

As we progress through the book of Exodus, we observe that the children of Israel are learning who God is. They have seen His great power in the plagues He sent to Egypt. God then gave them instructions on how they would be delivered if they would apply the blood of the lambs to their doorposts. All they had to do was follow what God had told them through Moses. The picture of substitutionary atonement was given through this occasion as we look at it in hindsight. To the Israelites this was an oddity but they followed the command and saw how God was delivering them from their bondage into freedom. They were given instructions on the Passover meal and as they followed God's orders they then were told to leave Egypt after God killed the firstborn of the Egyptians but not before they gathered valuables from the Egyptians.

They started the journey not knowing where they were going but depended on the word of the Lord that Moses spoke. As they trust God and obey Him, they are learning how to follow the Lord. Knowing the power of God and His mercy and grace helps one to trust God even when it doesn't make sense. When one knows Him through His Word and through experience, it becomes easier to follow, and things do start to make sense, when we know that He is the One who directs our paths. The Israelites get the chance to know God as he continues to reveal Himself in His Word and display of power. God will continue to teach them valuable lessons through difficult situations.

Our emphasis today is that we are to know that God is always present with us and desires us to simply follow Him as he leads.

1. PERPETUATING THE REMEMBRANCE (1-16)

The first Passover and Unleavened Bread were to be commemorated perpetually that would be a reminder of what God had done in this remarkable deliverance. If there would be reenactments and telling of the story over and over it would be guaranteed that this would continue throughout the generations. It is very important that God set up memorials so that He be glorified and be remembered. In this case it is the consecration of the firstborn and the feast of Unleavened Bread.

A. PRESERVATION OF THE FIRSTBORN

Exodus 12:12-13 God had taken the firstborn of the Egyptians and executed judgment upon them for the way they had treated the Israelites. God now turns the tables on them and to the Israelites He consecrates their firstborn. The irony is clearly seen here. They were considered special to God.

Each time a firstborn male, man or beast, came into the world that firstborn had to be redeemed. All the firstborn belonged to God as the parents would bring the firstborn sons to the Lord and offer a sacrifice. Each firstborn son in a Jewish family was very special to the parents and to the Lord. There is an excellency of dignity and power belonging to them.

The Sanctified---They were set apart for God's exclusive possession Rom 8:29, Jesus is considered the firstborn. He is the preeminent One, the one who is the rightful heir.

Heb 12:23—Christ is the firstborn of the church. The church is the fellow heirs with Christ who is the preeminent One.

All those who are born again are accounted as firstborn.

B. COMING OUT OF EGYPT

1. REMEMBER

This was to be a day to be remembered as it is the day of the coming of age.

Do this in remembrance of the Lord. Jesus said of the last Supper, do this in remembrance of Me. We were to continue on with communion in remembering His death and covenant. Out of bondage by the strength of the Lord The more of God and His power appears in any deliverance, the more memorable it is.

2. KEEP THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Unleavened Bread (1 Cor 5:7-8)

This was to be celebrated because leaven represents sin and how important it is to put away sin.

Not only were they not to eat leaven, but none was to even be seen.

Celebrate—It was not enough that they remembered it but they must celebrate it. They were to use this means to preserve the remembrance of it.

Instruct the Children the Meaning of the Deliverance—We must always be ready to teach the children about the knowledge of God. We are to make them familiar with scripture. We are to tell them of the great works of God. This particular feast is an utmost opportunity as it tells the wonders of God and His sovereign power. We should always desire to speak of the things of God whenever and whatever the situation. We should be concerned about the next generation, for if they don't receive the Word of God, where will we be?

Shall be for a Sign— a mark for all to see who they are
Prov 3:3, 6:21, Deut 6:4-9, / Mt 23:5 This statement gave rise to the use of phylacteries which were small leather boxes tied to the forehead and left arm. In these boxes are scriptures called the Shema of Deut 6. It turned into a legalistic matter and not a matter of the spirit.

C. LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN

1. DEDICATION OF THE FIRSTBORN ANIMALS

Holy to the Lord (Ex 22:29-31, Numbers 18:17)

Donkey parallels the 10th plague Rather than being sacrificed itself, a donkey is to be redeemed(replaced) with the sacrifice of a lamb, just as Israel was redeemed(replaced) with the blood of a lamb. We may think of the Egyptian firstborn as "redeeming" (replacing) the Israelites. The firstborn of a donkey, being an unclean animal, could not be sacrificed to God, so it was redeemed by a lamb.

The idea is that the firstborn of every womb belongs to God, but in the case of the Israelites he will not claim his right fully, a substitute will take their place. Life comes from death. God implemented a redemptive pattern that required death as a means to a fuller life. The consecration of the firstborn, is a reminder of the once for all substitutionary death of the beloved firstborn Son who is to come.

2. DEDICATION OF THE CHILDREN

Parents would bring their firstborn sons to the Lord and offer the appropriate sacrifice. When Mary and Joseph went to the Temple to redeem the Redeemer, they brought the sacrifice of the poor.

Lev 12:6-8, Luke 2:21-24

3. TEACHING THE CHILDREN

What is to be emphasized here is the power of God and what he did. The story is about God. This is a high view of God. That is where the emphasis is always to be.

Strength of the Lord It was God's strength that any of this happened. The mighty omnipotence of the Lord was on display His power was magnified when He was opposed by His enemies. This was the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. This was the Lord mighty in battle as He was referred to earlier. Lord killed the firstborn of the Egyptians It was not by accident that the Egyptian's firstborn died, it was done by God.

God sacrifices and redeems The death of the firstborn was a terrible reminder of the cost of redemption. This is a constant reminder that our eternal life came by death of the Son of God.

2. FOLLOWING GOD...TO A DEAD END (17-22)

Finally, the Israelites leave Egypt. The Israelites escape the stranglehold of slavery. This section sets the stage for drama in chapter 14.

A. GOD PLANS THE ROUTE FOR HIS PEOPLE

The long way instead of the short way This story has a twist as God leads them on a path they did not expect.. This is a longer route. The shorter route would bring them into conflict with the Philistines. This was to avoid war. But that way would have been four or five days journey and the wilderness journey was much farther. God had already told them that they would go on a three days journey into the wilderness. So they were not going to go along the Mediterranean coast, the easy way.

This longer way was to be a test to their faith. God was going to teach them a new lifestyle. The law had to be given, ordinances, covenants, and proper tabernacle worship.

God led the people ...to the Red Sea. God wanted them to learn some more things about Him in this Red Sea experience. He put them in a place where they could do nothing else but trust in Him.

This would seem to be the wrong way. We would not have done it that way but God's ways are not our ways. God always leads His people the best way.

Ps 23:3, 25:4-5, Prov 3:5-6, 16:9, It is God who directs the steps.

Jeremiah 10:23

When we let God direct our steps, expect to be led sometimes through difficulties. God knows what He is doing.

B. GOD ENCOURAGES HIS PEOPLE'S FAITH

Before Joseph died, he made his brothers promise that when God delivered Israel from Egypt, their descendents would take his coffin to the Promised Land. Joseph knew that God would keep His promise and rescue the children of Israel. Joseph knew he belonged with his people. Everyday this coffin would bring encouragement to the people as they would see this. It would remind them that God keeps His promises.

Bones of Joseph (Gen 50:24-25, Heb 11:22)

Josh 24:32

C. GOD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE IN HIS LEADING

God was always with them. The cloud by day protected them

From the hot sun as it gave them guidance. At night it gave them Light. When the cloud moved, they moved, and when it stopped they stopped.

God still guides His people today, mainly by His Word.

Pillar Of Cloud—Num 12:5-6, Deut 31:15-16

Ps 99:7, 105:39 Ex 40:34-38

Pillar Of Fire Ex 14:20

The Lord communicates to us through His Word and makes it clear to us. We are to be obedient to that.

There are times when we aren't sure which way God wants us to go, but if we wait on Him, He will guide us where He wants us.