

THE PASSOVER, PART 3

EXODUS 12:14-32

The first Passover was rather simple and some of its requirements were only applicable to that night in Egypt. Since then many rituals have been added to its observance. Under the Mosaic Law, the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed at the place God established His name which everyone believes to be the Temple. Since the Temple is gone, no animal sacrifices in the practice of Judaism can take place and that has also necessitated changes in the Passover celebration.

Deuteronomy 16:5–6 ⁵“You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the LORD your God is giving you; ⁶but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt.

When King Josiah celebrated the Passover, 2 Chronicles 35:1-19, it is clear the people brought their sacrifices to the priests and Levites at the Temple for slaughter and preparation. Notice that the NASB translators added the word “animals” after “Passover.” Last week we learned the animal itself came to be called the Passover and that is what the author of Chronicles wrote here. There is no need to insert the clarifying word “animals.”

2 Chronicles 35:6–7, 11, 16 ⁶“Now slaughter the Passover [חֲסִידֵי] *animals*, sanctify yourselves and prepare for your brethren to do according to the word of the LORD by Moses.” ⁷Josiah contributed to the lay people, to all who were present, flocks of lambs and young goats, all for the Passover offerings, numbering 30,000 plus 3,000 bulls; these were from the king's possessions. ... ¹¹They slaughtered the Passover *animals*, and while the priests sprinkled the blood *received* from their hand, the Levites skinned *them*. ... ¹⁶So all the service of the LORD was prepared

on that day to celebrate the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD according to the command of King Josiah. The King James Version and the American Standard Version all get this right and simply translate it "Passover." The New King James Version adds "offerings." The Revised Standard Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and the NET Bible all add the word "lambs." I suspect the NASB translators added the word "animals" instead of "lambs" because the animal could be a lamb or a goat. At any rate, the original Hebrews simply says "Passover" as a reference to the sacrificial animal.

At this point in Exodus 12, Yahweh gave Moses and Aaron instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It immediately follows the Passover, begins on Abib 15, and lasts for seven days. The purpose of this Feast is to remind the Israelites of God's miraculous deliverance out of Egyptian slavery and the haste with which they left; they did not have time to leaven their bread to allow it to rise. Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits appear together in combination, and are sometimes called the eight days of Passover. In the New Testament, these feasts were collectively called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Luke 22:1, 7 ¹Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. ... ⁷Then came the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover *lamb* had to be sacrificed. [see also Mark 14:1, 12]

For some reason, the NASB inserts the word "first" in Luke 22:7 which is not in the manuscript and it is unnecessary because they had essentially combined the two into one. No other translation inserts "first" there. It is clear that Jewish

thought during the Second Temple period considered them together as one celebration.

The eight days of Passover, Firstfruits, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread together comprise one of the three festivals all Jews were commanded to observe by travelling to the Tabernacle or to the Temple in Jerusalem; the other two being the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the Feast of Tabernacles. Passover (Ex. 12:14), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:17, 24), and Firstfruits (Lev. 23:14) together are permanent ordinances and the Lord said He would participate in the Passover when the Kingdom arrives (Mt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18). The Feast of Tabernacles is also a permanent ordinance (Lev. 23:41) and it is specifically stated in Scripture that it will be celebrated in the Kingdom (Zech. 14:16-19). Pentecost marks the birth of the church and it is a permanent ordinance (Lev. 23:21). The Day of Atonement is a permanent memorial (Lev. 16:29). Of the seven feasts, the only one not said to be permanent is the Feast of Trumpets.

Exodus 12:14 ¹⁴Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent [עוֹלָם] ordinance.

Permanent, עוֹלָם, means everlasting, forever, and eternity; it pertains to an unlimited duration of time usually with a focus on the future. This could just as easily have been translated an eternal ordinance rather than a permanent ordinance. The TANAKH calls it “an institution for all time.” Many theologians, generally Replacement theologians, believe the Passover came to an end the night

the Lord last celebrated it, but the fact the Scriptures call it an eternal memorial proves that theology incorrect. Their erroneous thinking is that Israel has been permanently eliminated from God's plan for history which is, of course, totally untrue. The actual Passover would never be repeated, but the observance of the Feast was to insure the Israelites remembered what happened to them in Egypt, the time they were formed into a nation, and the God who brought them out as His people. The redemption of Israel was an event with everlasting consequences; therefore, the remembrance of that event was to be everlasting as well. On that night, the Lord's work of forging them into a nation was complete; He saved them, and He placed them into fellowship with Him. This work had eternal significance and it required an eternal celebration to remind the descendants of those Israelites who God was and what He had accomplished on their behalf.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is to be a memorial and a celebration of the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt and it is an eternal ordinance. Replacement theologians do a tremendous amount of damage to biblical truth when they put the church into the Old Testament and usurp everything that applies to Israel and make it apply to the church.

Exodus 12:15 ¹⁵Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off [כָּרַת] from Israel.

Beginning with the Passover meal on the evening of Abib 15, they were to eat unleavened bread for seven days. To insure they didn't even accidentally eat leaven, they were to clean their homes to remove any leaven they found. Leavening is caused by small, microscopic organisms that would be impossible to completely remove, but they didn't know that. The command was simply to insure they understood the solemnity of the occasion and the importance of faithfully obeying the Word of God. It was a visible demonstration of their faith and trust in the Lord. The modern observance of the Feast as practiced by rabbinical Judaism today may be said to be an exercise in formality and formulaic ritual, but the actual Passover on that night was a demonstration of faith and trust that God was going to do what He said He was going to do. Removal of the yeast was a picture of separating from the world of which Egypt is usually considered to be a type. Leavening refers to the spread of the corruption in the medium which it has infiltrated. It permeates everything once it begins to ferment and spread. By purging the leaven from their presence, they were picturing their creation as a nation to be a people apart from the rest of the world and who were to keep out the leavening influences of the world with its values and worldview that are antithetical to God and to His program for world history. Their thoughts were to be on the Lord and not on the world.

Leaven is considered to be a metaphor for impurity and sin. That is not said in connection with the Passover account in Exodus, but the Exodus program was a type of Christ and His work. As the sinless one, He was without leaven, or

sin. The absence of yeast implied that those under the safety of the blood on the doorposts were in fellowship with God and free from the corruption of sin that would destroy that fellowship.

1 Corinthians 5:7–8⁷Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

No grain offering with leaven in it could be burnt on the altar.

Leviticus 2:11 ¹¹'No grain offering, which you bring to the LORD, shall be made with leaven, for you shall not offer up in smoke any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to the LORD.

At Pentecost, leavened bread was used as wave offering before the Lord but it was not burned on the altar; it was eaten by the priests. This bread was a type of the church which contains sin and Pentecost does mark the beginning of the church.

What does it mean to be “cut off from Israel” for improperly eating a meal during this Feast that contained leaven? Anyone who violated God's commands for this Feast was making light of God and disrupting the community by means of disobedience. Cut off, כָּרַת, means cut off or cut down; it is to sever an object from its source or cut into parts implying a violent action. In this context, it probably isn't referring to killing the offender although that is possible, but it does mean they were to be removed from the blessing and the protection of God's covenant community; they could not partake of the normal rights and privileges the Israelites were supposed to access. It could refer to removal from the com-

munity. In verse 19, even aliens would be cut off from Israel for eating anything with yeast in it which surely means being removed from the land; therefore, it isn't unreasonable to presume that any Israelite violating this command would be removed from the covenant community and expelled.

Exodus 12:16 ¹⁶On the first day you shall have a holy assembly [קִדְּשׁ מִקְרָא], and *another* holy assembly [קִדְּשׁ מִקְרָא] on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you.

Holy assembly, קִדְּשׁ מִקְרָא, refers to the Israelites as a community gathering together. Holy, קִדְּשׁ, means a holy thing, holiness, and sacredness. It refers to something consecrated and set aside for sacred use only; it was not to be put into common use, for if it were to be used in that way, it would become profane and ordinary or common and therefore no longer holy. Since this was done at the Tabernacle and the Temple, the implication is they were coming into God's presence which demands holiness on the part of those there to worship Him by means of the assemblies during this Feast. Assembly, מִקְרָא, means a convocation, reading, a public meeting, and an assembly; it usually refers to a religious gathering. These were days of celebration and remembrance. These assemblies were held on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Abib 15, and on the last day, Abib 21. On Abib 16, Firstfruits was celebrated. The Passover lamb was killed at twilight while it was still Abib 14. The Passover meal was eaten that evening after the clock had turned over to the new day Abib 15. Then the first holy assembly was held during the daylight hours of Abib 15.

No work was to be done the only exception being cooking in order for the people to be fed during the entire week. People were to keep their minds on God and on remembering the Exodus during this time and not on the mundane activities of everyday life. This required planning and preparation for the trip to the place of worship and for staying there eight days. Their thoughts were to be on God and not on the world. Obviously, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was not celebrated at the time of the Exodus; it became part of the Passover memorial after they left Egypt. They ate unleavened bread, but they didn't perform all the particulars of the Feast until they were out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:17–20 17'You shall also observe the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this very day I brought your hosts [אֲנָכֶם] out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. 18'In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19'Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* an alien or a native of the land. 20'You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"

These verses essentially repeat what has just come before. The timing of the Exodus is emphasized. The fact they were brought out on "this very day" is important. In verse 17, the Hebrew text does not say "the Feast of Unleavened Bread;" it reads "the Unleavened Bread" which is certainly the meaning and every text adds the word "feast" to clarify that it refers to THE Feast of Unleavened Bread. They are probably trying to avoid the implication that the observance consists only of eating unleavened bread which if doesn't; it's more than that.

Hosts, **צְבָא**, is a military term meaning an army, a host; it is a military congregation as a large fighting unit. It can also mean a division as a smaller unit of a larger fighting unit. In the Old Testament, this word refers to Israel as God's army. It was also used in Exodus 6:26 and 7:4 referring to the Israelites in Egypt. Numbers 1:3 uses this word where it has a clear military connotation and a number of versions translate it as "armies" there. The Revised Standard Version reads "number them company by company" and the NET Bible reads "by their divisions," both of which also carry military implications.

Exodus 6:26 ²⁶It was *the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts [**צְבָא**]."

Exodus 7:4 ⁴"When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts [**צְבָא**], My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments.

Numbers 1:3 ³from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to go* out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies [**צְבָא**].

Part of preparing the Israelites to be a nation, involved preparing them to go into the land of Canaan to conquer it and then defend it. God was certainly their Commander-in-Chief and fought many battles for them, but He also empowered them to fight their own battles under His direction.

Then Moses instructed the elders to commence the Passover by killing the lambs that were to be eaten during the meal. Again, the NASB added the word "lamb" to the text which is not in the original. In Jewish thought, Passover is used to refer to the sacrificial lamb.

Exodus 12:21–22 ²¹Then Moses called for all the elders [זְקֵנִים] of Israel and said to them, “Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover ~~lamb~~. ²²“You shall take a bunch of hyssop [אַזְזוֹב] and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning.

Moses and Aaron passed on to the elders the instructions they had been given. Exactly how the chain of command worked isn't specified, but it began with Moses and Aaron and then went to the elders and eventually down to the family units. Exactly how much information Moses passed on compared to what he had received isn't recorded. He passed on what they needed to know in order to be saved and he told them that they were to commemorate this event forever. I suspect he gave them all the information he had received and it simply wasn't necessary for it to be completely repeated in terms of writing it in the Exodus story as Scripture. It must also be assumed that the order to choose a lamb for the sacrifice had gone out prior to Abib 10 so the lamb was ready to be sacrificed on this day, which seems to refer to that very day, Abib 14, that Moses was instructing the elders. The exact timing of just how this all fit together is a bit cloudy given the information provided.

Elder, זָקֵן, means an elder, old aged, or leader. Leaders do not necessarily have to be elderly, but they may be and they are most likely older, mature men. While the word does refer to older people, the concepts of dignity, rank and privilege are also connected to it. The Eastern culture holds older men in much

higher esteem than we do in our western culture. They are valued for the wisdom they have accumulated over the years of a long life.

The time was at hand and the lamb now needed to be sacrificed. Each family was to slay the lamb they had selected for this occasion. They were to catch the blood in a basin in order to insure an appropriate amount was available to spread on the lintel and the doorposts and hyssop was to be used as the brush for applying it. Once the blood was applied, all the family members needed to be in their homes, the place of protection, and stay there until morning when God had finished His work of judging Egypt.

Hyssop, *אֶזְזוֹב*, is a plant that is part of the mint family; some say it is Syrian marjoram which is part of the mint family. It is apparently pungent and has white flowers and a hairy sort of surface that makes it good for dipping and sprinkling. It grows in rocky areas and on walls (1 Kings 4:33). Figuratively, it came to refer to spiritual cleansing which is likely reflecting this first known use in Exodus. It was used in other purification situations under the Law of Moses. It was used in the ceremony for cleansing lepers (Lev. 14:4, 6, 51-52). It was used to deliver sour wine to the Lord's mouth as He was being crucified (John 19:29). It is possible hyssop was used at the cross because it is connected to the Passover blood and He is the true Lamb of God.

Psalm 51:7 ⁷Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

The Lord will be the agent who will execute judgment on the firstborn of Egypt.

Exodus 12:23 ²³“For the LORD will pass through [עָבַר] to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over [פָּסַח] the door and will not allow the destroyer [שָׁחַת] to come in to your houses to smite [יַגִּיף] you.

Pass through, עָבַר, means to cross over, or to travel through; it refers to making a linear motion often along a particular route or path. Certainly, the omniscient, omnipresent God doesn't have to travel through Egypt to determine who to save and who to kill and He doesn't have to visually inspect every home for the blood, but the effect of this judgment reflects that very thing. These kinds of statements are accommodating the way we process and understand information. We are incapable of understanding the way God perceives events except as they are related to the way we perceive events. What we can say is that it is God who saves those who are under the protection of the blood, and it is God who slays the firstborn that are not under the blood. Pass over, פָּסַח, is a form of the familiar word used for the Passover and it means to pass over or to go by; it is to move in a linear motion without stopping implying a lack of confrontation or engagement in an activity. Passing through and passing over are similar but the former describes the movement while the latter describes the constant movement and the lack of hindrance involved in making the movement.

Smite, **נָגַף**, means to plague, afflict, or inflict; it is to give with a deadly or bothersome pandemic disease or condition as an extension of hitting as a physical impact. The word for plague in Exodus 1:1 was **נִגְעָה**, meaning an assault or a physical blow causing a wound. Whether or not the slain firstborn suffered an actual physical wound is not clear, but it is certainly within the realm of possibility given the language used. It is also not out of the realm of possibility that He who gives life is able to take it simply by means of His Word and His will without committing any apparent physical assault. He can simply cause one's life to depart.

The word translated destroyer, **מְחַרֵּם**, means to be corrupt, marred, or ruined; it pertains to an object being in a ruined state implying the object is now useless. It can mean that something is destroyed and as a noun it can mean destroyer and that is how it is translated in every translation. Since God said several times He was going to destroy the firstborn Egyptians and execute this judgment Himself and since I believe the destroyer is God the Son, I do not believe we can assume it is some sort of angel of death sent by God to do this work. Some theologians believe the word should be translated "destruction" which would then read "and will not allow the destruction to come in to your houses to smite you" which makes sense, but that is very much a minority position and "destroyer" is by far the majority opinion.

When God called Moses, he told the prophet that He was going to bring the people out of Egypt and settle them in a wonderful land. Once there, they were to remember God's work on their behalf forever.

Exodus 12:24–27 ²⁴“And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever [עוֹלָם]. ²⁵“When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. ²⁶“And when your children say to you, ‘What does this rite mean to you?’ ²⁷you shall say, ‘It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.’” And the people bowed low and worshiped.

Exodus 3:8, 17 ⁸“So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.... ¹⁷“So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”

This promise needed no explanation or elaboration at this point in Exodus. When Moses and Aaron first went back to Egypt, Aaron told the Israelite elders all that God had spoken to Moses when he was called at the burning bush. They knew God sent Moses and Aaron to bring them out of Egypt and they knew He had a land for them.

Exodus 4:30 ³⁰and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses....

Apart from the information Moses and Aaron brought to the Israelites, we don't know how much they knew about Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant, but it probably wasn't much. It is possible, of course, that an oral tradition concerning the land promise was passed down from Jacob and his sons to the Israelites, but if so, they didn't seem to think much of that promise almost immediately after being freed from slavery. Jacob took his family into Egypt in approximately 1876 B.C. and he must have passed on the knowledge of the land

promises with him to his sons, but it could have been lost over time as the sufferings of the slavery in Egypt beat down the Israelites. The Exodus took place around 1450 B.C., but this was over 400 years after God entered into His covenant with Abraham. The Israelites had left Canaan and lived in a nation dominated by paganism for four hundred years with centuries of subjugation and slavery included. Even if they remembered these things, they must have been very discouraged and wondering when these things would take place. Subsequent events of the Exodus suggest they hadn't remembered much of their history and they hadn't remembered much about Yahweh either. There is another element in terms of remembering the past that may come into play here. Initially, the Israelites were accepted in Egypt and lived the good life. That situation could have seduced them into forgetting Yahweh and His promises to their forefathers. We have to remember, God told Abraham they were going into slavery long before it happened (Gen. 15:13) and God had a reason for allowing that to take place. If Egypt was a type of the satanic world system and Israel was becoming comfortable not only living in it but fully participating in it, then God had to develop a plan to make them sick of the world system in order to bring them to the point where they would desperately want to separate from it. That's what happened and that's what, at least in part, the Exodus is revealing to us.

For some contemporary perspective on this, consider the fact that from the time the Puritans first came to the mainland of what is now the United States of America is a similar period of time to that of the Abrahamic Covenant to the

Exodus. It was easier to record history at the founding of our nation than it was for the Israelites and as a nation we haven't been enslaved for a few hundred years, but how much do we really know about that time period? Most of us probably don't know much at all. Why would the Israelites be any different especially considering the extremely harsh life in which they found themselves?

The land promises began with Yahweh's call to Abraham when the Patriarch was told to go "to the land which I will show you."

Genesis 12:1¹Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;

God began to specifically identify the land He was going to give to Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 13.

Genesis 13:14–17 ¹⁴The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. ¹⁶"I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. ¹⁷"Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

In Genesis 15 after the Abrahamic Covenant was ratified, God further specified the extent of the land He was giving to the Israelites.

Genesis 15:7, 13-16, 18-21 ⁷And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." ... ¹³God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. ¹⁴"But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ¹⁵"As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶"Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." ... ¹⁸On

that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: ¹⁹the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite ²⁰and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim ²¹and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

The last time Abraham was promised the land was when he was instructed about the rite of circumcision before Isaac was born and he was 99 years old.

Genesis 17:8⁸"I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

The Abrahamic Covenant and the provisions it promised for the land were passed on to Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis 26:3 [Isaac] ³"Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

Genesis 28:13 [Jacob] ¹³And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.

If the Israelites had, in fact, forgotten the covenant promises concerning the land, Moses and Aaron certainly reminded them immediately before the Passover.

Moses told the elders they were to remember this night forever by observing the Passover as a memorial. The memorial was to be a time of teaching the children what this night meant to them as Israelites and they still do that as part of the Passover meal observance to this day. They have created a procedure

during which the youngest capable child asks questions and in response the head of the family explains the Passover to them. This isn't the only time they explain these things to their children, but this element of the Seder is in response to the Lord's command in Exodus 12:24. We have previously discussed the eternal nature of this Feast which the word עֲוֹלָם indicates. This command involves more than participating in the Passover observance, it involves teaching the children what happened so the history of Israel is preserved and carried on throughout the generations. The Jews may not have been faithful about a lot of things, but they are certainly faithful to preserve the ceremonial aspects of Judaism, at least in the more orthodox branch of Judaism. Unfortunately, Judaism has devolved into a religious system of Rabbinic tradition rather than a religion based on the Old Testament Torah.

The concept of teaching the children was repeated by Moses to the people twice more, once in Exodus and once in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 6:20–25 ²⁰“When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which the LORD our God commanded you?’ ²¹then you shall say to your son, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. ²²Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; ²³He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.’ ²⁴“So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as *it is* today. ²⁵“It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

In this Deuteronomy Scripture, Moses used the Exodus as the basis for knowing and obeying all the statutes God gave the Israelites through Moses.

They owe their existence to the God of those statutes who delivered them with a mighty hand from Egypt and they should therefore obey Him. The Israelites were to remember the signs and wonders they observed in Egypt implying they were at least part of the basis for their faith in Yahweh. Far too many theologians claim that faith in God based on the display of His power through signs, miracles, and wonders is a false faith and they are incorrect. These supernatural events are instruments God uses to authenticate Himself and bring people to faith and these are things the Israelites saw and experienced. He is also stating that God is a faithful God who keeps His covenant promises and fulfills them for which bringing them into the land is evidence. It is also evidence that He will fulfill all His covenant promises to and with Israel that will be entered into in the future: the Land, Davidic, and New Covenants. Moses was telling the Israelites their future is based on and intertwined with the time they spent in Egypt being formed into a nation. The Exodus should be a foundational part of confirming their faith in Yahweh.

It seems the observance of this Feast was forgotten at times throughout the history of Israel, but after the return from Babylon, they were more faithful about it. Certainly, by the time of Christ it was practiced yearly.

Josiah, the last faithful king of Judah whose reign ended only a few years before the Babylonian captivity celebrated Passover after Hilkiah discovered a book of the Law given by Moses in the Temple. When the king heard the words of the Law, he was very distraught because they had not been observing

the Torah at all much less being obedient to keep the Passover as a memorial.

The entire story may be read in 2 Kings 23:21-23 and 2 Chronicles 34:14-35:19.

2 Kings 23:22 ²²Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah.

2 Chronicles 34:21 ²¹"Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book which has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD which is poured out on us because our fathers have not observed the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

Ezra began the observance of Passover after the Babylonian captivity and it seems to have been carried on throughout the intertestamental period into the time of the Lord's First Advent.

Ezra 6:19–22 ¹⁹The exiles observed the Passover on the fourteenth of the first month. ²⁰For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together; all of them were pure. Then they slaughtered the Passover *lamb* for all the exiles, both for their brothers the priests and for themselves. ²¹The sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to *join* them, to seek the LORD God of Israel, ate *the Passover*. ²²And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

John the Baptist made a reference to the Passover lamb when he said, Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

John 1:29, 36 ²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ... ³⁶and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

The people would have made the connection between the Lamb of God and the Passover. Some theologians want to deny the Passover connection by

claiming the Passover sacrifice did not have to be a lamb; it could be a goat and Jesus isn't known as the goat of God who takes away the sin of the world. That's true, but we discovered the Hebrew word used in Exodus, אֵז, meant a lamb or a goat and the people would have known that. That argument is null and void and it is apparently made in an attempt to confuse people over semantics and to facilitate Replacement Theology.

We also know the Lord went to the Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread during His life in Israel. The Last Supper is the Christian version of remembering Him with its roots in the Passover remembrance the Lord celebrated on the night before His crucifixion of the Israelite's Exodus from Egypt.

The people bowed low and worshiped as a show of faith in Yahweh and in gratitude for the deliverance He was bringing to them after all these generations of slavery.

Exodus 12:28 ²⁸Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

The Israelites believed that Yahweh was going to deliver them from their slavery that night and they obeyed the instructions they were given. They knew these instructions were not directly from Moses and Aaron but from Yahweh through Moses and Aaron.

Exodus 12:29–30 ²⁹Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. ³⁰Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians,

and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead.

Yahweh executed His final act of judgment on Egypt by killing the firstborn in each family and He also killed the firstborn of the cattle. Don't be fooled by the brevity of the Scripture; this was an extremely powerful and devastating judgment. It was the final blow struck to liberate the Israelites from Egypt. Not only was the population of Egypt experiencing death in every home, one of their gods, Pharaoh, was powerless to stop not only death among the people, but he was powerless to stop the death of the next divine king, Pharaoh's son. From the greatest of them to the least of them, no one was spared God's judgment. This was a powerful, devastating blow that had to be psychologically debilitating to the whole nation.

The wording of verse 29 may suggest the firstborn were struck dead all at once rather than one by one throughout the night. Either way, they died in judgment.

The firstborn of Pharaoh limits the meaning of firstborn to those who were yet to have children of their own. Pharaoh himself was the firstborn son and he didn't die in this judgment.

The great cry in Egypt wasn't from those who were dying; it was from those who were grieving their lost loved ones. God wasn't torturing the firstborn; He was removing their life's breath from them. Even if He physically struck them

as the language certainly suggests, He could immediately remove life without any crying out.

“There was no home where there was not someone dead” must be a reference to extended families. Older folks with grown children wouldn't have someone die in their home unless there was extended family living under the family roof. This is a common situation in the Middle East then and now. When we were in Jordan, many of the homes had an unfinished upper floor on them which was intended to be finished for a son to occupy when the time came. During biblical times, the sons of Jewish families built their houses attached to the houses of their fathers and took their bride to their father's house after they were married. This is probably the same kind of situation in Egypt at the time of this judgment.

Egypt was reaping the judgment owed for murdering the sons of Egypt some years earlier. This is not an evil act as so many people want to portray it who do not understand God. The God of righteousness and judgment is executing the just penalty for murder—a life for a life.

Genesis 9:6 “Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

It is noteworthy that in this instance, the Israelites did not take it upon themselves to kill the Egyptian's firstborn; that was God's prerogative. There was also the element of divine revelation to prove Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, is the one

true God of the universe and the pantheon of pagan gods the Egyptians worshiped are impotent impostors.

Exodus 12:31–32 ³¹Then he called [קָרָא] for Moses and Aaron at night and said, “Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the LORD, as you have said. ³²“Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also.”

The fact that Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron at night is not a contradiction of Exodus 10:28-29 when he banished Moses from his presence under penalty of death and Moses agreed that Pharaoh would never see him again. The word translated “called” or “summoned,” קָרָא, can mean to summon someone into one’s presence but its primary meaning concerns the enunciation of a message. In this context, it means to proclaim or to announce something. Pharaoh sent word to Moses to get out and this time he didn’t put any conditions on their departure. He just said take everything you have and get out!

Some theologians do believe Pharaoh did summon Moses into his presence without following through on his death threat due to the fact he was totally defeated and humiliated and just wanted the Israelites out of his land.

Pharaoh asked to be blessed but there is no record that Moses did so. The last time an Israelite blessed a Pharaoh was when Jacob blessed the Pharaoh who provided them refuge from the famine in Genesis 47:7.