

Exodus 12:1-30

What was God doing in v. 2? He was establishing a new religious calendar of Israel in commemoration of the Exodus. The month they came out of Egypt would now become the first month of the New Year. This feast of Passover was to mark a new age in the history of Israel ("...the first month, the first month of your year").¹

What were the directions God gave to Moses in vv. 3-4? On the 10th day of this month, take a lamb that is just the right size for your family to eat in one meal. If a family was small and not able to eat an entire animal, they were to find another family to share the meal with. The celebration of Passover was centered in homes.

How were the animals described which were chosen for sacrifice (v. 5)? A lamb, a year old male without any defects...from the sheep or the goats. The New Testament identifies the Passover lamb as a type of the Person and work of Jesus Christ, God's "Lamb" (1 Corinthians 5:7). At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, John the Baptist announced that Jesus was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

What were the directions God gave to Moses in vv. 6-7? On the 14th day of the month, slaughter the lamb at twilight. Then take some of the blood and paint the sides and tops of the doorframes of your houses.

What were God's directions for eating the Passover evening meal (vv. 8-10)? Roast the meat over the fire – do not boil it or eat it raw. Eat it along with bitter herbs -- which symbolized the Israelites' bitter experience of oppression in Egypt. And eat bread made without yeast -- to remember that they were in such a hurry to leave Egypt (12:33-34) that there was no time to add the yeast and let the bread rise. The Israelites were not to eat any unconsumed parts of this meal again as leftovers. Leftovers must be burned up. This was a special sacrificial meal, not just another dinner.

How were they to eat the Passover meal (v. 11)? They were to eat it in hurry with their cloaks trucked into their belts, with their sandals on and their staffs in their hands as if ready to depart immediately. Evidently the Israelites normally went barefoot in their homes, and would lay their staffs aside when they entered their dwellings. God told them to eat the Passover with their sandals on their feet and their staffs in their hand. This was a reminder of the sense of urgency with which they had to eat the meal when they fled from Egypt.²

On the same night that they ate the Passover meal what would the Lord do (vv. 12-13)? He would pass through Egypt and kill every firstborn boy or man and the firstborn of all the animals. But the houses that had their doorposts painted with blood He would pass over and no one would be killed. This was the final proof, in the plagues, of God's sovereignty and the humiliation of the gods of Egypt.

Note that God said that when *He* saw the blood He would pass over the Jews. He did not say when *they* saw it. The basis of their security was the fact that God's justice was satisfied with the blood-sacrifice of the lamb. Therefore the Israelites could rest. The reason Christians can have peace with God is that Jesus Christ's blood, in the same way, satisfied God as it washed away our sins in the eyes of God and we can know true forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7).

The purpose of this final plague was like the others: to bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt (Numbers 33:4), thus showing that God is the Lord.³

What would be the future significance in the life of the Israelites of this night (v. 14)? This day would be celebrated for the generations to come as a festival – a remembrance.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, a national celebration of Israel's redemption from Egypt, began with the Passover meal and continued for seven more days. What were the specific requirements for observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread (vv. 15-16)? For seven days they had to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, they had to get all the yeast out of their homes. If they didn't do that, or if they ate any yeast during the seven

day festival, they would be cut off from Israel that is, excluded from the camp, separated from covenant rights and privileges, possibly resulting in death. Also, they were to hold sacred assemblies on the first and seventh days of the festival and not do any work at all other than to prepare food.

The bread that the Jews used for these feasts contained no yeast, which made it like a cracker rather than a cake in its consistency. The Old Testament often uses yeast as a symbol of sin. Yeast gradually permeates dough, and it affects every part of the dough. Here it not only reminded the Israelites, in later generations, that their ancestors fled Egypt in haste, before their dough had time to rise. It also reminded them that their lives should resemble the unleavened bread as redeemed people, namely, free from sin.⁴

What were the future directions for celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread (v. 17)? It was the very same day the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt after 430 years. They were to celebrate it every year on the same day kinda like how we celebrate Christmas. And pass this ordinance down to the following generations.

What was the role of yeast to be during the seven day festival (vv. 18-20)? These verses are essentially a repeat of God's instructions in vv. 15-16.

What commands did Moses give to the elders of Israel (vv. 21-22)? Go get your animals and sacrifice them for the Passover. Use the blood to paint the sides and tops of your doorframes and don't go outside.

Hyssop grew commonly on rocks and walls in the Near East and Egypt. It was probably the same plant that we identify as hyssop today, or very close to it. Masses of tiny white flowers and a fragrant aroma characterized it. The Jews used it for applying blood to the door in the Passover ritual, because of its availability and suitability as an applicator of liquids—something like a paint brush. The hairy surface of its leaves and branches holds liquids well and makes it suitable as a sprinkling device for purification rituals.⁵

What would the Lord do next (v. 23)? He would go over all of Egypt and if he saw the doors painted with blood he would pass over the house and not kill anyone.

What was the future guidance Moses gave the elders in regard to the Passover celebration (vv. 24-27a)?

Make this a lasting ceremony you do every year once you get to the Promised Land. And be sure to tell your children and all the generations to follow exactly what this celebration means and why we celebrate.

How did the people respond (vv. 27b-28)? They bowed down and worshipped and did exactly what the Lord told Moses and Aaron they should do.

Worship and obedience occur together again here. These are the two proper responses to God's provision of redemption. They express true faith. These are key words in Exodus.⁶

What did the Lord do next (v. 29)? At midnight, the Lord killed every firstborn boy, man and animal in all of Egypt.

How did Pharaoh and his people respond (v. 30)? They were screaming and crying. Great sorrow gripped the nation as God destroyed the favored sons of families in every stratum of society from royalty to slave. This presents a vivid reminder of the fury of God against sinners and the awful price that sin exacts.⁷

¹ John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 126.

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 110.

³ John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 128.

⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 113.

⁵ Ibid., 115.

⁶ Ibid., 116.

⁷ J. John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 129.