

Exodus 12 - Salvation Through Judgment :

Part 2 - Death for the Egyptians: a Passover for the Hebrews

The narrative:

- 1-2 The month Abib is to be the start of the year.
- 3-5 *The Passover is established.* Each family to take an unblemished male lamb or kid from flock on 10th day of month
- 6-7 They are to kill it on the 14th day; place the blood on the doorposts and lintels of their house
- 8-11 They are not to eat it raw or boiled, but roasted, 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
- 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.
- 43-51 *Requirements for the Passover*, carefully observed by the people who exit Egypt the same day.

1 -The Passover Lamb as the Gift of God

1. 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.

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

2. 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 which God will show. It's meaning is centrally located in that it is something normally eaten, and that it is flesh and blood.

3. 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.

4. The lamb chosen must be unblemished, 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.

5. 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 together, 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 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 visible to 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 trust 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.

3 - 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 its covering blood, which preserves their life in the midst of judgment. They also eat of its flesh which gives them life to go forth to serve the Lord in the wilderness.

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6. 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.

4 - 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].

5 - You eat to walk away from slavery.

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 by those who are 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].

7. 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 judgement. 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].

8. 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.