions for the people were designed for a new nation. The words **"This month"** refers to the **"month"** Abib which before the Exodus was Israel's seventh month. Now God said that it was to be **"the first month of the year to you."** Israel's **"first month"** would remind them of the beginning of God's mighty acts: their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. We must remember that this is a new **"beginning"** for the nation of Israel and now they would have both a religious calendar with the first month being Abib, and a civil calendar beginning with Tishri. After the Babylonian Captivity, the name for the first month was changed from Abib to Nisan (see Esther 3:7), which was a Babylonian name that means *"start."* This would correspond to our months of March-April.

IV. THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE (Exodus 12:3-7)

A. Choosing a lamb for each household (Exodus 12:3-5).



1. (vs. 3). The LORD went on to tell Moses and Aaron to **"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house."** God here begins to give instructions for the preparation of the first Passover. He directed His spokesmen, Moses and Aaron to **"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel."** They were to **"speak"** to the entire **"congregation,"** or the nation as a whole, but we are told in Exodus 12:21-28 that Moses and Aaron gave the instructions to the elders to pass on to the rest of the people. First, God said that on the **"tenth day of this month"** meaning the first **"month"** of Abib, **"a lamb"** was to be chosen **"according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house."** This means that every household was to select **"a lamb"** which would be prepared and eaten by family groups. Since there was no tabernacle, temple, altar or priesthood at this time, the head of the family was given the task of choosing the **"lamb"** on **"the tenth day"** of this first **"month."** The Passover was going to be a family activity. **Note: Families have always been and continue to be one of the most important human units in God's eyes. He works with mankind today through families, governments, and the church. It's no accident that societies deteriorate when these three areas of life are destroyed. It clearly seems to be the plan of the devil to destroy mankind by destroying these three facets of our existence.**

2. (vs. 4). In this verse, God further explains the choosing of the Passover lamb for families. He said **"And if**



the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb." Just in case a **"household"** or family was too small to eat the entire **"lamb,"** they were to share it with their **"neighbor"** taking into account the number of people that will eat. The phrase **"every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb"** means that the number of **"lambs"** chosen should be determined by the number of people eating and how much each person would eat. Therefore, it was possible that two or more families could share a **"lamb"** and eat together. These directions were given because **"the lambs"** were to be eaten in one night, and there were to be no leftovers (see Exodus 12:10).

3. (vs. 5). In this verse God gave specifics concerning the lamb. The LORD said **"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats."** There were three basic requirements for the animal that was to be chosen. First, the animal had to **"be without blemish."** This means that it had to be a perfect specimen, without any physical flaws, and certainly not diseased. **Note: *These requirements would be repeated to the Israelites as part of the Law for every sacrifice they were to bring to God once they entered the Promised Land. An animal with any kind of defect was not acceptable for either burnt or peace offerings (see Leviticus 22:18-25; 23:12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Malachi 1:14). The fact that this had to be a perfect "lamb" looked ahead to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who died for us and who was, and is***



perfect in every way (see Hebrews 7:26-27). Second, the animal also had to be **"a male of the first year"** or one **"year"** old. It had to be **"a male"** because it was a substitute for the firstborn **"males"** in the family who God claimed as His own (see Numbers 3:13; 8:17). The fact that the chosen **"lamb"** had to also be **"of the first year"** indicates that it had reached its full life potential. Third, the animal could be taken **"out from the sheep, or from the goats."** In other words, the animal could be either a **"lamb"** or a **"goat."**

Note: Since either sheep or "goats" were acceptable as Passover sacrifices, we can't be sure if one was used more than the other. We do know that as late as the days of King Josiah, kids or baby "goats," as well as sheep were being used at Passover (see II Chronicles 35:7). However, neither sheep nor "goats" are used in Passover celebrations today. Of course today, Jews no longer offer animal sacrifices. They celebrate this feast with only a roasted bone to symbolize the ancient sacrificial animal.

B. The Passover lamb killed and the blood applied (Exodus 12:6-7).

1. (vs. 6). Still referring to the Passover lamb, God said **"And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."** The phrase **"And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month"** means that once the perfect Passover lamb or goat was selected, it was to be held until **"the fourteenth day of the month,"** four days after it was



selected (see verse 3). Of course, it still had to be unblemished at the end of the four days. On that day, **"the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."** Although the heads of households had the responsibility of killing the animal, all of them did it at the same time. Therefore, the Passover was a national observance as well as a family observance. The Passover animal was to be killed **"in the evening"** or literally *"between the two evenings."* **Note:** *The Jews had two "evenings." The first was 3:00 p.m. when the "evening" sacrifice was killed; and the second was at 6:00 p.m. or near sunset. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, in later practice, the Passover lamb was slain between 3 and 5 p.m. This would give the priest enough time to slaughter many sacrifices. Although the first Passover was celebrated in homes, the Law specified that after they entered Canaan, it was to be observed at a central location of worship (see Deuteronomy 16:5-6). In addition, the death of our LORD at the ninth hour or 3:00 p.m. (see Matthews 27:45-50; Luke 23:44-46) agrees with the time of the offering of the Passover lamb. (For a detailed explanation of how Jesus' death fulfilled every aspect of the Passover lamb, see "The Last Week of Jesus' Life" dated February 7, 2016 on this website.)*

2. (vs. 7). After the animal is killed God said in this verse, **"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it."** The people were to take **"the blood"** from the slain animal and **"strike it"** or spread it on both **"sides"** of the **"door"** and on the top of the



"doors" of the homes where they would eat the animal.

Everywhere a lamb was eaten its **"blood"** was to be applied to the **"door posts"** or frames using hyssop to apply it (see Exodus 12:22). The presence of **"the blood"** would be the means by which God would save or deliver His people from the judgment that He would bring upon Egypt later that night. Likewise, Jesus' **"blood"** is the only means of our eternal salvation. **Note:** *The application of "the blood"*

on the "doorposts" and upper post, or lintel of each house in which the Passover lamb was eaten would protect those in that house from God's final plague in Egypt: death of the first born. God prescribed this process as a matter of faith. It was not a matter of logic, nor did it require human consent. It was what God required for the walk of faith at that moment. It's most important to understand that Scripture tells us that God would only pass over the houses where He saw "the blood" applied. This indicates that if any Israelite home didn't have "the blood" applied to the door frames, the first born in that house would die as well. This was not limited to just Egyptians. Salvation has, and always will be based on a person's faith (see Ephesians 1:12-13; 2:8-10). Spreading "the blood" over the "doors" was also a type, or picture of the LORD Jesus and "the blood" He would shed on the cross. Just as the Hebrews were enslaved in Egyptian bondage, believers once lived in bondage to sin (see John 8:34; Romans 3:9). Just as "the blood" of a perfect, flawless animal substitute in the prime of its life delivered the Hebrews, so does "the blood" of the perfect and flawless Son of God in the prime of His life (see Luke 3:21-23) save us from sin (see John 1:29; Hebrews



9:13-14; I Peter 1:18-19).

V. THE PASSOVER MEAL (Exodus 12:8-11)

A. Rules for preparing the Passover meal (Exodus 12:8-9).

1. (vs. 8). The LORD went on to say in this verse, **"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it."** The Israelites were to **"eat the flesh in that night"** meaning that the meat of the lamb was to be eaten the same **"night"** that it was killed. In addition, God said it was to be **"roasted with fire"** or over an open **"fire."** Then it was to be eaten with **"unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs."** The **"bread"** that they ate was to be without leaven or yeast which caused the **"bread"** to rise. Since the Exodus would happen quickly, the people had to eat their meal in a hurry and not take the time to add leaven or knead the dough (see Exodus 12:34, 39). There would be no time to wait for the **"bread"** to rise. **Note: In Hebrew, this "unleavened bread" is flat bread called matza. The "bread" eaten for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the seven-day feast that immediately followed Passover, was not to have any leaven because leaven in Scripture typifies sin (see Matthew 16:6-12; I Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9).** Along with the roasted lamb and **"unleavened bread,"** they were to also eat **"bitter herbs."** The Bible does not tell us what these **"bitter herbs"** were,



but it is thought that they may have been chicory, horehound (a bitter herb of the mint family) and wild lettuce. We are not told the purpose of the "**bitter herbs**," but one would have to agree that they would remind the people of the bitterness of their oppression and suffering while in bondage (see Exodus 1:14).

2. (vs. 9). Still talking about the roasted lamb, in this verse God said "**Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.**" The people were not to "**eat**" the meat "**raw, nor sodden at all with water.**" Eating sacrificial meat "**raw**" was done by many pagan or idolatrous nations and involved eating blood and fat, both of which were forbidden for Israel (see Genesis 9:4; Exodus 29:13). The phrase "**sodden at all with water**" means that they were not to boil it in "**water.**" God repeated that it was to be "**roasted with fire.**" The phrase "**his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof**" means that the animal was to be roasted whole with the head, legs and "**purtenance thereof**" or the inner parts. Simply stated, the Passover lamb could not be eaten "**raw**," but had to be "**roasted**" whole with its inner parts intact.

B. Being ready to leave Egypt (Exodus 12:10-11).

1. (vs. 10). God continued to say in this verse "**And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.**" The phrase "**let nothing of it remain until the morning**" means that all of



the Passover lamb was to be eaten and there was to be no leftovers. If the family or families couldn't eat the whole lamb, God said "**ye shall burn with fire**" or "**burn**" up what was left.

2. (vs. 11). This verse says "**And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.**" God here said that they were to "**eat**" the lamb "**with your loins girded**" meaning with their cloaks tucked in their belts. They were also to "**eat**" with "**your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand**" so that all they had to do when they finished eating the Passover meal would be to get up and go without having to get dressed, or look for anything they would need. They were to also "**eat it in haste**" or "**eat it**" quickly, because once the LORD killed the firstborn in the land, Pharaoh would call Moses and Aaron and tell them to get out of Egypt as quickly as possible (see Exodus 12:31-34). They would be expected to gather all of God's people and start their journey immediately. When Pharaoh would finally let Israel go, it would happen quickly, and there was to be nothing from these Passover animals left behind. This verse ends with God saying "**it is the LORD's Passover.**" There was to be no doubt that God was in charge of everything that would happen on that night. The word "**Passover**" comes from a verb that means "*to jump over.*" When used in our text, it means that God passed over, or spared, the Israelites when He brought the plague of death upon the firstborn of the Egyptians.



VI. THE PASSOVER'S SIGNIFICANCE (Exodus 12:12-14)

A. Observing the blood (Exodus 12:12-13).

1. (vs. 12). Now, God tells Moses and Aaron why everyone needs to follow His instructions perfectly. The LORD said in this verse, **"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD."** The word **"For"** connects this verse with the phrase *"it is the Lord's Passover"* in the previous verse. Since it was God's Passover, He declared that He was going to do two things. First, He was going to go through **"the land of Egypt that night"** and **"smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast."** The **"first born"** in every family and the **"first born"** of every animal would be killed as God passed through **"Egypt."** Second, God said that He would **"execute"** or bring **"judgment against all the gods of Egypt."** The Egyptians had many **"gods,"** but Israel's God would demonstrate that He was the true and living God and He confirmed it by saying **"I am the LORD."** This implied that He was the only God and **"all the gods of Egypt"** were nothing, and completely powerless in His presence. There would be no doubt as to which divine sovereign was responsible for the judgment that was brought upon the Egyptians.



2. (vs. 13). In this verse, God said **"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."** God said that **"the blood"** placed over the doors would be a **"token"** or a sign as evidence that they were to be spared from the destruction. When the LORD saw **"the blood"** He would **"pass over"** those houses **"and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."** The only thing that would save the Israelites from the death of their firstborn would be **"the blood"** that God saw over their doorposts and lintels. The Scriptures tell us that the number of Israelites who left Egypt that night were about 600,000 men. This didn't include women and children nor the Levites (see Exodus 12: 37; 38:26; Numbers 1:46; 2:32-33). Considering all of this, it has been estimated that as many as 2.5 million people took part in that deliverance as well as the march through the wilderness. Nothing like that has ever happened to any other nation. ***Note: Only those who believed God and followed all of His instructions would be spared. It was not enough to simply kill the lamb, save its blood, and eat all its meat. Neither could anyone trust "the blood" applied to a neighbor's doors. Every household had to personally apply "the blood" over their homes. This is true today for those who want God's salvation. In order to be redeemed, they must accept "the blood" of Christ for themselves, believing that it was shed for their sins. It's very clear that the lambs being put to death were types of Jesus Christ who was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover***



lambs. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers that "even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (see I Corinthians 5:7). The Apostle Peter wrote that we were not redeemed with corruptible things but with "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (see I Peter 1:18). All of the Old Testament sacrifices were fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross, shedding His blood for us.

B. Establishing a memorial (Exodus 12:14). In our final verse God says "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." The phrase "this day shall be unto you for a memorial" means that the Passover, the fourteenth day of Abib, was to be an annual reminder of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt. The nation of Israel was to celebrate this occasion as a "feast" or festival "by an ordinance" or commandment from the LORD "forever." Bible-believing Christians today don't observe the Passover Feast because it was designed for Israel only. However, we do believe that Jesus Christ is our Passover for He has been sacrificed for us (see I Corinthians 5:7). **Note:**

"Memorials" are important to the Christian life even today. While God does not call us to set up stones or construct monuments as He did the Israelites, He does command us to remember His blessings. In the Old Testament, Psalm 103:2 shouts this anthem "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." God has established "memorials" for believers today. For example, baptism is a visible representation of a



believer's dying to sin and living for God. Communion is a reminder of Christ's death and our need to live lives that honor Him. According to I Corinthians 11:28, Communion is a time for us to examine ourselves. So, the next time you witness a baptism or take part in Communion, take advantage of the opportunity to praise God for your blessings. Also, use it as a time of reflection, and consider how you should respond in light of all that God has done.

VII. Conclusion. Just as the Hebrews were bound in Egyptian bondage, believers once lived in bondage to sin (see John 8:34; Romans 3:9). Just as the blood of a perfect, flawless animal substitute in the prime of its life delivered the Hebrews, so does the blood of the perfect and flawless Son of God save us from sin (see John 1:29; Hebrews 9:13-14; I Peter 1:18-19). For believers in Christ, Israel's slavery in Egypt pictures our bondage to sin from which we have been delivered. The Exodus of God's people from slavery and bondage in Egypt is still one of the most important events in Jewish history. What was an act of mercy for them, a display of God's grace, was at the same time an act of divine judgment upon Pharaoh. This all was a fulfillment of God's prophecy to Abram (Abraham) in Genesis 15:13-14, 16. We can be sure that our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who identifies Himself as the LORD or Jehovah the covenant keeping God, always keeps His promises.



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