

THE PASSOVER, PART 4

EXODUS 12:33-51

At this point in the narrative, Pharaoh had just ordered Moses to “go out from my people” taking their herds and flocks with them. The Egyptian people had grown to fear the Israelites and this God of theirs that had caused so much destruction, and now death, in Egypt. In their mind, if they didn't get those Israelites out of Egypt, there was no telling what this God of the Israelites was going to do to them next and they had no interest in finding out.

Exodus 12:33 ³³The Egyptians urged [תָּוֶק] the people, to send them out of the land in haste [מְהֵרָה], for they said, “We will all be dead.”

The word translated urged, תָּוֶק, means to be harsh, severe; to be in a state of a high degree of intensity. It can mean violent or fierce. “Urged” may not be the best English translation of this word; the HCSB translates it “pressured” and that is probably, although perhaps not entirely either, a more accurate representation of the force of this word in this context. In English, to urge means to persuade, but the Egyptians weren't persuading, they were ordering, probably even forcing, the Israelites out of their country. Haste, מְהֵרָה, means impetuous, rash, or hurried; it pertains to actions which are energetic yet without wisdom or sense. Most translations use the word haste, but some use “quickly.” The point is the Egyptians wanted the Israelites out of Egypt—like yesterday! They were forcing them out because they were terrified that this God of the Israelites was going to kill all of them. They were horrified at the destruction their nation experi-

enced at the hands of Yahweh and now their firstborn sons were dead, including the god in waiting, Pharaoh's son and heir to the Egyptian throne. They couldn't get rid of the Israelites fast enough any way they could get them to go. The flip side of this is God was using the Egyptians to get Israel out of the land they had made their home for over four hundred years. Subsequent events would show that as hard as it was to get Israel out of Egypt, it would take even more work by Yahweh to get Egypt out of the Israelites.

The text reminds us that they left in such haste they didn't have time to leaven their bread so they mixed the dough without the leaven and carried it out with them.

Exodus 12:34 ³⁴So the people took their dough before it was leavened, *with their kneading bowls bound up in the clothes on their shoulders.*

The fact they left with unleavened bread dough probably has some future significance to the Feast of Unleavened Bread which they were obviously not celebrating on this first Passover. They intended to leaven their bread but did not have time, a fact which emphasizes the haste aspect of their departure. In Deuteronomy 16:3, this bread is called "the bread of affliction."

Deuteronomy 16:3³"You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt.

The Egyptians essentially gave their wealth to the Israelites to get them to leave. One theologian speculated they gave them their wealth in the form of their gold and silver idols since the Egyptians now knew their idols were worth-

less, but that seems to be very far-fetched. They gave them their wealth in whatever form they held it in order to get them to leave. It is quite likely that some of the Egyptians came to believe in Yahweh, but probably not many and once the Israelites left the country, the Egyptian's pagan worship practices continued. Egypt's historical record does not reflect any cessation of pagan worship after the Exodus.

Exodus 12:35–36 ³⁵Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; ³⁶and the LORD had given the people favor [חֵן] in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered [נָצְלוּ] the Egyptians.

When God called Moses at the burning bush, He told the prophet the Israelites would take at least some of the wealth of Egypt with them when they left the country (Ex. 3:22) which was also a promise He made to Abraham years before (Gen. 15:14). Once Moses and Aaron arrived in Egypt, they relayed this information to the people through the elders (Ex. 4:30). Now this prophecy was being fulfilled; the Israelites asked for valuables and they received valuables. We don't know how much of the wealth they took, but it must have been significant even to the point of Egypt's economic devastation. Later, it would be revealed that some of this wealth was put to use in two ways. First, the people contributed an offering for the building of the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:1-9) and second, they used it for the forging of the golden calf at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 32:1-6).

Favor, חֵן, means favor or grace. As favor it means to perform acts which display one's fondness or compassion for another and as grace it means kind-

ness, kindheartedness, or compassion resulting in acts of kindness displaying one's pleasure with an object which benefit the object of pleasure. In this context, the word refers to the Egyptian's recognition of the special standing the Israelites had with their God; therefore, they feared them and wanted them to leave their country before that God could inflict any more destruction upon them. The Egyptians were not fond of the Israelites; at the least they disdained them and at worst they hated them. Enslaving people isn't exactly an act of endearment. They may have respected them for their relationship with such a powerful God, but they weren't giving them their wealth because they liked them and wanted to bless them. That idea is completely foreign to the context of the Exodus although a lot of theologians want to force the idea into the text that the Egyptians had developed some sort of favorable feelings for them. The Egyptian people knew the issue Moses brought before Pharaoh was freedom for the Israelites; they wanted them to have it not because they felt kindness or empathy or compassion for the Israelites, but because they were afraid of them and they wanted to preserve what little of their nation they had left. One other element that cannot be ignored is the fact that God influenced the Egyptian people to be favorably disposed to giving up their wealth to the Israelites. That was part of the purpose of the judgments. As the result of God's activity in their midst, they became more than willing to forfeit their wealth for what they thought would be peace.

Plunder, נָצַל, primarily means to deliver and it can refer to taking the spoil after a battle. In the context of Exodus 12, it refers to the taking of objects from another's power and it means to strip off, to recover, or to rescue something. In this case, the Israelites were recovering the back wages owed them for all the years of involuntary servitude they were forced to endure in Egypt. That's how the word is used in Judges 11:26 and 1 Samuel 30:8.

Judges 11:26 ²⁶While Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, three hundred years, why did you not recover [נָצַל] them within that time?

1 Samuel 30:8 ⁸David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue [נָצַל] all."

In English, plunder is defined to mean stealing goods from someone typically using force and in a time of war or civil disorder; it is the violent and dishonest acquisition of property, that is, property acquired illegally and violently. Obviously, this isn't what happened in Egypt; while it was a time of considerable civil disorder, the Israelites didn't forcibly remove wealth from the Egyptians nor did they steal it. It was given to them in order to encourage them to leave. Because there are theologians who deny this interpretation of the word, plundered is the word most commonly used in our English translations; a couple of translations use "spoiled" or "despoiled." Obviously, the common thought among theologians is that the Israelites plundered or took spoil, but I'm suggesting the context isn't really saying that. It is possible to understand the use of the word to mean God forcibly took their wealth through the judgments, but the Israelites didn't

forcibly take it. The idea the text is revealing is the Israelites stripped the Egyptians of their wealth or recovered the wealth that rightfully belonged to them as the fruits of their labor, but it was willingly relinquished by the Egyptians and not liberated by the use of force which the words “plunder” and “spoil” mean.

Exodus 12:37 ³⁷Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot [רַגְלִי], aside from children.

Rameses was in Goshen, it was one of the storage cities the Israelites built, and from that area they traveled to Succoth. Whether or not they could have travelled there in one day given the number of people and animals they had to move is unclear. Wherever it was, it was south and east of Goshen. As a general impression, the text seems to suggest it was a journey that could be accomplished in a day. The exact location of Succoth is not known. It is generally thought to be just north of the Great Bitter Lake. This is a marshy area north of the Gulf of Suez.

There was 600,000 men plus women and children totaling what most people estimate to be about 2,000,000 Israelites. Skeptics claim there could only have been a few thousand of them, but that's totally unreasonable. For one thing, only a few thousand Israelite slaves could not have provided the bricks required for the massive building projects the Egyptians built during that time. Also, the numbers of them that fought the wars to get into the promised land required many more people than a few thousand men and that large number of men could not have been born and reached fighting age in the short period

of forty years they were out of Egypt and in the wilderness prior to entering Canaan. One of the reasons or purposes I suggested for Israel's time spent in Egypt was to build them into a nation that could not only take Canaan, with God's help, of course, but they could also occupy it, survive in it, and defend it. That takes a population base of a size suitable to the size of the territory they were to occupy. Skeptics also claim the Israelites in such large numbers could not have survived in the desert for forty years, but that obviously ignores the supernatural activity of God to insure their survival.

Earlier it was noted that God referred to the Israelites as hosts, **צְבָא**, which is a military term referring to an army or a subdivision thereof. One theologian argues that this verse is specifically referring to foot soldiers rather than to men in general, but he also argued, incorrectly I think, that thousand, **אֶלֶף**, is an incorrect translation and instead refers to about 600 family fighting units totaling only about 5,500 fighting men. His argument rests on the fact the word may be translated clan, division, family, or tribe; therefore, it should be translated that way here rather than as a thousand which it does, in fact, also mean.¹ That's an illegitimate totality transfer; context matters and there is no reason to deny it means "thousand." Simply because it refers to a clan, division, family, or tribe in other places in the text, doesn't require that meaning here. This is the common higher criticism explanation for denying the text as we have it. Foot, **רַגְלֵי**, refers to

¹ Douglas K. Stuart, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Exodus*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 297-303.

foot soldiers or infantrymen as well as moving on foot as opposed to riding. The HCSB translates it “soldiers on foot.” God was fielding His army of Israelites. It should be obvious that an army doesn’t exist if it only has a few thousand men in it. It might be a posse or a militia, or a group that is more of a decorative accouterment for a dictator or government, but it isn’t much of an effective fighting army. This number is consistent with the numbers arrived at in the censuses detailed in Numbers 1 and 26 both of which were conducted in order to determine the number of men who could go to war for Israel (Numbers 1:2-3, 26:2). Finally, in Exodus 1:9, the reason Pharaoh gave for fearing and enslaving the Israelites was the great number of people they had become. He said at that time, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.” The mighty Egyptians would not have been afraid of a few thousand men, men who were shepherds and not even organized into a fighting force at that time. The Egyptians had a large, well-trained, battle-tested army that was feared in that part of the world; yet, the size of the Hebrew population created fear among them. A few thousand Hebrews wouldn’t, couldn’t create that kind of fear. We also know the efforts of Pharaoh to limit the number of Israelites by killing the male Hebrew children did not succeed and they continued their population growth. There is no biblical, exegetical reason to doubt the number of people we have in text.

They also left with their livestock and, presumably, all their other possessions and the wealth of Egypt. One would suspect that moving long distances

with this many people, animals, and possessions would be a logistical nightmare and it would be interesting to see how they pulled this off. One would also suspect they didn't have a lot of possessions, but we know at a minimum they had cooking utensils and clothing.

Exodus 12:38 ³⁸A mixed [עָרַב] multitude [רַב] also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.

Mixed, עָרַב, means a mixture, a mixed company, or interwoven; it primarily means a grouping of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and multitude, רַב, means numerous, a large amount. Clearly, the people leaving Egypt were not only Israelites; there were other ethnic groups leaving with them. The exact identity of this mixed multitude is not known. There may have been some other Semitic peoples in Egypt, possibly enslaved themselves, who left with them. Possibly, some Egyptians who became believers left with them. Perhaps some unbelieving Egyptians left with them in order to get out of their destroyed country. We need to remember, the Israelites left with great wealth and a lot of livestock and the universal human condition seems to create a desire in people to attach themselves to the people who have all the money and power. Whether that was true then or not, it is true a lot of people who were not Hebrews left with them when they left Goshen. This mixed multitude would cause problems during the course of the Exodus.

Numbers 11:4-5 ⁴The rabble [רַב־הַמָּסָרִי] who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? ⁵"We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

Rabble, רַבָּבָה, means rabble, riff-raff; it is collection of grumblers with the focus being on the complaint. The context of Numbers 11 involves the complaint there was no meat to eat and they began to imagine their life back in Egypt was so much better. Apparently, the complaining started with the mixed multitude and spread to the Israelites.

History records the fact that the attitude of the Israelites was bad enough on their own; they didn't need any unfavorable, outside influences from people who were not Hebrews. Foreigners became a snare to them throughout their history. That's why they were to kill the Canaanites to the last person, and when they failed to be obedient, those people became a problem for them. That's why Ezra ordered them to separate from the people of the land and from their foreign wives when they returned from the Babylonian captivity. Let's examine this issue of allowing a mixed multitude to remain among the Israelites where they could be a negative influence throughout their history. It started here in the Exodus.

We need to examine this reality of a mixed multitude and the concept of Israel as a nation set apart for God. God formed them into a nation in the world (Egypt) and He took them out of the world to put them in a land where the world was supposed to be removed (Canaan). Due to the disobedience of the Israelites, the world was not completely removed from Canaan; therefore, their work for God was hindered and they remained part of a mixed multitude and

that was detrimental to accomplishing the purpose for which God created them. Many things about the way of life God commanded them to live were peculiar to them in order to set them apart from the world. Monotheism and the way they practiced it were completely foreign concepts to the rest of the world. Their dietary laws are often thought of as health regulations, but they were actually meant to set them apart from the world.

God warned the Israelites about coexisting with the Canaanites in the land and that's why He was going to make it possible for the Israelites to drive them out of the land. Existing as a mixed multitude would lead the Israelites into idolatry and to sin against God and when they didn't drive them completely out, that is exactly what happened.

Exodus 23:31–33 ³¹“I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River *Euphrates*; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. ³²“You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. ³³“They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

The Israelites were not obedient in conquering the land and some of the Canaanites continued to live among them and caused them problems. Judges 1:19-36 provides a more specific record revealing the Israelite's failure to drive the Canaanites completely from the land. The book of Joshua records this fact in several places.

Joshua 13:13 ¹³But the sons of Israel did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites; for Geshur and Maacath live among Israel until this day.

Joshua 15:63 ⁶³Now as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah could not drive them out; so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.

Joshua 16:10 ¹⁰But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers.

Joshua 17:12–13 ¹²But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. ¹³It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

In Joshua's farewell address to the Israelites, he told them what was going to happen if they insisted on clinging to the other nations. When they allowed themselves to be part of the mixed multitude, they would be trapped and eventually removed from the land. We know this is exactly what eventually happened.

Joshua 23:11–13 ¹¹"So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your God. ¹²"For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, ¹³know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

Even after the Babylonian captivity, they still wanted to be part of the nations around them, but Ezra took action and put a stop to it. Not only had they failed to separate themselves from the pagans, they had embraced the abominations of their paganism.

Ezra 9:1, 10:11 ¹Now when these things had been completed, the princes approached me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, according to their abominations, those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebu-

sites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites. ... ¹¹“Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers and do His will; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.”

To this day, one of the fondest hopes most Israelis harbor is that they will finally, once-and-for-all-time be accepted among the other nations of the world as just another nation in the world who wants to live at peace with everyone else. That won't happen, of course, but that's what they want to happen. They just want to be thought of as being like everyone else. They displayed this same mindset so many centuries ago when they begged Samuel to give them a king.

1 Samuel 8:5, 19-20 ⁵and they said to him, “Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.” ... ¹⁹Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, “No, but there shall be a king over us, ²⁰that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

It should be obvious that God's plan for Israel was for them to be a nation set apart, a nation that was supposed to reveal Him to the world. They were different and they were created and designed to be different, but because they were disobedient, they never achieved the separation God intended for them.

During the next-to-last judgment, the darkness, Pharaoh specifically prohibited the taking of livestock into the wilderness to worship Yahweh (Ex. 10:24). After the death of his firstborn son, Pharaoh told them to leave with their livestock (Ex. 12:32). The animals, as the last element of Israel's exit to be released, represent the completed victory by Yahweh over Pharaoh and his gods, and

the total, final exit from the land by the Israelites. They were leaving for good and they were taking everything with them.

Bread was a staple in the ancient Middle East and they baked the unleavened dough into hard cakes. The lack of yeast was the product of the haste of their departure.

Exodus 12:39 ³⁹They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into cakes of unleavened bread. For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

They did not have time to prepare any other food to take and whatever was left over from the Passover meal had to be burnt. They must not have known that God was going to provide for them in the wilderness. The manna would not begin to be provided until they were a month into their departure (Ex. 16:1) and by that time the people were grumbling against Moses and Aaron. I have to admit that eating unleavened bread for a month would have gotten real old, real fast, but once they left they may have gotten milk from their animals to drink and to make cheese or yogurt or whatever else they were able to do with it. It doesn't sound like they were eating the meat from the livestock they had on hand, at least not at this point. It seems that God had a reason for allowing them to be hungry at the start of the Exodus in or to humble them and to recognize His benevolence and His power when He began providing them manna for food. We must never lose sight of the truth that God was miraculously providing for the Israelites while they were in the wilderness for four decades.

Deuteronomy 8:3–4 ³“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴“Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

The time spent the Israelites spent in Egypt was 430 years.

Exodus 12:40–41 ⁴⁰Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. ⁴¹And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Skeptics also try to cast doubt on this number. It relates to Genesis 15:13 where Yahweh told Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. Most theologians believe the number given to Abraham was an approximation since the exact number of years was somewhat immaterial at the time, but the number given in Exodus is the accurate number for the length of time they were in Egypt. In various places, the Bible refers to 400 years (Gen. 3:15; Acts 7:6), 430 years (Ex. 12:40-41; Gal. 3:17), and “about” 450 years (Acts 13:19). The 430 years of Exodus 12 seems to reflect an exact figure. “To the very day” may be referring to the fact they left on the very day of the Passover without delay.

Paul, writing Galatians, seems to suggest the 430 years is measured from the time the Abrahamic Covenant was ratified in Genesis 15 to the Exodus.

Galatians 3:17 ¹⁷What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

In Acts 13:17-19, the approximation of 450 years seems to include 400 years of bondage, 40 years of exile in the wilderness, and about ten years for the conquest of Canaan.

Acts 13:17–19 ¹⁷“The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. ¹⁸“For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹“When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—*all of which* took about four hundred and fifty years.

Due to the presence of the mixed multitude among the people, the Lord provided further instructions for observing the Passover that addressed the issue of Gentile presence among the Israelites during future observances of the Feast.

Exodus 12:42 ⁴²It is a night to be observed for the LORD for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.

The Lord reiterated the importance of not only observing the Passover but observing it on the correct day. The incredible importance of this day not only to Israel but to the world when God's plan for history is taken into account, cannot be overstated. Christians do not celebrate this as the Passover, but what that represents is tremendously important and must not be forgotten. It is also an event the background of which must be properly understood and taken into account in the formulation of a biblical Systematic Theology. Replacement Theology completely destroys the ability to comprehend these issues. In my opinion, this marks the day Israel should be considered a nation of people and not a collection of tribes although the complete forging of the people into that nation would take a few centuries until the unifying influence of David brought them together. It is the nation from which the Savior of the world would come. It marks the occasion from which our remembrance of that Savior flows because He was the Passover who takes

away the sin of the world. It is such an important day, it will be observed as an everlasting memorial.

Next, the Lord addressed the issue of foreigners and the Passover.

Exodus 12:43–45 ⁴³The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner [גֵּר] is to eat of it; ⁴⁴but every man's slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it. ⁴⁵“A sojourner [תּוֹשֵׁב] or a hired servant shall not eat of it.

Membership in the covenant community that is Israel is an important consideration for participation in the Passover. A foreigner, גֵּר, literally means a son of a foreign land; one with no kinship ties, in this case, to the Israelites, and sojourner, תּוֹשֵׁב, means a temporary resident, a sojourner, or a stranger; it refers to an alien living in an area that is not one's normal country as a class of people with less social rights.

Circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant which places a person into the covenant community as a member in good standing. God's plan includes people from all nations; therefore, those foreigners who had been assimilated into the Israelite community and been circumcised could participate. Those who are not part of the covenant community can join themselves to that community and participate in the activities of Judaism once they are circumcised. In Genesis 17:9-14 when God established circumcision as the sign of the covenant, He made provisions for Gentile servants to be circumcised and participate in the covenant community. But those who are outside the covenant community cannot participate; they are not united to Yahweh and in fellowship with Him.

Exodus 12:46 ⁴⁶“It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.

The Passover is to be eaten indoors which is a reminder of that first night when they had to be indoors in order to be afforded the protection of the blood on the doorposts. Being indoors also served to screen out unauthorized persons from coming along and helping themselves to the food. This is a sacred meal and those who are not part of the covenant community cannot partake of it.

The text does not give any reason for the prohibition on breaking any bone of the sacrificial lamb. The New Testament does relate this to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Romans went to the cross to break the Lord's legs and facilitate His death, but He was dead already making that unnecessary. According to John, the fact His legs were not broken fulfilled this Exodus Scripture.

John 19:36 ³⁶For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN."

Psalms 34:20 ²⁰He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken.

One theologian believed this was a symbolic representation of the perfection of Christ as the Passover Lamb, but I don't think there is enough biblical evidence to make that claim. Psalm 34:20 is referring to the Lord's protection of the righteous person during times of affliction and that may have more bearing on this situation. We have to remember that the lamb selected for the sacrifice was supposed to be a perfect animal in the first place; perfection isn't necessarily the issue.

Exodus 12:47 ⁴⁷"All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this.

Another theologian claimed this represented the unity of the people as the skeletal bones remained unified, but that is not supported by the text either. I'm just issuing a warning here about excessively spiritualizing the Scriptures. Certainly, there are spiritual issues involved in the Passover, but the Bible is clear about identifying them and we

don't need to go out of our way to make them spiritual in order to confirm the text or make us seem to be personally spiritual. We simply want the text to speak for itself; that's the point of literal hermeneutics.

This Old Testament verse quoted by John in the New Testament is an example of how Jewish authors used the Scriptures. This is a literal plus typical example. "The literal meaning of the passage quoted from the Old Testament deals with a historical event or thing, not a prophetic event. However, the historical event becomes a type of a New Testament event, and, therefore, it is quoted in that way."² The Passover lamb represents a type of the Messiah. While the bones of the criminals on either side of the Lord were broken, His bones were not broken as typified by that actual Passover lamb.

During the night of the Passover, in a sense, the entire community was participating in the Passover meal together. It was eaten at the same time under the same protection of the blood by all the Israelites each in his own home. There is a sense of unity in all of this, but I'm not convinced the unbroken bones signify it. All of the Passover Feasts celebrated after that first night are also eaten at the same time in the same way according to the same instructions by the entire Jewish community which is a representation of the solidarity and unity of the covenant community. I do think the unity and togetherness represented by celebrating these everlasting feasts has served to keep the Jewish people together throughout the centuries. It's been 3,500 years since the first Passover was celebrated and it's still going.

The Lord repeated the command to allow circumcised sojourners and strangers to partake of the Passover, but no uncircumcised person could participate. Uncircumcised Israelites could not participate either.

² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of the Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, vol. 1, 4 vols. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2016), 1:23.

Exodus 12:48–49 ⁴⁸“But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it. ⁴⁹“The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.”

It is a command for every Israelite to participate in the Passover.

Numbers 9:13 ¹³“But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the LORD at its appointed time. That man will bear his sin.

Provision was made for an Israelite who was unclean to partake of the Passover a month later than the usual observance.

Numbers 9:10–11 ¹⁰“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a *dead* person, or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the LORD. ¹¹“In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

The Israelites celebrated one Passover at Sinai (Num. 9:1-14) and then did not celebrate it again until they entered Canaan (Josh. 5:10). The Israelites who came out of Egypt were circumcised but during those forty years of wilderness exile, they were not circumcised; therefore, when they entered the land, they had to be circumcised in order to celebrate the Passover.

Joshua 5:2–7 ²At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make for yourself flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time.” ³So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way after they came out of Egypt. ⁵For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, *that is*, the men of war

who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷Their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way.

The Scriptures record the obedience of the Israelites to observe the Passover and that day they left Egypt forever.

Exodus 12:50–51 ⁵⁰Then all the sons of Israel did so; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. ⁵¹And on that same day the LORD brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

Remember, the Passover meal was eaten in the evening of the last judgment. The next morning was still the same day according to the Jewish reckoning of a day and that is the day the Exodus began.