

# Jesus as the goal of Israel's Feasts and Fasts - 02

## *The Passover – Part I*

### Biblical References:

Old Testament: Exodus 12; 13.1-10; 23.14-17; 34.18,25; Leviticus 23.5-14; Numbers 9.2-14; 28.16-25; 33.3; Deuteronomy 16.1-8,16; Joshua 5.9,10; 2 Kings 23.21-23; 2 Chronicles 30; 35; Ezra 6.19, Ezekiel 45.21.

New Testament: Matthew 26.1-2; Mark 14.1,12,14,16; Luke 2.41; 22.1,7-8,11,13,15; John 2.13, 6.4; 11.55; 12.1; 13.1; 18.28,39; 19.14; Acts 12.4; 1 Cor 5.6-8

### **1 - The covenant with Abraham.**

In the context of the covenant with Abraham, the Lord had made clear to Abraham that he had given him and his descendants the land, but that while Abraham was wandering all over it during his lifetime, the descendants would not enter the land until four generations further on. [Genesis 12.1-3; 15.7-16].

### **2 - The arrival of the Hebrews in Egypt as a place of provision.**

Joseph, to whom God communicated in vision and dream, was sold to the Midianite traders by his brothers [Genesis 37], and he was taken to Egypt in captivity and later jailed when framed by Potiphar's wife [Genesis 39-40]. He rose to be the governor of Egypt next to Pharaoh [Genesis 41] and was in place as a Saviour-figure for his family when the famine arose in their own country [Genesis 42]. He welcomed them, declared his love and forgiveness to them and so Egypt turned out to be a place of haven and blessing to Jacob and Joseph's generation. So it was until the death of both Jacob and Joseph [Genesis 50]. The Hebrews multiplied greatly there and prospered in a fertile and productive area of the land of Goshen [Exodus 1.1-7].

### **3 - The new Pharaoh over Egypt; the arrival of Moses.**

Exodus 1.8 records the new king over Egypt who came to power and did not know Joseph. We might wonder how the history of the wonderful provision of Joseph to guide them through the famine was not known to the new Pharaoh. It was because he was the founder of the 18th Dynasty [Ahmose?]. He saw the numbers of the Hebrews as a security threat and was determined to oppress them and treat them as slaves to contain them.

The Hebrews were set to work building the store cities of Pithom and Raamses.. The labour was driven by slave masters and intense; but their fertility and numbers were sustained and then the king introduced the killing of the boys at birth. The birth of Moses is recorded and his growth in Pharaoh's household and education.

He is seen as a leading-saving figure who knows that the leading of his oppressed people is in his destiny. However, he is rejected at the time he overtly stands up for one of them. He flees to Midian as a marked man and marries there.

### **4 - God promises deliverance to the Hebrews.**

The call of Moses, aged 80, in Midian is initiated by God who has seen the plight of the Hebrews people and has arisen to liberate them [Exodus 3-4; 5.22-6.9] and that Moses is sent back to Egypt to declare this to the Hebrews and then to confront Pharaoh.

### **5 - The plagues as judgments of God against the gods of Egypt.**

Pharaoh is the person who leads and has authority over the people of Egypt. He is confronted by Moses and Aaron, man to man. His intransigence is predicted by God and his awareness of the confrontation with Moses as the prophet of the Lord shows that he is aware that Moses is speaking on behalf of God who wants his people to come and worship him in the wilderness. That is, they must move out of the place they now live in, because He desires their worship and fellowship at this time and He has somewhere to take them. A place which at this time will become their own land, consistent with his promise to Abraham.

Yet, the Pharaoh and his people worship other gods; and there is a confrontation taking place here between the gods of the Egypt and the Lord. This is seen in every one of the plagues [judgments] which oppress Egypt and its people.

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The turning of the Nile into a blood bath [Exodus 7.14-21] addresses the trust the people had in the Nile as their life, the source of their drinking water and their water for irrigation of crops. In this way Hapi the Nile god and Osiris, the water god whose blood was supposed to be the life of the Nile are discredited. As the fish in the Nile die to the goddess Hatmehyt, whose symbol was a fish and models of fish were worn as charms, is also dishonoured and overcome.

The second judgment of frogs [Exodus 8.5-14] discredited the goddess Heqt, the goddess of fertility and patron of the midwives. Heqt cannot control the fertility of the frogs.

The third judgment of lice [gnats] [Exodus 8.16-19] as arising through the dust of the land, considered the sacred land of Egypt.

The fourth judgment of flies [Exodus 8.21-24] which includes the beetle god Khepera was widely worshipped as a god of the resurrection.

The fifth judgment of murrain, [Exodus 9.1-7] a disease on the cattle discredited the bull god Apis and Hathor the goddess of love often depicted as a cow. It is also true that the cattle themselves, particularly rams, bulls and cows were sacred.

The sixth judgment of plague of boils, [Exodus 9.8-12] means that the Egyptians found that they could not stand against Moses. The practice of the priest bathe four times a day and to shave their whole bodies every second day, and to wear only linen, and so keep themselves ceremonially clean was now compromised. And of course, the god of healing, Imhotep, was thoroughly discredited.

The seventh judgment of hail [Exodus 9.18-25] brought a powerful expression against Sepes who was supposed to live in a tree and even the sun god Ra, who was supposed to appear between two sycamore trees every day. The goddesses Nut and Hathor lived in trees as well and so the hail did damage to their dwellings. The sky goddess Nut was especially blameworthy here because she could show no control over the sky from where the hail came.

The eighth judgment of locusts [Exodus 10.4-15] rebuked the god Senehem who was pictured in ancient Egypt as a locust.

The ninth judgment was that of complete darkness. [Exodus 10.21-29]. The sun god Ra found himself totally obscured. And Pharaoh himself was acknowledged as the son of the sun god Ra.

The tenth judgment was against the first-born of Egypt. [Exodus 11]. The Pharaoh was worshipped as a god in Egypt, and the son of the Pharaoh was expected as a new manifestation of the sun god Ra.

Each of these judgments strikes at the commitment the people and the Pharaoh had made to deny the God of all the earth [the God of Israel] his own honour and glory.

### **6 - Passover night Exodus 12**

Indeed this is expressly said in that on Passover night the judgments of God are specifically against the "gods of Egypt" [Exodus 12.12].

The narrative:

1-2 The month Abib is to be the start of the year.

The Passover is established. Each family to take an unblemished male lamb or kid from flock on 10th day of month

They are to kill it on the 14th day; place the blood on the doorposts and lintels of their house

They are not to eat it raw or boiled, but roasted by fire, and eat it all as they stand dressed, ready for a journey.

12-13 Why called a Passover? Blood protects them from the destroying angel.

14-20 The later Festival of the Passover: on 14th of Abib they are to eat unleavened bread, [bread with no yeast] for 7 days. Do it for all generations forever.

21-23 Moses tells them how to offer the lamb, sprinkle the blood and for what purpose.

24-28 He tells them to instruct their children in the nature of this ritual. The Hebrews do as they are commanded.

29-30 All the first-born of Egypt are killed.

31-33 Pharaoh and his people urge the Hebrews to depart

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34-36 In preparing for their departure, they receive gold, silver and garments from the Egyptians.

37-39 They journey from Raamses to Succoth. There are 600,000 men plus women and children. They bake the unleavened cakes and take them with them.

40-42 The time they had lived in Egypt was 430 years.

Requirements for the Passover, carefully observed by the people who exit Egypt the same day.

### **7 - The Passover Lamb as the Gift of God**

This event which was to take place was so significant that it is the beginning of the Hebrew year [12.2] from now on. It is something that every year, makes the fresh start. What ever a past year may hold in the memory of the people, this event will establish the new year as hopeful, and new.

### **8 - A matter of eating the flesh and relying on God's promise about the blood.**

There is to be found from within their daily stock of food a particular item, it is a year old lamb from their flock [12.3,5]. They are to take it on the tenth of the month and separate it from the sheep and the goats. It is for a holy, a separated, purpose - it is going to be eaten, but eaten for as particular purpose that God will show. It's meaning is centrally located in that it is something normally eaten, and that it is flesh and blood.

### **9 - Each person must partake**

They are to decide on the number of lambs according to their households, but if households are too small for a whole lamb, then according to what each man ought to eat. That is, the criterion for a shared lamb overrides the distinction of the households, in favour of the fact that each person shall have a full share in the lamb. This is a matter of eating, in which the whole people shall participate, individually and fully - no one misses out; each is prepared for and each must be satisfied by what he has eaten.

### **10- The lamb chosen must be unblemished.**

This is a clear sign that it is required by the Lord for a holy, separated purpose [12.5]. Its selection is left to those who have had it for a year among their flock - and are in a position to appreciate its worth to themselves by virtue of its perfection by comparison to its lesser fellows - and they select it willingly, releasing it to the Lord's purpose.

It is a personally selected lamb, a personally eaten lamb, but it is killed in concert with the whole of the assembly of the Hebrews [12.6]. It is something in which they all share commonly and its meaning is to be common, consistent with the fact that their calendar will reflect this permanently [12.14].

It shall be killed at twilight [the beginning of a new day] and in such a way as its blood is released from its flesh for a purpose. This is immediately done - it is painted on the sides and lintels of the doorway of the house, so that it may be seen by a person passing outside. [12.6-7]. From the point of view of the eater of the lamb, its blood is shed in its death first, and then its flesh is eaten. Its blood is used with reference to what is happening outside the house, it is for Another to see and recognise the faith in His word of those in the house; that they are using His provision. Inside the house, the flesh is eaten as all food is, as a provision of life and strength to go forth from the meal in the power of what is supplied.

### **11 - The blood is salvation “from”, the flesh is salvation “to”; both in respect to God.**

The two actions are to be done on the same night as the judgment will be enacted - they shall put the blood on the doorposts and eat the flesh on the same night [12.7-8]. In this way they draw from the Lamb covering blood which preserves their life in the midst of judgment and they eat of its flesh which gives them life to go forth to serve the Lord in the wilderness.

The lamb shall not be boiled or raw. It shall be the subject of fire. It is roasted quickly and eaten with bread. In this way the two things eaten are flesh and bread.

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### **12 - No leaven [mixture] in the bread [2 Corinthians 5.6-8]**

The bread is holy in its function as well; this is shown in that it is to be prepared quickly, with no yeast taking time to rise, and in a holy, unmixed way, where no yeast is at work within it.

The taste of this meal is not sweet, the lamb is accompanied by bitterness, provided by something which accompanies its eating. The herbs indicate that there is something bitter about this meal that is not found in the lamb itself but in the accompanying setting of the meal.

It shall be entirely consumed by the eaters, for its purpose is entirely reserved for this. But whatever is left over, by virtue of the eaters not eating it, is not to be used as common, or for any other purpose, but burned up completely by morning. You eat it once for all, and yet you make a memorial of it year by year [12.7-10,14].

### **13 - You eat to walk away from slavery into fellowship with God**

The way of its eating is that people are standing up - it is a meal not enjoyed for itself but for the purpose for which it is ingested. It is eaten quickly, with an eye to what is happening all around on that night. It is eaten so that, dressed for action, for walking away from an old life, for leaving of slavery, for escaping an enemy, for service to the Lord. It is eaten quickly, as those who are not savouring a nice meal for itself, but to get it into one's stomach so as to walk in the strength of it for as far as this salvation night will take them [12.11].

### **14 - It is the Lord's Passover.**

The reason for treating this roasted lamb this way is because it is the Lord's Passover. It is stated in 12.11-12 in such a way as you could attribute the Passover to the lamb eaten or to the event of the wrath of God which He is executing that night. 12.11 speaks of the lamb eaten as the Passover. 12.12 as the act of the judgment of God upon Egypt as the Passover. And in 12.13 we have what the Passover is in respect of the Hebrews who are being saved.

For it is both - it is salvation through judgment. 12.12 speaks of what it means for the Lord to Passover the land - for the Egyptians it is a passing "through" their land, it is a destruction - a smiting of the Egyptians [12.23]. 12.13 indicates what it means for the Hebrews - it is that He sees the blood; and because it is there for Him to see then He "passes over" them, so that no plague falls on them [12.23].

### **15 - It is to be done as a permanent memorial.**

They are to observe this memorial permanently, [12.14] and in the promised land which they are to go [12.25]. That is, their dwelling in the land is always to be constantly controlled by this memory of how they have come to be there - by salvation through judgment. A judgment in which their salvation was effected through the slaying of a lamb, whose blood shielded them from the wrath of God and whose flesh was the life strength in which they walked to freedom from slavery into the freedom to serve God in a temporary wilderness place and then finally in a land of their own.

### **16 - Leviticus 23.5-14**

Outlining the major feasts of the year the Passover and Unleavened bread is one of the three sacred assembly times for the year. There is no work done on the first day and on the seventh; and there are offerings to the Lord by fire for seven days.

### **17 - Extension for month to celebrate Passover. Numbers 9.2-14**

Because of ceremonial uncleanness at the 14th Nisan some folks could not celebrate Passover. They had a provision for the 14th of the next month.

### **18 - The Burnt Offerings accompany the Passover. Numbers 28.16-25 [See also Ezekiel 45.21-25]**

First day: burnt offerings accompanied by grain offerings.

Two young bulls, each accompanied by 3/10ths of ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. One ram plus 2/10ths and seven male lambs each with 1/10th..

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One male goat as a sin offering to make atonement.

These are to be in addition to the regular morning burnt offerings.

### **19 - Passover to be celebrated at a place the Lord chooses. Deuteronomy 16.1-8**

This place will be a place where He has arranged for the dwelling of his Name [verse 2,5-6]. Unleavened bread is called the "bread of affliction" which means because you left Egypt in haste.

The reason for the haste was that the Lord had brought a judgment, and wanted the people to go through it and survive. So there was no time to let yeast be in the bread ñ there was no time for it to rise.

### **20 - Circumcision of the whole nation and Passover in promised land. Joshua 5**

This section records that the day after the Passover was celebrated the manna stopped being provided, because they had the fruit of the land to now eat.

21 ñ Josiah the king renews the covenant. Passover resumed. 2 Kings 23.21-23

From the days of the Judges until the 18th year of Josiah the king of Judah the Passover was not celebrated. Then in that year it was celebrated. All this took place because the book of the covenant was found in the Temple and read before the king.

### **22 - Hezekiah repaired the Temple and re-instated worship 2 Chronicles 30 & 35.**

Hezekiah celebrated Passover I he second month because not enough priests were available 2 C 30.1-5, 13-20. Many people were not prepared for it; and Hezekiah asked God's pardon for this ñ the Lord pardoned them and so healed the people.

### **23 - At the completion of the second Temple the Passover was celebrated. Ezra 6.13-22**

As the exile completed the rebuilding of the Temple on their return from exile they were attended by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. It was completed on the 3rd day of Adair in the sixth year of Darius. They celebrated by dedicating the temple and then celebrated Passover.