

Exodus 13

This section is somewhat repetitive, but the emphasis is on the Lord's right to the firstborn in Israel, and how the Israelites were to acknowledge that right.¹

NOTE: The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are back-to-back celebrations. Passover isn't a week or even a day, but a meal held on the 14th day of the month of Nisan followed immediately on the 15th day of Nisan, by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were feasts of commemoration causing the Israelites to remember their deliverance from bondage in Egypt.

What did God tell Moses to do (v. 2)? God had saved the firstborn of the Israelites from death in Egypt; therefore, the firstborn of humans and of animals were to be consecrated to God, as belonging to Him.²

What does consecrated mean? Dedicated to the service of the Lord much like what Hanna did with Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11, 21-28).

What did Moses in turn tell the Israelites (v. 3)? Again Moses reminded the people of the importance of the Passover – the day of their deliverance (12:24–27) from the land of slavery by God's mighty hand.³

The Passover commemorates Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt. The blood of the slain Passover lamb stood in the place of the firstborn of each family so that the firstborn would not die. This feast is the foundation for the other feasts because of its focus on memorialization and preparation.

In the New Testament, we see an even greater Passover Lamb. It was no accident that Christ's crucifixion occurred at the same time and on the same day as the Passover: He is the fulfillment of this feast. His sinless life and His voluntary sacrifice provide redemption for all who turn to Him.⁴

What did Moses tell the Israelites to do when they entered the Promised Land (vv. 4-7)? Observe this same ceremony, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in this same month year after year. For seven days eat nothing with yeast and don't even have any yeast in your houses. And on the seventh day hold a festival to the Lord. The removal of the leaven (yeast) represented their separation from the Egyptians as well as the world.

What was each Jewish father to do (v. 8)? Like the Passover (12:26–27), the Feast of Unleavened Bread had great educational value in the home. The fathers were to explain to their sons the historical significance of not eating yeast. **Fathers – what are we to explain to our sons and daughters that is of great spiritual importance to ensure that they clearly understand? Let us start with the Gospel.**

What was this observance compared to (v. 9)? The feast was like a sign on their hand or forehead, that is, it was a continual reminder of God's mighty deliverance from Egypt.⁵

What were the instructions of v. 10? Celebrate the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread at this same time every year.

What else did Moses tell the Israelites to do when they entered the Promised Land (vv. 11-13)? Once in the Promised Land, the firstborn sons and male animals were to be dedicated to the Lord (v. 2; Numbers 18:15). Animals were included because "they too benefited from the redemption which God provided in the 10th plague." Since donkeys were considered ceremonially unclean animals (Leviticus

11:2-4) they could not be sacrificed as the first male donkey but they could be redeemed (bought back for a price) by lambs sacrificed in their place.⁶

If they did not give to the Lord a young sheep or a young goat as a sacrifice for the donkey, they must kill the first male donkey. The Lord would not accept donkeys as sacrifices.

What is each father directed to do (vv. 14-16)? The Hebrews' first-born sons were to be "redeemed." This too would have teaching value in the home (Exodus 12:26-27; 13:8). The Egyptian firstborn males were slain in judgment. The Israelite firstborn animals were slain in substitutionary sacrifice. The Israelite firstborn sons were redeemed by lambs sacrificed in their place which was to serve as a reminder of God's powerful and gracious deliverance from Egypt.

The Israelites now began their migration from Goshen to Canaan – the Promised Land. What was unique about the Israelite journey upon leaving Egypt (vv. 17-18)? The most direct route from Egypt to Canaan would have been through Philistine country, a trip of about two weeks along the coastal road known as "The Way of Horus." But this was a busy thoroughfare, under constant surveillance by the Egyptian army. To save His people from attack and consequent discouragement, God led them by a more southerly route through the Sinai Peninsula. The children of Israel went up in orderly ranks.⁷

What did Moses do (v. 19)? Moses was honoring Joseph's request that his bones be taken from Egypt (Genesis 50:25). Joseph requested this because he knew that Egypt was not their final resting place, but that God had a Promised Land for them. His coffin laid above ground for the four hundred or so years until it was taken back to Canaan. It was a silent witness all those years that Israel was going back to the Promised Land, just as God had promised. Now the promise was being fulfilled.

What was unique about the Israelite journey (vv. 20-22)? The pillar of cloud and fire, the token of God's presence, remained over the Israelites until they entered Canaan (the Promised Land) under Joshua's leadership (v. 22).⁸

Supernaturally guided by a pillar of cloud in the daytime, which became a pillar of fire at night, the Israelites apparently traveled some distance every day. Besides guiding them, the cloud, symbolizing God's presence, assured them of His goodness and faithfulness and His protection from their enemies (Exodus 14:19-20).⁹

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 126.

² William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 98.

³ John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 130.

⁴ Reflections Ministry with Ken Boa

⁵ John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 130.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 100.

⁸ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 131.

⁹ John D. Hannah, "Exodus," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 131.