

**Exodus 12:1-28 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup> 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 an house: <sup>4</sup> And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour 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. <sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats: <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it *is* the LORD'S passover. <sup>12</sup> For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. <sup>13</sup> And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup> And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. <sup>15</sup> Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. <sup>16</sup> And in the first day *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. <sup>17</sup> And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. <sup>18</sup> In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. <sup>19</sup> Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. <sup>20</sup> Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. <sup>21</sup> Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. <sup>22</sup> And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that *is* in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. <sup>23</sup> For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite *you*. <sup>24</sup> And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. <sup>25</sup> And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. <sup>26</sup> And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? <sup>27</sup> That ye shall say, It *is* the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the

head and worshipped. <sup>28</sup> And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

### **Birth of a Nation (1)**

#### **(1) Day of New Beginning (v1-20)**

#### **(2) Preparation for a New Beginning (v21-27)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The years of bondage in Egypt for the children of Israel were difficult years of unbearable afflictions. Toward the close of the Exodus, the bondage was greatest. Egypt was a pagan land where idolatry abounded. For the children of Israel, the Pharaoh was not friendly toward them after the death of Joseph and subjected them to slavery, doing the hard labour. Under those conditions, they cried out to the living and true God and He heard their cry.

God prepared Moses to deliver Israel from the vindictive clutches of the Pharaoh. So that they may go out of Egypt, the worship of the living and true God be made. In the wilderness, Israel will be given the instructions to construct the Tabernacle where proper worship of Jehovah was made according to God's specifications.

Nine plagues have already been wrought to demonstrate the truth that Pharaoh is not god but Jehovah is. Pharaoh has to acknowledge and submit to this truth and be grateful that God has blessed Egypt with life.

The final plague will take the life out of Egypt. Every first-born child and first born of cattle, Egypt's future, will have to die. This is the greatest blow yet. God has been withholding His wrath, giving Pharaoh numberless opportunities to repent, with the plagues increasing in gradual intensity. Truly, God is a merciful. The Bible tells us how Pharaoh continues to harden his heart refusing to acknowledge and submit to the sovereign power of God. This is the snare of absolute power and its abuses.

The LORD'S Passover was instituted to save Israel from the death plague that will come upon the land as it is recorded in Exodus 12:26-27, *"26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped."* Israel is never to forget their humble beginning and God's merciful deliverance.

In the New Testament, Christ is portrayed as the Passover Lamb that saves us from the bondage of sin and gives the power to overcome sin - 1 Corinthians 5:7 *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."* We are to live holy lives to return thanks to Him for saving us from all our sins and give to us a place in heaven. Death has lost its sting. We have indeed a life worth living for.

The day when we received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour is a new beginning. A new life without the strangle hold of sin but having the ability to say "no" to sin, we have before us a life of victory till we reach our heavenly home.

**(1) Day of New Beginning (v1-20)**

The month of Abib – March/April (Exodus 13:4), by divine decree, will be the beginning of Israel's religious calendar, marking the start of Israel's life as a nation (v1-2).

Verses 3-14 Specific instructions were given by God to Israel concerning the Passover to prepare for the Exodus. It includes the animal to select, when to kill it, what to do with its body and how to cook it, what to do with the leftovers, how to dress for the meal, the reason why it was being celebrated *"in haste: and what the shed blood signified."*<sup>1</sup>

The Passover is a feast. An unblemished lamb or goat, one that is not sick or impaired, less than 1 year old is to be selected for each household. If there are too few members in the household, two households can share one lamb. This is an offering made to God, such a sacrifice must be the best, nothing short of a pure, wholesome sacrifice is reasonable (v3-5).

The lamb is kept for 4 days. The sacrifice is to be made at sunset of the 4<sup>th</sup> day.

*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 an house...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.*

Moses' instruction later clarified this - Deuteronomy 16:6 *"But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt"* (v6-7).

Truly, it was done to acknowledge the goodness of God to Israel. Not only in preserving them, but in delivering them from the plagues that came upon the Egyptians.<sup>2</sup>

According to the historian Josephus, it was customary to slaughter the lamb at about 3pm. This was the time of the day that Christ, the Christian's Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7), died - Luke 23:44-46 *"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."*

The blood of the lamb is collected and stroked upon the doors and side posts each Israelite household.

The time of the feast was a time where they would have to be on the alert, ready to flee Egypt at the first signal to move (v8-11).

The angel of death will pass over Egypt to execute God's judgment. It was to declare the victory against all the gods of Egypt. Indeed, Jehovah, the God of Israel is God, greater than all other gods – *I am the LORD* (v12).

The blood is to be a memorial for Israel to remember how Israel believed God and did in obedience according to all of God's instruction and how they were saved (v12-14). The word

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<sup>1</sup> John Mac Arthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary, Thomas Nelson, 2005, 99.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Volume 1, Hendrickson, 251.

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translated “ordinance” is the Hebrew word “*ḥuqqāh*” denoting the prescription or instruction by God - special spiritual law.

Verse 15-20 describes how they are not to eat unleavened bread for 7 days and that the house is to be rid of all leaven. Leaven is a piece of sour dough used in bread making to raise the bread. It comes from a previous batch of dough. Bread made in haste without rising is called “unleavened bread”.<sup>3</sup> This is called the bread of affliction because they had no time to allow the bread to be raised.

*Deuteronomy 16:3-4 “Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.”*

God gave the instruction to institute the Passover first to Moses v1-20 and Moses related fully God’s command to the elders of Israel for its implementation - *21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them...This instruction is to be carefully taught to the people so that they may know the significance of the Passover...26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? 27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD’S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.”*

The response of the people was one of submission and thanksgiving for the great deliverance that God’s has wrought in answer to prayer. Remember, they have cried to the LORD by reason of the bondage, the afflictions suffered under the hand of Pharaoh. God is mindful of their tears and has acted to help them. What a glorious God we worship!

## **(2) Preparation for a New Beginning (v21-27)**

The time has now come. God will make every Israelite a free man, no longer subjected to the abuse of Pharaoh who used them for his selfish end.

*28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. 30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.*

God is longsuffering and patient but if repentance is not forth coming, judgment will surely come. Israel saw in that day the glory of God when God judged Egypt.

Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron urgently. The fear of further death and judgment caused great panic and fear among the Egyptians. Pharaoh finally released his clutches over Israel for his fingers were literally plied opened by the power of God. Did Israel have to do anything? No, they beheld the power and glory of God before them and cannot help but fall in humble worship and adoration.

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<sup>3</sup> Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, Leaven, Pradis Bible Software.

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On that day, Israel spoiled the Egyptians, all the wages that were due to them were duly paid - 35 *And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.*

600 000 men besides children left Egypt that day (v37). Israel had stayed in Egypt for 430 years (v40) - 40 *Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.*

Truly, it is a momentous time in Israel's history when they are given the freedom of worship, man's most basic prerogative owed to his Creator.

The Passover is to be observed by everyone in Israel, servant bought with money, every one circumcised. No foreigner or hired servant is to join in the feast. All that experienced God's mercies are to join in thanksgiving.

*46 In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*

What is significance of this? This was remarkably fulfilled in Christ the antitype, John 19:32 (Gill).

*47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49 One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. 50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. 51 And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.*

It was a national deliverance and it shall be observed by Israel as a nation.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the New Testament, in the book of Hebrews it is written Hebrews 11:28 *"Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."*

It was faith in the living and true God that delivered Israel. This faith accepts the Lord's provision as well as His plan. Israel accepted God's provision by faith. When the believer accepts Jesus Christ by faith he accepts God's provision for salvation.<sup>4</sup> God's plan for our lives is full proof. We cannot improve on it but to gratefully walk therein.

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<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, New Testament Commentary, Hebrews, Moody, 1983, 357.

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The Lord's Supper is the Christian's Passover. We remember how Jesus was our Passover Lamb who died to win our redemption from the bondage of sin and death. May we remember our spiritual heritage and teach them to our children.