

# **The First Passover and Its Significance**

**(Part 1 of 2)**

**Exodus 11:1 – 12:20**



**Waters Turn to Blood**  
Exodus 7:14-25



**Amphibians (Frogs)**  
Exodus 7:26-8:11



**Gnats (Lice)**  
Exodus 8:12-15



**Flies**  
Exodus 8:16-28



**Disease on Livestock**  
Exodus 9:1-7

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# The Ten Plagues of Egypt

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**Unhealable Boils**  
Exodus 9:8-12



**Hail and Fire**  
Exodus 9:13-35



**Locusts**  
Exodus 10:1-20



**Darkness**  
Exodus 10:21-29



**Death of First-Born**  
Exodus 11:1-12:36

# Introduction

- In this message we learn of the inauguration and meaning of the first Passover.
- Associated with the establishment of Passover is the 10<sup>th</sup> and last plague: the death of the firstborn in Egypt.
- Three features distinguish this plague from its nine predecessors.

# **1. Israel's liberation was announced beforehand (11:1).**

- The preceding acts of God were probationary exercises which resulted in no liberty for Israel.
- The tenth act of God would succeed where the others had failed.

## **2. This was a work of God without any mediation of Moses and Aaron.**

- Although all of the preceding 9 signs were the work of God, this final one involved the Lord in person coming to exact a just judgment (11:4; 12:12).

**3. The Israelites in Goshen must make a self-declared stand as the people under the blood of the lamb by a public mark of blood on the houses where they lived.**

- Beginning at the 4<sup>th</sup> plague, the Israelites in Goshen had been exempted and set apart from the rest of Egypt without any

- cooperative or obedient act of their own.
- But this time, they must choose to obey God's instructions if they wish to be exempt from judgment.

# The 10<sup>th</sup> Plague (Exod 11:1-10)

**God tells Moses Pharaoh will let the Israelites go after this plague (11:1-3).**

**Exodus 11:1** The LORD said to Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you



away completely. <sup>2</sup> Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry." <sup>3</sup>And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

- At God's command, the Israelites asked their neighbors for silver and gold jewelry (11:2).
- This was a collection of their unpaid wages for all the work they and their ancestors had done as slaves in Egypt.
- God gave the Israelites favor in the sight of the Egyptians (11:3).

- God had promised Abraham that his descendants would leave Egypt “with great substance” (Gen. 15:14), and he repeated that promise to Moses (Ex. 3:21-22).
- All the Egyptians, except Pharaoh, highly respected Moses and they freely (probably out of fear) gave their wealth to the Israelites (11:3).

# Moses warns Pharaoh about the death of every firstborn in Egypt (11:4-10)

<sup>4</sup> So Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, <sup>5</sup> and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the

slave girl who is behind the handmill,  
and all the firstborn of the cattle. <sup>6</sup>

There shall be a great cry throughout  
all the land of Egypt, such as there has  
never been, nor ever will be again. <sup>7</sup>

But not a dog shall growl against any of  
the people of Israel, either man or  
beast, that you may know that the  
LORD makes a distinction between

Egypt and Israel.' <sup>8</sup> And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt."

<sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

- This was Moses' final address to Pharaoh.
- In rejecting God's word, Pharaoh caused some of the finest people in

- the land of Egypt to die and consequently brought great sorrow to himself and to his people.
- Why did God kill only the firstborn?
- We must remember that God calls Israel His “firstborn son” (Exo. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1).
- At the very beginning of their conflict, Moses warned Pharaoh that the way



- Pharaoh treated God's "firstborn" would determine how God treated Egypt's firstborn.
- **Exodus 4:22-23:** Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, <sup>23</sup> and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son."

- Pharaoh had tried to kill the Jewish male babies, and his officers had brutally mistreated the Jewish slaves, so in killing the Egyptian firstborn, the Lord was causing Pharaoh to reap what he had sown.
- God warns us in Hosea 8:7, you sow the wind, you shall reap the whirlwind.
- We reap what we sow, after we sow

- and more than we sow.
- As for the righteousness of God in destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians and their livestock, remember that “righteousness and justice are the foundation of [His] throne.
- The actions and choices of leaders greatly effect the people under their leadership. [Be careful in your voting]

- As for the timing of the judgment, God said it would occur about midnight. God Himself will visit Egypt and kill every firstborn of the Egyptians – both human and cattle.
- The Israelite homes, marked by the blood of the Passover lamb, will be exempt.

- Pharaoh's resistance was unchanged despite the warning (11:9), and he remained firmly opposed to the liberation of his slaves (11:10).
- Moses' patience reached an end and he left Pharaoh's court "in the heat of anger" (11:8).

- In 11:10 we are reminded that God gave Pharaoh many opportunities to repent and let the Israelites go.
- Pharaoh stubbornly refused to do so.

**The Enactment of the Passover to mark a new beginning for Israel and serve as a perpetual memorial (12:1-20).**

**Exodus 12:1** The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup> "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. <sup>3</sup> Tell all the congregation

of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb [or a young goat] according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. <sup>4</sup> And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the



Lamb. <sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, <sup>6</sup> and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. <sup>7</sup>

"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the

lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

<sup>8</sup> They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

<sup>9</sup> Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. <sup>10</sup> And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning

you shall burn. <sup>11</sup> In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.

# A New Beginning

- Passover marked a new beginning for the Jews and bound them together as a nation.
- The phrase “all the congregation of Israel” (v. 3) is found here for the first time in the Bible and indicates that God was now looking upon His

- people as one nation.
- Passover united the people around the killing of the Lamb (12:6), the putting away of the leaven (v. 19), and the eating of the feast (v. 47).
- Passover also marked the beginning of a new “religious” calendar in Israel.
- Israel already had a civil calendar. It now gains a religious calendar.

- The month is known as Abib and it occurs in the Spring (our March-April). The religious new year was to be counted from this month.
- Because the Jewish calendar is based on a lunar month of 29 to 30 days, it slowly loses ground against the solar calendar, until eventually an extra month has to be added. This

- means that the date of Passover is never the same in the solar calendar from year to year.

# The method for choosing and killing the Passover lamb:

- Must be without blemish (12:5)
- Must be a male 1 year old (12:5)
- May be a lamb or a kid (12:5)
- Select it on the 10<sup>th</sup> day. Keep it under observation until the 14<sup>th</sup> day (12:3,6)



- Kill the lamb/kid at twilight on the 14<sup>th</sup> day (12:6).

## **The ritual after killing the Lamb**

- One lamb per household (12:3)
- If there are not enough people in one household to eat it all, join with the household of your nearest neighbor (12:4)

- Some of the blood of the lamb is to be put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house in which they eat it (12:7)
- The flesh is to be roasted by fire (not boiled or eaten raw), including its head, legs, and inner parts (12:8-9)
- Unleavened bread and bitter herbs are to be eaten with the meat (12:8)

- Most people feel that the bitter herbs symbolize the years of bitter bondage in the land of Egypt.
- Anything not eaten by the morning is to be burnt. (12:10)
- Eat it dressed ready to travel: with belt fastened, sandals on the feet, and your staff in your hand. (12:11)

- Eat it in haste. (12:11)
- The Passover is a “pilgrimage festival.” The Israelites were going on a trip with God in their presence.

# God explains the procedure of the 10<sup>th</sup> plague (Exod. 12:12-13)

<sup>12</sup> For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup> The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And

when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

- God will personally appear to enact judgment on the firstborn of the Egyptians, their cattle, and destroy their faith in their gods.

- The “destroyer” will accompany God. According to **Psalm 78:49** it was a “band of destroying angels (NIV). They would be the ones who enter individual houses unmarked by blood to kill the firstborn child or animal.
- On every house marked with blood, He promises to “pass over” and “no plague will befall you to destroy you.” (12:13)

- Never up to this moment in the history of revelation has such a strong emphasis been laid on the shedding of blood and the importance of the blood as a protection from God's judgment.
- This gives some indication of how important the shedding and application of the blood of the Passover lamb is.



- It is the blood which has the astonishing power to solve the problem of acceptance before God.
- The God who came in wrath “passed over” the houses marked by blood in peace.
- The shed blood, which was applied to their houses by obedient faith, “satisfied” the God of judgment.

- Passover does not simply celebrate the Exodus. It celebrates our deliverance from death!
- From the NT we know that Jesus' blood was shed for us as our "Passover Lamb" and His blood is able to propitiate the righteous wrath of God toward those who place their faith in the atoning sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

# God explains the meaning of the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (12:14-20)

<sup>14</sup> "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. <sup>15</sup> Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the

first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. <sup>16</sup> On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may

be prepared by you. <sup>17</sup> And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. <sup>18</sup> In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the

month at evening. <sup>19</sup> For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. <sup>20</sup> You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread."

# Explanation

- The Passover is a new beginning that must never be forgotten (12:2,14).
- Associated with the Passover is seven days of unleavened bread (called “the Feast of Unleavened Bread” – 12:17) wherein leaven is to

- be removed from all Israeli houses.  
(12:15)
- The Passover occurs on the 14th day and the Feast of Unleavened bread begins on the 15<sup>th</sup> day and lasts for 7 days.
- The first and seventh day of the Feast of unleavened bread is to be treated as a day of “rest” (shabbat)



- regardless of the day of the week it falls on. No work is to be done on these two days. Food for eating purposes may be prepared (12:16)
- A “holy assembly” is to be held on the first and seventh day of unleavened bread (for worship).
- From the NT we learn that “leaven” is symbolic of “malice and evil,” two

- words that signify broadly any and every sort of “wrong” in our lives.”
- **1 Corinthians 5:7-8:** Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. <sup>8</sup>  
Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of

- malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
- The symbolism of Passover plus the Feast of Unleavened Bread teaches the decisiveness of newness: the old life and practice of disobedience to God (sin) must be put away from us and we must learn to practice a new

- life of obedience to God.
- The Feast of Unleavened bread celebrates separation from sin and commemorates God deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt (12:17).

# Conclusion

- Is there any “leaven” remaining in your life?
- Remember that “leaven” or “yeast” is a symbol for sin: it is hidden, it works silently, it spreads and causes bread dough to rise (be “puffed up” – 1 Cor. 4:18-5:2).

- It is compared in Scripture to Hypocrisy (Luke 12:1) and sinful living (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
- Paul urges local churches to purge out the sin from their midst and present themselves as an unleavened loaf to the Lord.

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