

Message #22

Exodus 12:43-51

Last week, toward the end of the exposition I gave some wrong numbers pertaining to years. Israel was in Egypt for 430 years from 1876 B.C. to 1446 B.C.. After 430 years, 603,550 men over 20 (Ex. 38:26; Num. 1:46), plus women and children, about 2 million, left Egypt.

They met at a city known as Rameses and they traveled to a place known as Succoth some 30 plus miles away. If we say that the people could travel at 2-3 miles per hour, which is realistic, this would take about 12-15 hours to make this trip. Now probably most of the people were excited and were looking forward to moving to their new home land. Most of the people were probably expecting God to inform them about their next move. But what God does, as soon as they are out of the land, is inform them, **don't you ever forget, in all your generations, about the Passover.** God says you need to be very careful to remember that the shed blood of the sacrificial Lamb is the thing that kept you from the death penalty. That shed blood is the reason you are alive and have a relationship with Me.

Had Israel actually understood this, she would have never rejected Jesus Christ. She would have realized that He is our Lamb who takes away our sin. But of course, Israel has completely missed this point. But what we see here is that:

IN THE AFTERMATH OF LEAVING EGYPT, GOD GAVE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER .

Now notice from **verse 43** that this is called an “ordinance.” The Hebrew word “ordinance” (huqqa) is one that means to carve something or engrave something as a definite, established custom (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 300-301). God wants this “Passover” engraved as a sacred remembrance forever. This is not something to think lightly about.

There is a definite connection between this ordinance and the celebration of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:20, 23/Matt. 26:18-19, 26-30). So the celebration of the Lord's Supper may be linked clear back to this very text in the book of Exodus. The Passover is an ordinance for Israel and the Lord's Supper is an ordinance for the Church.

Now, it is clear from this text that the Passover ordinance was not to be some loosey goosey operation. People could not do this their way; they had to partake God's way. It was to be strictly observed. **What we learn in this section about the Passover is who may observe it, where it is to be observed, when it is to be observed and how it was to be observed.**

We may observe from **verse 43** that the LORD specifically gives this instruction to Moses and Aaron. This is serious instruction that has life and death ramifications and Moses and Aaron are the leaders who are to communicate it to the people.

No matter what the dispensation, true leaders of God must always communicate the salvific significance of the shed blood of the sacrificial Lamb as being the only means of escaping death. It is the only means of salvation. There is no other method, no other way to be saved except through faith in Jesus Christ.

It is true that God chooses certain men and He gives those men certain skills to be able to understand His Word and the job of those men is to carefully and accurately communicate that Word to the people.

Now as we analyze this passage there are seven Passover instructions:

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #1 – No foreigner is to eat the Passover. **12:43b**

Now many foreigners had left Egypt with Israel. It was a “mixed multitude” (12:38). God obviously wanted everyone in the world to understand that He has a very unique relationship with the nation Israel as with no other nation on earth. The fact is God would make a provision so that a foreigner could eat the Passover meal, but not in his uncircumcised condition.

If one were to partake of the Passover, one needed to be circumcised. Now in today’s politically correct world, one would probably say this is racial or ethnic discrimination. Yes, it is. This is God’s system and let me say to you—I don’t care what your race is or your ethnic background is, God does have a special relationship with Israel and if you do not believe on Jesus Christ and are circumcised in your heart, you will go to hell. It doesn’t matter what your race, color or creed is. You will go to hell.

God does make a racial and ethnic choice. Israel is His nation. The beauty of His grace is that we may tap into the blessings of God by faith in Jesus Christ. He is the one who will circumcise our hearts.

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #2 – Every slave may eat after he is circumcised . **12:44**

The Israelites had been slaves to the Egyptians for over 400 years, but now the Israelites had their own slaves. Obviously a relationship to God is not contingent upon one’s social status for slaves could have a relationship with God.

The Hebrew word “slave” (ebed) is one that refers to a servant or slave that often was captured in war. A slave would work for a master as a hired employee. Now servants were not forbidden to partake of the Passover; however, before one could partake, he must be circumcised.

Now this O.T. mandate does raise a question about the female slave. What about the girls? How would a girl be connected to God if the mandate is circumcision? We must remember that in the O.T. economy, the female is always connected to the male. If a woman were married, she is connected to her husband. If a woman was not married, she was connected to her father.

So if the “male” species made a decision that I am going to be circumcised so I can have a relationship with the God of Israel, it would affect the whole family.

Now in the Grace Age, once one is in Christ there is no more male or female classification. Any person, whether male or female may believe on Jesus Christ and have access to God.

This is where many children today make a mistake. Each person male and female must stand on his own in his relationship with God. But in the days of Moses, it was not that way.

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #3 – No temporary resident could partake of the Passover. **12:45**

The terms used here “sojourner” or “hired servant” are terms that do not refer to permanent residents.

If someone were just passing through (a sojourner) and happened to be in the area when the Passover was held, that one could not partake as just some passing shallow religious experience. In fact, this type of person actually had no real interest in being right with God.

If some hired person (hired servant) were in the area to help with some special building project, he was to be treated respectfully, but he was not to partake of the Passover.

He was not there because he was interested in being right with God; he was there because he had been hired to do a job.

This is exactly why at the communion service Jesus Christ taught Paul, who teaches us, that each person is to “examine himself” and there is a warning given to one who does not do it (I Cor. 11:28-29). Part of the examination process is to see whether or not one is part of the body or family.

In other words, each person is to examine himself or herself to make sure that he truly does believe totally and only in Jesus Christ and His shed blood for salvation. The communion service is a sacred service. It is not to be some momentary religious ritual and if someone enters into lightly, “for this reason many among you are weak, and sick and a number sleep.”

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #4 – The Passover was to be eaten in a single house. **12:46a**

We must always keep in mind that this Passover is designed to point to Jesus Christ. It is to be carried out in a very sacred and solemn way. God is very specific in these details.

Now this entire meal was to be eaten inside the house. It was to be eaten by the family at a family setting in the house. There are at least three reasons why:

Reason #1 - Because this best memorialized the fact that the final plague demanded that the family be inside the house, protected by the blood.

All had to be in the house and protected by the blood.

Reason #2 - Because by eating this meal inside, it would certainly prevent unqualified people from eating it. No uncircumcised person was to eat and by eating this meal inside this could be regulated. No one could sneak into the house and partake in an unworthy manner.

Reason #3 - Furthermore, this was a sacred meal and you did not want pieces of food dropped outside for animals to eat.

Now this certainly teaches us some things about the sacredness of the Lord's Supper. It is to be celebrated inside the house of God by the family of God at a corporate family gathering. No one was to have their own little private Passover feast any more than one is to have his own little private Lord's Supper.

There are some churches who think it is cute to bring animals into church. The reason most churches do this is to increase attendance through some novel idea. Well, this text would suggest that such an act is sacrilegious. The church is a sacred place for God's people and family to worship God. It is not to be a kennel or stable for animals to have some cutesy religious experience.

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #5 – No bone is to be broken. **12:46b**

Many have observed that this is an odd thing, but it is not so odd if we keep in mind this all points to Jesus Christ, God's Passover Lamb. The reason no bone was to be broken is because of its sacred connection to Jesus Christ. This is the sole reason for this mandate. Jesus Christ is the ultimate Lamb of God (John 1:36), who gives a sinner a relationship with God through His shed blood and His bones would not be broken. His body was broken and bruised, but not His bones (Psalm 34:20/John 19:33, 36).

There are a couple of key applications we may make of this:

First, when we break the bread we are referring to what happened to Christ's body, not His bones. Christ's body was broken. He was beaten beyond human recognition, but not one bone was broken.

Second, this speaks to the fact that God does not want the body of Christ broken. We the Church are the body of Jesus Christ and He does not want us to be fragmented, fractured or broken. He wants us one body. This is an important thing to see as we are in the process of trying to put up a sanctuary that will enable all of us to worship God as one family.

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #6 – All of Israel is to celebrate this Passover. **12:47**

All were to partake of this meal at the same time. You could not just go off by yourself on any day and say, “I think I will celebrate this my own way and in my own time.” God demanded corporate celebration and corporate connection.

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION #7 – All who partake of the Passover must be circumcised.
12:48-49

It was the circumcision of the flesh that indicated membership in the family of God and today it is circumcision of the heart that indicates the same thing (Colossians 2:11).

It did not matter whether one were a native born Israelite or a stranger who was living with the Israelites; the fact is “no uncircumcised person may eat” the Passover.

We may observe from **verse 50** that Israel did what God wanted her to do: “all the sons of Israel” obeyed God.

So when they got to Succoth, they celebrated this meal the same day that God brought them out of Egypt. Keep in mind that the death plague hit at midnight and Pharaoh demanded that they immediately leave, so this became a key day and later that day, they celebrated the Passover.