

Exodus 11-13 • Passover and the Final Plague

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Here on Wednesday night, we make our way through the Old Testament, and we are in the Book of Exodus, chapter 11. Open your Bible there, please.

I get regular emails from people who have, for some reason or another, never ventured into the Old Testament. Just probably because they found it too challenging, or too boring, or any number of other excuses that people will sometimes give for... Well, some people stay away from the Old Testament because God seems angry. And they'll say, I like hanging in the New Testament cause He seems like just a lot nicer God and I can understand some of that.

But when you really dig into the Old Testament and when you go through it, you see that there is just incredible expressions of God's grace, love, goodness, mercy, patience, long suffering. I mean, just everything is just very pronounced as you go through that, and I trust we'll see some of that here tonight.

I was touched as Dan was leading worship, and just some of his prayers, and some of the songs that he chose. And then just his closing prayer there about thanking the Lord for being able to shelter under the blood of the Lamb.

Here in Exodus, we're going to talk tonight about sheltering under the blood of the Lamb. That's exactly what we're dealing with and that all comes into focus as we emphasize this last plague that is going to be visited upon the nation of Egypt.

Let's begin with prayer, ask the Lord's grace.

Father, we open our hearts to You tonight. Whenever, whenever, Lord we come to the Scriptures, we just, we want to humble ourselves because our natural tendency, Lord, is to be arrogant. And yet we recognize that we need You.

We need You to give us understanding. We need You to open our minds and hearts. We need You, Lord, to impart wisdom in such a way that we come away with a true understanding of what Your Scripture is laying out for us.

And God, we believe that the words that we're studying here are living and active. We believe that there's a dynamic here that goes far beyond just simply reading words on a page.

And we pray that You would impart Your wisdom through Your Spirit tonight to each one of us, and You know where we're at.

You know what's going on in our lives and You know the challenges we're dealing with. You know the pain. You know the difficulty. You know the, well, You know everything, and so we give You this time.

We lay our hearts, our lives at Your feet that You, Lord, might be Lord. And speak to each person as only You can.

We ask it in Jesus name, amen. Amen.

As we get into chapter 11 here, this is one of the most incredible sections of Scripture because it deals, as I said already, with that final plague. The last of the plagues that is brought upon the nation of Egypt.

And, it's not the plague itself, but it's what grew out of that plague. It's the observance that grew out of that plague, and I'm talking about Passover. And of course, this is all very applicable to the time period that we're in the year right now with Passover and resurrection Sunday.

But the reason that Passover is so important is because all of it, from the Old Testament foreshadows what God does in the New Testament. And what He does for you and me on the cross through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We know that there's a connection between Passover and the work of Jesus Christ, because, well we see the beauty of the symbolism, but also it's made to fit together according to the words of the apostle Paul.

Let me show you this on the screen from 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Paul simply writes,

1 Corinthians 5:7b (ESV)

For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

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If there was any doubt about what Passover is connected to, Paul eliminates that doubt by making that particular statement right there. When we finished chapter 10 last time, you might've noticed it sounded very much like Moses and Pharaoh had finished speaking.

Let me put this on the screen here. This is how the last chapter ended with,

Exodus 10:28-29 (ESV)

Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."

Then Pharaoh said to him, (Pharaoh speaking first to Moses saying) "Get (out of my sight) away from me; (make sure that you don't appear) take care never to see (me) my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."

And then we ended the chapter and we said, amen, that's it, let's close in prayer. And it sounds like, well, that was it, that was the end of the conversation, but it's not the end of the conversation. Remember that chapter divisions didn't come about until hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years later.

And so the fact that there's a break between chapter 10 and chapter 11 was created by people long after the text was written. Moses did in fact not leave Pharaoh's presence at that statement, but they continue on their conversation, but we're not going to get to it until we get to verse 4 of the chapter we're in.

Verses 1 through 3 are inserted in the middle of this conversation to give us, the reader, some vital information. Here's what it says, verses 1 through 3. It says, "*Now the LORD had (past tense) said to Moses, (this is prior to Moses even coming in and speaking to Pharaoh, He says,) "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely. Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold."*" (NIV)

And then there's this parenthetical comment in verse 3, that "*(The LORD made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, (meaning the people of Israel) and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.)*" And so even though Pharaoh continues to harden his heart, Moses was well liked and favored by the people of Egypt.

This is now where we pick up the conversation again, which ended in the last chapter. And it continues here in verse 4. *“So Moses said, ‘This is what the LORD says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt.’”*

Listen to this, *“⁵ Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well.”*

This plague is not going to be limited to human beings. He says, *“⁶ There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. ⁷ But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal.’ Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.*

⁸ All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, ‘Go, you and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will leave.” Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.”

That's where the conversation ends, that started in the previous chapter. And in most of the instances where Moses told him of a plague that was coming, he clearly outlines what's going to take place.

And he says that there is coming a final plague, and that final plague is going to bring death to the first born male in each household from Pharaoh, to the maiden who works at the hand mill. And that's simply a way of, a poetic way of saying it will be without distinction. In other words, whatever your position, your wealth or your power, it won't make any difference. This is going to happen to everybody. And man and animal, first born will die.

And he said, there will be wailing in the land like you've never ever heard before. However, in the land of Goshen where the Jews reside there in Egypt, he said, there will be perfect peace and silence. And you will see that God makes a distinction. And when that all happens, he says your officials are going to come to me, and we will leave. Very short chapter, chapter 11.

Now we get to chapter 12. *“The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² ‘This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.’”* I want you to pause there, please, for just a moment because we need to talk about this. This helps us to understand the importance of the Exodus as it relates to the history of Israel. This is so significant in terms of what it is as an event that it will forever stand for them as the beginning of their year.

It's like God saying to you in mid-March or early April, this event that I'm doing in your life is going to be so profound, we're going to start over again in terms of where you mark the beginning of your year. And it's going to be with this event that is going to start the calendar for you. All right.

And there's another reason for it too, because this event, this exodus of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt marks also the beginning of Israel's life as an independent nation. They have been in slavery. They came here as just a fairly good sized family, but they're leaving as a nation of people, probably somewhere around 2 million. Some people say more, and they are starting off now as an independent autonomous nation from this point onward.

And He tells him that this is the first month of the year. It's going to be called, Abib. By the way, that's a Canaanite name, but that's the name they gave it. It literally means, fresh young ears. You might say, well, that's interesting, does that mean they're listening now for the first time? No, it's not talking about human ears.

It's talking about the ears of crop, and it's specifically referred to barley. Their barley crop was coming up at this time, and this is when they would harvest those fresh young ears of barley. And that's essentially what Abib means. The Babylonians called it the month of Nisan. It's the same thing, but even though it's the new year in Israel, it corresponds to our Western calendar as this very time; late March, early April, usually. We are in that period of time, right here, right now, which makes it interesting and a little more significant for us.

Now, as we continue reading, the Lord is going to give some specific instructions for the Jews in preparation for the Passover observance, beginning here at verse 3.

He says, *“Tell the whole community of Israel...”* And can I just say, this is the very first reference in the entire Pentateuch; the first 5 books of the Bible, where God refers to Israel as, *“the whole community of Israel.”* And that may not sound like a big deal, but this term in the Hebrew has a New Testament equivalent. And that New Testament equivalent is, Ecclesia, it means, church. And so it's the same idea of the fellowship, the fellowship of believers.

He's saying, tell the whole community or the whole fellowship of Israel, *“that on the tenth day (make note of that) of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴ If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into*

account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.”

You literally have to measure it out. And you say, well, if there's only 2 or 3 people in our family, then we need to go to our neighbors who are a family of 5, and we should probably get a lamb that's going to cover 8 of us, so forth, so nothing goes to waste.

He says in verse 5, *“The animals you choose must be year-old males (the Hebrew literally means, born within the year) without defect, (and of course, that is because these animals foreshadow the sinlessness of Christ) and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.”*

And by the way, that's an interesting thing there. This whole thing about the sheep, it could be a sheep or a goat. Isn't that something? Now, if you've ever seen a sheep from that part of the world, they're actually hard to tell apart from goats at times because they're brown and black. They're not just your typical woolly sheep like you see here in the United States. If you didn't see their tails, you might even mistake a sheep for a goat or a goat for a sheep.

And what's interesting about that, is that's most likely where this idea that comes forth in the New Testament of God separating the sheep from the goats brings its significance. Meaning that even though it's hard for people to tell the difference, God's special discernment is such that there is an easy ability that He has to separate the sheep from the goats, even though they might all, from a distance, look like the same sort of an animal to you or me.

He goes on here in verse 6 and He says, *“Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, ...”* You can see that God's been giving these instructions for them for days ahead of time, right? This is not all happening on the day that they're coming out of Egypt or even the one day before. This has been going on, this instruction has been happening for days.

He says, set apart the animal on the 10th day, and then on the 14th day, take care of them till that day, *“when (He says) all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.”* Now listen carefully to these instructions, verse 7 and following.

“Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.”

Now, all these things have meanings. We know what the lamb means. We know that the lamb is already a picture of Jesus, but we've got this other thing. They're supposed to eat it with bitter herbs, right? Or as the Canadians say, herbs. They pronounce the h, I don't know why. The bitter herbs was simply a reminder of their bitter life under slavery in Egypt.

And so this was a commemoration. As they were to commemorate this in the years and centuries to come, the eating of bitter herbs would remind them, we had a bitter life. Our forefathers had a bitter existence living there in Egypt.

And then the bread without yeast, I think most of you know that yeast is a picture in the Bible of sin. And so bread made without yeast, signifies the absence of sin and so forth. And of course, that pointed again to the coming of the sinless Savior who would give His life for the world.

He says, *“⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over a fire—head, legs and inner parts. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.”*

And then the Lord said, *“¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.”*

Now, this applied in a very practical way to the people of the very first Passover. The people we're reading about right here. They ate it in haste because they had barely eaten the Passover meal when all of this death broke loose upon the land and they were called to just leave. Up and leave, get out of here, leave. And they had to quick, just put things together and essentially just go.

Now, in years later, it's sort of an interesting symbolism. Can you imagine living..., you're in your own home, you're not going anywhere. But when you observe Passover, you would literally dress yourself in such a way like you were about to leave. And that again was that reminder of how quickly the forefathers had to leave Egypt in haste when they were literally expelled from the land.

Verse 12, *“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both men and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am (YAHWEH) the LORD. ¹³ The blood (listen to this) will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”*

This is where we get this idea of sheltering under the blood of the Lamb. The Israelites sheltered in their homes under the blood that was painted literally on the doorposts of their home, and it is just a beautiful picture of what we're doing right now, by resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. We're sheltering under the blood of the Lamb. And when we say, shelter, we mean we're safe. We're safe under His blood, so it's a lovely, lovely picture.

Verse 14. *“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.”*

Now, He's going to go more into the detail of what the festival is going to look like because Passover itself is not technically considered the festival. The festival is what comes after Passover, and you're going to see that here in the verses that come, and that is going to be the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

But Passover and the Feast Of Unleavened Bread are literally butted up next to one another. And so to the Jews, it became one thing. They would refer to Passover, or just the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and they would be referring to both. So when you get to the New Testament, you have to know that.

Because they'll be talking about Passover, and they'll call it the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Or they'll talk about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and they'll call it Passover, so it just became this synonymous sort of a way of thinking about these things because there was no break between the two; the commemoration of Passover and the feast of unleavened bread.

This is now where He's beginning to talk about the feast. It says in verse 15, *“For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do.”*

Then the Lord reveals what this overall observance is called. Verse 17, *“Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.”*

So the Passover was to be observed on the 14th day of the first month of their religious calendar. And then the Feast of Unleavened Bread went from the 15th to the 21st. Okay, so that's the way it works. And again, those things are all

spoken of interchangeably in the New..., well, they're even spoken interchangeably at some point here.

Verse 18. *“In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day (that’s Passover) until the evening of the twenty-first day. ¹⁹ For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. ²⁰ Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”*

You might be saying, well, what does, cut off mean? Well it could mean excluded from the camp. It could mean excluded or separated from the rights and privileges connected with the covenant that God is going to make with them in the wilderness. It can even possibly refer at times to death.

He doesn't specify right here, but you can just see that this was a big deal because God wanted to make the point that this sacrifice that will be made for them in the future by the ultimate Passover lamb is going to be a sinless sacrifice. There will be no sin and that was the point of it.

Verse 20, *“Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.*

²¹ Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop, (which was a type of a branch) dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning.

²³ When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over (of course that’s where the name of the observance comes from) that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.”

Now He just told you who is actually doing the killing. And He refers to him as, *“the destroyer.”* Okay? We assume that this is potentially Satan, we don't know. We don't know. A destroying angel, if you will.

Verse 24, *“Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. ²⁵ When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. ²⁶ And when your children ask you, (this is important, this is for all parents to hear) ‘What does this ceremony mean to*

you?’²⁷ then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped.²⁸ The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.”

The reason I want to pause there for just a moment for those of you who are still parenting children at home, is that this is not the first reminder that we're going to see in this section of Scripture. There are multiple references where the people of Israel are very simply reminded to pass along the information to their children.

Now it goes without saying that this is important, but they didn't always do it. They didn't always do this. We get to various books of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, where the end of the book ends with something like, and then the next generation arose and they knew nothing of the ways of the Lord.

And obviously the parents didn't do a very good job of passing those things along to their children. But how long does it take for an observance of to become an empty religious ritual. It takes about one generation. You don't pass it along, if you don't give the meaning to your children, then for them, it becomes an empty religious ceremony, ritual or whatever. Why do you do this? Well, we've all done it. It's what we do. Why do you do? I don't know. I don't know what it's all about. It's just something we do. We do this, we do...

Have you ever run into somebody who goes to a church that maybe involves a lot of rituals, and you ask them why they do things, and they're like, I don't know. We just, we were told to do this. Yeah, but what's the meaning behind it? Well, I don't really know. It doesn't take long, you guys.

And the last thing you want to do when you're raising children, is raise kids with empty religious observance and ritual, because kids are not going to stick with it. They're going to abandon it altogether. They leave home, and I'm speaking from experience. I left, when I turned, I could not wait to turn 18.

Unfortunately, my parents attended a very liberal mainstream church, which never proclaimed the gospel. I didn't hear the gospel at church. When we went to church every week, I never heard the gospel there. I heard some Bible stories which I had serious doubts were real. I thought they were probably fictional.

And I remember going to church and just seething while I'm sitting there in a chair, well, chair, hard wooden pews with no padding. I didn't have any padding either back then and so it was particularly painful. But I remember thinking to myself, when I turn 18, I am out of here. And I made good on that. I made good

on that. I turned 18, I did not darken the door of a church for about the next 7 years.

Then it took my marriage failing. I got married at 20 and then at about 25 things just fell apart because things do fall apart when you're not walking with the Lord. And boy, I tell you all of a sudden I was ready to go back to church but I went back with a completely different heart. And all that empty religious ritual I still haven't gone back there.

And to this day, I am very much opposed to empty religious ritual and you hear me. Those of you that have been around hearing me teach, you know that I've been trying for all these years of teaching the Bible, to separate empty religion from what the Bible teaches. Because there's still a lot of things we have to wade through that are very empty, and very meaningless, and so forth. Because man has this propensity. We just, I should say man as in mankind, we have this propensity just to add to the Word of God empty religious things. There you go.

Verse 29. *“At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, (again, that statement, your position, power, or wealth made no difference) and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.”*

Listen to verse 30, *“Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, (just exactly as Moses foretold) for there was not a house without someone dead.”* Can you imagine what that must have been like? Can you imagine? Absolutely crazy.

Verse 31. *“During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. ³² Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me.” ³³ The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. “For otherwise,” they said, “we will all die!”*

³⁴ *So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. ³⁵ The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. ³⁶ The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.”*

Now you might say, well, what's all this plundering of the Egyptians all about? Well, most of this is going to be used in the construction of the tabernacle and

other articles of worship in the wilderness during the time that they are there so that's really what all this is about.

Verse 37, *“The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Sukkoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.”* All right, now here's the first time we're given a number. Obviously, only the men were counted with women and children added in.

And some scholars estimate once again, that Moses led out somewhere between 2 and 2.5 million people. That's the estimate that is often thrown around, and it wasn't just Jews.

Look what verse 38 says. *“Many other people went up with them, and also large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.”* Who are these other people?

Well probably some Egyptians who didn't like the way things were going. It's always disgruntled people in every country who decided that maybe this God of the Hebrews is the one true God who created all things, and we're going to go with these Jews because we want to go with them.

No doubt there were slaves from other nations that had been brought into Egypt, other nations, perhaps that the Egyptians had conquered. They took advantage I bet, the opportunity to leave and so forth. There's these other people mixed in with the Jews. Now, these other people are going to cause problems as the people get into the wilderness, but we'll get to that later.

Verse 39. *“With the dough the Israelites had brought from Egypt, they baked loaves of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves. ⁴⁰ Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years. ⁴¹ At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD's divisions left Egypt.”*

I'm going to have you stop there for just a moment again, because whenever you encounter numbers like this, like we are here in verse 40 and 41, you need to understand something about numbers and the way the ancient peoples recorded things like this.

Whenever these kind of countings are given to you in the Bible, you need to understand that they often round it up and round it down. Some people who are just really exact in their numbers, they get crazy because there are places in the Bible where it says they were in Egypt for 400 years and some it says 430 years.

And they just make some crazy. And they're like, well, what is, see, that's a contradiction.

Well, no, they just weren't that concerned about being exact when they wrote things down, different cultures like ours, we're pretty exact. We punched the numbers into the calculator and if it doesn't balance to the penny, we get all bent out of shape. They didn't care. It was like, close enough, that's literally the way they, they thought. Being absolutely precise, this is a cultural thing, giving freedom and leeway and so forth to the mentioning of numbers is true to some other cultures.

Verse 42, *“Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, (and that simply means, the Lord watched over them, took care of them all during that night when this horrible death was going on, it says) on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil (or to keep watch is what that means) to honor the LORD for the generations to come.”*

So this was another element of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They would keep vigil, or keep watch, during the night to commemorate the fact that the Lord kept watch to take care of them.

And then the chapter is going to end here with some additional guidelines for observing Passover. *“⁴³ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the regulations for the Passover meal:*

“No foreigner may eat it. ⁴⁴ Any slave you have bought may eat it after you have circumcised him, ⁴⁵ but a temporary resident or a hired worker may not eat it.” That would be a non-Jew who's just either passing through the area or a hired person passing through the area.

“⁴⁶ “It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. (and He said) Do not break any of the bones.”” And of course, that is a specific and prophetic fulfillment concerning the sacrifice of Jesus, whose bones were not broken when He hung on the cross.

Verse 47, *“The whole community of Israel must celebrate it.*

⁴⁸ “An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat it.”

And the reason for that is because circumcision was the sign of the covenant that was made between God and Israel. And this celebration and observance was for those who were under the covenant. Okay. And that's why He said circumcision was a must.

Verse 49, *“The same law applies both to the native-born and to the alien living among you.”*

⁵⁰ *All the Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.*

⁵¹ *And on that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions.”*

We're going to do one more chapter here tonight. Chapter 13. *“The LORD said to Moses, ² “Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal.””*

What's He doing here? Well, this is again called the consecration of the firstborn, but the reason is because the Lord spared the firstborn males in all the Israelite homes where they were sheltering under the blood of the Passover lamb, right?

He spared the firstborn males. They didn't die, so what God said was, they're mine. They belong to Me, right? So He says, you're to set them aside as mine, right? Whether man or animal, they belong to the Lord.

Now, He's going to get more into this and you'll see more about this, but He's going to repeat some things here from the previous chapter.

Verse 3 says, *“Then Moses said to the people, “Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast. ⁴ Today, in the month of Abib, you are leaving. ⁵ When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites-the land he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey-you are to observe this ceremony in this month:””* This is an ongoing thing.

“⁶ For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD. ⁷ Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. ⁸ On that day tell your son, (okay, here we're talking about parenting again) ‘I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’”

In other words, this is the modern equivalent of saying, Lord, this is why we go to church. This is why we read our Bible. This is why we pray because of what the Lord did for me when he brought me out of slavery.

I was in slavery to sin, and the Lord brought me out of that slavery, and that's why we do the things that we do. Those things don't make us Christians. We do those things because we are Christians because we are followers of Jesus and so forth.

And then we're on verse 9. *“This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. ¹⁰ You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year.*

¹¹ *“After the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and gives it to you, as he promised on oath to you and your forefathers, ¹² you are to give over to the LORD (here we have more of an explanation now) the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the LORD. ¹³ Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons.”*

Now what, what's going on here? Well, again, this is that consecration, separation of the firstborn. God said basically from here on out, all the firstborn are Mine. You got to redeem them. You got to literally buy them back. And this is going to be a perpetual reminder of what I did for you by sparing your firstborn sons. And that's the whole point of it. It was just simply to remind them, right?

Do you remember that when Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had to take Jesus to the temple to do that very redemption. And that was that was different from circumcision because He was the firstborn. But what's this deal about the donkey? Did you catch that? He says, now when it comes to a donkey what are you going to do with it?

See, the reason He has to give instructions about donkeys is because they were unclean animals. You can't sacrifice a donkey. You can't sacrifice an unclean animal. You can sacrifice a clean animal. Fine. If that's a firstborn clean animal, go ahead and sacrifice it. It belongs to the Lord. And that's what it meant to redeem it. You sacrifice it to the Lord. You give it to the Lord; the firstborn male animal. But if it's an unclean animal, can't do that. So He said in its place, sacrifice a lamb. And if you don't sacrifice a lamb for that firstborn donkey; male donkey, break its neck.

Now I can understand that may sound cruel to a modern audience, especially those of you who are animal lovers. But everything the Lord did, everything the Lord told the people to do had a purpose behind it.

He was communicating truths that they needed to hang on to. And again, although this may sound cruel, He's teaching them about salvation and He's teaching them that salvation is a choice.

Because salvation and redemption, we use that term, redemption. We've been redeemed by Jesus. He gave His life for us. Just as they were to give the life of an animal, the firstborn male animal, right? As this had to be redeemed, so forth.

What He was teaching them is that when it comes to like an unclean animal, and by the way, we are unclean animals, you either redeem it with a lamb or it dies. Doesn't that sound a little bit like salvation?

We either get redeemed or we die, or there's destruction. He's teaching here. You have 2 choices in front of you: redemption or death. And again, it sounds harsh, but can I just tell you? It is. That's why it sounds harsh. It is. It's very harsh.

There's nothing pretty, there's nothing clean. There's nothing good about sin and what has to be done to take care of sin. The way Jesus suffered on the cross was horrific. It was horrific. It was horrific. And He did it for you, but that's what was necessary. He suffered that way because it was necessary. Our sin made it necessary. And now there's a choice that we have: redemption or death.

All we unclean animals, all we like sheep have gone astray. Each has turned to its own way. We've all gone astray. We've all done wrong. We all deserve to be punished. Every single one of us.

And so the choice is yours. Are you going to let Jesus redeem you? Or are you just going to basically invite death?

And I hear from people all the time well, God's a God of love, why does He send people to hell? God doesn't send anybody to hell. They choose it. They choose it for themselves. The choice is theirs. He has given them every reason. to choose the right way.

He not only gave them redemption, He made it free. He says, this is not going to cost you anything. It's going to cost me everything, but it's free for you. That's

what Paul says in Ephesians 2:8 and 9. And this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, lest anyone should boast.

Here's this salvation option that is available to you and me, and it's free of charge. No, I don't want that. I don't want any God said, I don't want any, nobody's going to tell me what to do and how to live. Hey, you choose it for yourself, man. You choose it for yourself.

But see, this is what He's teaching here. This is what is being taught to the Israelites and it is given to you and me in the Bible that we might look at this as an example of the options that are available to us. Redemption or death. There's no other option. I'm sorry if that leaves you in a quandary, but it shouldn't, because the option of salvation is the best thing you've ever had offered to you.

Verse 14 *“In days to come, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ (here's the third time He's made reference to parents passing this along) say to him, ‘With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.’*

¹⁶ *And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand.”* Boy, once again, tell your children that God set you free.

Verse 17. *“When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country,…”* Do you know what he's talking about there? He's talking about the Gaza Strip.

It's what you hear about right now, today, where the war is going on in the land near Israel. And it was the land of the ancient Philistines. It's the same strip of land. I'll show it to you in just a moment on a map.

But he tells us here that *“...God did not lead them (that way) though that was shorter. (and we'll see that) For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.”* And we're assuming there that would be the Philistines coming against them.

“¹⁸ So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle.” Well when we read about this and the way the Lord led them out of the land, it's apparent that God wasn't leading them directly to the promised land.

Because He was going in really, in the opposite direction. And I'm going to show you that. At least, it's what I think. There are other people who disagree with me, as they disagree with many other things.

Because He was going to reveal Himself to them at Sinai, and even actually the location of Mount Sinai is even a disputed sort of a thing. But I want to show you, first of all, a map of the land. We'll put the map up and let me start by circling essentially the land of Egypt. All right.

So there's..., that's it's very crude, but that's basically where they're starting out from, okay.



Now, where are they going? Well, they're going ultimately to the promised land and that's circled there, now in that upper place on the right. That's essentially the land of Egypt.

Now, if they would've gone straight there, and it's hard to say how long it would've taken them with all the people, and all the ... They've got elderly, they've got children, they've got all the flocks and herds. It probably would've taken a long, long time. Normally on foot, for an able bodied person, this would take about 2 weeks, okay. To go from Egypt essentially to Israel. All right.



But the Lord said He didn't want to lead them through Philistine land. I'll put a box over that area. That is the land essentially of the Philistines. Now you can see where Egypt is the big circle. You can see where Israel essentially is going to be, the promised land and you can see that the Philistine territory is right there.



I mean that if you're going to take the shortest route, you're going to follow what they call the coastal road. And that would literally hang on the coast and you just make your way to Israel along the coast. You have water. It's really the shortest route.

Now what I'm going to show you next is highly disputed, all right? Because scholars just don't know. You can see, I put an arrow there from Egypt down south. Now you can see that my, my guess, and again, this is my guess, is that they stayed on the west side of the Red Sea, and then God opened up the Red Sea, and that's when they crossed over.



There are other scholars who believe that all of that happened up way farther north. But even the area of Mount Sinai, let me show you that I'll circle the area down there in the tip of the peninsula. That's where some scholars believe Mount Sinai is located. That's the reason why I believe Moses took the people down the direction of the arrow and then cross the Red Sea where he did.



And then they were essentially just had to travel a short distance to Mount Sinai where the Lord revealed Himself to the people of Israel and revealed His law. I want to be careful not to have you ingrain this map in your brain because it may not be correct in terms of the route they took. I honestly don't know. This is my best guess. All right, so there you go. That's my disclaimer.

Verse 19, let's finish up the chapter. It says, *“Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. (you remember that?) He had said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.””* We read that, as we finished the Book of Genesis.

“²⁰ After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ²¹ By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their

way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.”

Now you might be reading these verses and saying, well, here it says they left Succoth, they camped at Etham. Well, that tells us exactly right where they were so why is there any question? Well, the question is because those cities are long gone. And not only are they long gone, they'll pop up again hundreds of years later in another location with the same name, and that can really mess with archaeologists as it relates to where the original location of the place was.

There's just a lot of questions. We know they were there in that region, but exactly where? Yeah, but what we're told in verse 21 is very important. The Lord guided them by day and by night. And it says in verse 22, *“Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.”* The Lord was guiding them the entire time of their travels. And that happened for 40 years.

That's where we're going to stop for tonight, and we will pick it up in the next chapter next time so let's close in prayer.

Father, we thank You. We thank You so much for Your Word. We thank You, Lord, for preserving it. Lord, even some of these towns, and cities, and places haven't been preserved in terms of their exact location. But isn't it interesting, Lord, that Your Word has been preserved? It's been kept for us. And we know that it's the very Word that was written.

And we're so thankful, Lord, that You have preserved the Word of God supernaturally through the years, that we might study it and gain a heart of knowledge and insight and understanding from it.

And we pray that with the things we've learned tonight, that we would grow in the grace and knowledge of what You did for us through Jesus, our Savior, because Lord, we know that He is our Passover lamb, the one who laid down His life. He is the perfect, sinless, sacrifice given for us.

And Lord, we just, we thank You God for the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life that comes through the redemption that Jesus makes possible for us. Not because we're good people, not because we've lived a good life, not because we've earned it in any way, but because we simply have accepted by faith what You did for us. We thank You, we praise You, and we worship You tonight in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

And all God's people said, amen. Have a good rest of your evening.