

Exodus Chapter 12

Exodus 12:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,"

“The Lord spake”: Most probably, the instructions on the Passover (verses 1-20), were also given during the 3 days of darkness in order to fully prepare Israel for the grand finale, their Exodus from Egypt.

“In the land”: Later, while Israel was in the wilderness, Moses wrote (23:14-17; Deut. 16:1-8), and indicated that the detailed instructions for this very special feast day in Israel’s religious calendar were not like those of the other special days. All which were given after the nation had already left Egypt. This one, the Passover, was inextricably linked to what took place in the Exodus, and that connection was never to be forgotten. It became indelibly entrenched in Israel’s tradition and has always marked the day of redemption from Egypt.

Exodus 12:2 "This month [shall be] unto you the beginning of months: it [shall be] the first month of the year to you."

“This month”: The month of Abib (March/April), by divine decree became the beginning of the religious calendar, marking the start of Israel’s life as a nation. Later in Israel’s history, after the Babylonian captivity, Abib would become Nisan (Nehemiah 2:1; Ester 3:7).

Yahweh began the calendar of Israel with the Exodus. The “first month” of the Hebrew year, called Abib (or Aviv). Literally means “the ear” month because at this time, about April for us’ that the ears of grain have developed.

In these verses, we see first of all, the Lord speaking to Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron did not instigate any of the plagues and then tell God. These plagues, Moses' and Aaron's messages to Pharaoh and the people, originated with God. All Moses and Aaron were doing was carrying out God's orders. If we are good ministers, that is what we should do as well. We should first listen to God and whatever He tells us, and then we must bring it to the people. We see that God established the month we call April, as the first month of the Hebrew year. The Hebrews call it Abib. We do not know for sure how they had measured their months before, but we do know that God said from now on, April is the first month of the year for the Israelites.

Verses 3-14: The detailed instructions for the Passover included what animal to select, when to kill it, what to do with its blood, how to cook it, what to do with leftovers, how to dress for the meal, the reason why it was being celebrated “in haste,” and what the shed blood signified.

Exodus 12:3 "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 a house:"

God's specific instructions about the Passover "lamb" (a goat's kid was also acceptable, verse 5), would ensure that in every way, it was fit for sacred sacrifice.

Here, we see the celebration of the Passover for the Israelites being set up for the very first time. Notice the word "all" in the first sentence. This means men, women and children. Whosoever will is a very good description of this. In our language, He is saying: On April 10th, each family go and get a lamb from your flock and pick out one that your family can eat at one sitting; don't get one too big. You will see why in the following verse.

Exodus 12:4 "And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor 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."

There would be cases where the family would not be large enough to consume an entire lamb at a sitting. Where this was so, men were to join with their neighbors, either two small families joining together, or a large family drafting off some of its members to bring up the numbers of a small one. According to Josephus, ten was the least number regarded as sufficient, while twenty was not considered too many.

"Every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb": Rather, shall ye count. In determining the number for any given Paschal meal, ye shall "count men according to their eating," admitting more or fewer, as they are likely to consume less or more.

Here we see if there were just 3 or 4 people in a household, they would not be able to consume a whole lamb by themselves. Then 2 families would need to go together and pick a lamb that these 2 families could eat at one meal. Ordinarily 10 people could eat a small lamb.

Exodus 12:5 "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take [it] out from the sheep, or from the goats:"

"Your lamb ... without blemish": A kid goat was an alternative choice. Any flaw would render it unfit to represent a pure, wholesome sacrifice given to Yahweh.

You see a description of what this lamb, that is to be sacrificed, would be like physically. John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God (in John 1).

John 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:36 we read, "And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"

John was speaking prophetically of Jesus (the Lamb of God), being sacrificed on the cross for our sin. Jesus actually does away with sin for His followers. Just as this lamb (in verse 5), was to have no blemish, Jesus had no blemish. That is why the soldiers did not break His legs to hurry death. Jesus had no blemish. He was to be a male lamb. Jesus was a male. "Of the first year", means that he was taken before he came to a female lamb. Jesus was not married and definitely

did not have an affair with anyone. He NEVER committed any sin, much less adultery, as some movies are showing now. This is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (in my opinion), to accuse our Savior of sin. It appears that a lamb could be a goat or a sheep.

Exodus 12:6 "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."

“In the evening”: Literally “between the two evenings.” Since the new day was reckoned from sunset; the sacrificing of the lamb or kid was done before sunset while it was still day 14 of the first month. “Twilight” has been taken to signify to be either at the time between sunset and the onset of darkness; or from the decline of the sun until sunset. Later Moses would prescribe the time for the sacrifice as “in the evening at sunset” (Deut. 16:6). According to Josephus, it was customary in his day to kill the lamb at about 3:00 p.m. This was the time of day that Christ, the Christian’s Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), died (Luke 23:44-46).

One really interesting thing that we should notice was that the whole congregation viewed this. If you look at it from the spiritual standpoint as all of us, because of our sins, helped crucify Jesus. Another thing we notice here, that each head of the house killed their own lamb. There was nothing between God and the head of the house then, except this sacrificial lamb. There is no one between Christians and God now, except Jesus Christ (the Lamb of God). What a beautiful parallel. This four day difference in time was a time to examine the lamb and make sure it was perfect, leaving time to go and exchange it if it was not.

Exodus 12:7 "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."

“Strike it”: With a bunch of hyssop (See Exodus 12:22).

“The two side posts and on the upper door post.”: The idea seems to have been that the destroying influence, whatever it was, would enter the house by the door. The sight of the bloody stains above the door and on either side, would prevent its entering. The word translated “upper door post” appears to be derived from *shâcaph*, “to look out.” And to signify properly the latticed window above the door, through which persons viewed those who knocked before admitting them.

Such windows are frequently represented in the early Egyptian monuments. The blood thus rendered conspicuous would show that atonement had been made for the house, i.e., for those inside.

This is what I call being covered with the blood of the Lamb. The very thing that saves Christians is when we are symbolically washed in the blood of the Lamb; covered over with it, if you will. We are told in Revelation that the Christians will be wearing white robes in heaven, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 7:14 "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The reason this blood of this sacrificial lamb was put on the door posts and over the door was because this was the entrance to the house. The devil or his evil demons cannot cross the blood. God honors the blood as well. God cannot look upon sin; He will destroy the person involved in sin. The only way to not be destroyed is for the shed blood to be between you and God. God sees the shed blood and passes over without destroying you.

Exodus 12:8 "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; [and] with bitter [herbs] they shall eat it."

The night is thus clearly distinguished from the evening when the lamb was slain. It was slain before sunset, on the 14th, and eaten after sunset, the beginning of the 15th.

"With fire": Among various reasons given for this injunction the most probable and satisfactory seems to be the special sanctity attached to fire from the first institution of sacrifice (compare Genesis 4:4).

"And unleavened bread": On account of the hasty departure, allowing no time for the process of leavening: but the meaning discerned by Paul (1 Cor. 5:7-8), and recognized by the Church in all ages, was assuredly implied, though not expressly declared in the original institution. Compare our Lord's words (Matt. 16:6; 16:12), as to the symbolism of leaven.

"Bitter herbs" The word occurs only here and (in Numbers 9:11), in reference to herbs. The symbolic reference to the previous sufferings of the Israelites is generally admitted.

This is so symbolic of Jesus. The flesh of the Lamb is Jesus, as we read in John 6.

John 6:53 "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

All of this is symbolic of course. You do not literally eat the flesh of Jesus or drink His actual blood. The Communion of unleavened bread is symbolic of the flesh of Jesus, and the grape juice you drink, is symbolic of the blood of Jesus. The unleavened bread is symbolic of the sin-free body of Christ. Leaven is symbolic of sin, so we see in this unleavened bread that Jesus was, and is, completely free from sin. The "roast with fire" has to do, in my opinion, with the fire, symbolic of God. The bitter herbs show the bitter bondage the Israelites were faced with in Egypt. I believe the bitter herbs show the Christians that to follow Jesus and partake of the blessings of Jesus, that there is some self-sacrifice to be made. A Christian must crucify his flesh and separate himself from worldly lust to be a follower of Jesus.

Exodus 12:9 "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."

“Eat not of it raw”: A prohibition with health implications which also distinguished them from pagans who often ate raw flesh in their sacred festivals.

Here they were told especially not to eat it raw, as was the practice with some of the false religions. "Nor sodden at all with water", I believe, means don't boil it. One of the purposes of roasting was so it would not be broken apart in the sacrifice, but would be whole, as we see in the statement "his head with his legs". The "purtenance" was the intestine. Most of the time this was opened and washed out and the intestine was then cooked with the whole body. So much of this symbolizes the necessity of the body being kept intact with no broken bones. It could also, symbolize the unity of the faith. Remember, we are looking at these Scriptures more with the spiritual eyes than with the physical.

Exodus 12:10 "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."

That which either was not usually eaten, or was more than all of you could conveniently eat.

"Ye shall burn with fire": To prevent either:

(1) The superstitious use of the relics of that lamb by the Israelites, who thereby had received a greater benefit than they did afterwards by the brazen serpent, which upon that account they worshipped; or:

(2) The profane abuse of that which had been consecrated to God's service (Compare Exodus 29:34).

I believe this was symbolic of taking communion and that nothing that has been placed out for communion should be left over to the next time. Whoever conducts communion should eat and drink all that is left. This is similar to the manna that fell from heaven. Each day's necessity was to be taken care of, but not to be held over to the next day. The symbol that I see in this is that we must daily eat of the Word of God to stay in good stead with God. The Bible (Word of God), is to be consumed each day. To be able to live a victorious life with Jesus, we must eat of His Word every day. We could see in this that Jesus is our daily Bread. We depend on Him, not on our own abilities.

Exodus Chapter 12 Questions

1. Who instigated the plagues?
2. What part did Moses play in this?
3. What message should ministers bring the church?
4. What did He establish as the first month of the year?
5. What do the Hebrews call it?

6. What day of the month should they get the lamb?
7. What was this celebration they were establishing?
8. Who would partake of the lamb?
9. If the family was not large enough to totally consume the lamb at one sitting, what should they do?
10. Describe the lamb they should choose.
11. Who called Jesus the Lamb of God in the gospels?
12. What was he speaking of, when he called Jesus the Lamb of God?
13. What gender was the lamb to be?
14. How long should the lamb be kept and examined?
15. Who shall kill this lamb?
16. What is this symbolic of?
17. Who is between the Christian and God the Father?
18. What was to be done with the blood of the lamb?
19. Why?
20. What will make the Christians' robes white?
21. What is to be done with the flesh of the lamb?
22. What type of bread is to be eaten?
23. Why?
24. What are the bitter herbs symbolic of?
25. In the communion service, what is the bread symbolic of? What is the wine symbolic of?
26. What does "sodden with water" mean?
27. What is the "purtenance"?
28. Who ate raw meat in their ceremonies?
29. What symbolizes the unity of the faith in all of this?
30. What other time would these Israelites be warned not to have anything left for the next day?

31. We, Christians, must daily eat what?