

Exodus 12.1-28 | The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷ “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰ And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹ In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. ¹⁸ In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

Exodus 12:1-28 | Passover Instructions

The threat has been made to Pharaoh regarding the coming death of the firstborn of Egypt. Now it is time for preparations to be made among the people of God. This is the final act of judgement against Egypt as a nation and at the same time it is the act of deliverance for Israel. One side must be warned but God’s people must be spared. How is it that the Israelites will be spared? It is all because of a lamb. This is of the same story we tell about Jesus.

1. Instruction

Exodus 12:1-2 | The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,
 2 “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.

It is a final meal in Egypt but it does not look back. Everything about the passover meal lunges forwards and that's why God marks this as the first month of the new year. The year now begins in the spring. This event is so great that it will orient all of time for God's people. The instruction comes before the explanation.

Exodus 12:3 | Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.

Step one: Organize families around the lamb. The instruction is to set aside a lamb according to father's houses. If you're household is too small for a lamb then you should get together with another household. The organization is under the lamb according to father's houses. Father's lead your families under the blood of the lamb. Join together into a church, so that all are brought under the blood of the lamb.

Exodus 12:5-6 | Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Step two: Pick a good lamb, kill it at twilight on the 14th. The lamb should be valuable. A male a year old, because the lamb is standing in place of the firstborn males in the home. The lamb is to be set aside and will give up its life as a valuable offering and the entire congregation of Israel organized by their families will kill the lambs at twilight.

Exodus 12:7 | “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

Step three: Put the lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintels. The passageway into and out of the house shall be marked with the blood of the lamb. It is a door, a new birth.

Exodus 12:8 | They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Exodus 12:11 | In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

Step Four: Eat it all, Eat it fast. No Leaven. The lamb is to be either consumed by the family or burnt over the fire. The bread consumed with it is unleavened. Be dressed ready for action. This is a meal of departure, faith takes action into the unknown.

2. Purpose

Exodus 12:12 | For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.

Now that you've been told what to do the Lord tells you why. God is going to pass through the land of Egypt. He will strike all the firstborn sons of the land, man and beast. And at the same time he will be executing his judgement on all the gods of Egypt. Why can he do this? He says it right there, "I am the Lord." The battle is God vs. gods. There is no neutral space. You are with God or you are against him. This is true at every level of reality. The nation of Egypt will learn that their gods cannot protect them, it will be a final destruction of their gods. But why will Israel be spared?

Exodus 12:13 | The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

The sons of Israel will be spared because of the blood on the doorposts of their homes. But look the blood is not a sign for the Lord. Of course the Lord is able to make a distinction between his people. The blood is pedagogical. It is a sign for you. So that you will know that the reason we were passed over is because we were protected by the blood of the lamb. God promises to see the blood and Passover the Israelites.

3. Rite

Exodus 12:14 | "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

The Lord is commanding a calendar restarting one night event. But it is not merely for one night, it is to become the central communal event of his people. Once a year they will gather together for the feast of unleavened bread. It is instituted as a rite because we must remember the deliverance of the Lord. We forget the faithfulness of the Lord and we wander away from him, not just individually but collectively. You forget. I forget all the time. I forget the deliverance of the Lord, and God knows this about us so he builds our cultures around remembering him.

Exodus 12:15 | Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

So the normal bread that would have been made in the home was sourdough. And in order to make sourdough you mix flour and water, and set it out. Then you feed it for several

days until it gathers wild yeast from the air and your hands etc. Then you just take a chunk of that sourdough and you mix it with more bread and water and you keep your starter going. Starters can last indefinitely. Making unleavened bread is not hard, you just don't put in the piece of the starter. For this memorial feast all the leaven is to be removed from its house. You can see this is symbolically saying, we are taking nothing from the past with us. We are heading into a brand new world, with brand new leaven.

Exodus 12:19 | For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land.

The leaven is to be a distinction among Israel. If you eat what is leavened then you will be removed from the congregation of Israel. The feast is all about leaving the old world behind. It is a feast of death of the old world and way of life in Egypt under Egypt's gods and a stepping into the new life under the deliverance of the true God. This is one of the most challenging aspects of our faith but it is simultaneously the place of liberation. You must leave behind the leaven of the old world.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 | Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

This is our call in Christ, who is our Passover lamb. He is the one under whose blood we stand so that we are saved from the wrath of God against evil. Now our lives are like a feast of unleavened bread of sincerity and truth offered to the Lord.

Exodus 12:24-25 | You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. ²⁵ And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service.

This statute is to be passed down generationally. Because the story of the Lord's deliverance of this generation will become the story of his deliverance for all generations.

Exodus 12:26-27 | ²⁶ And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' ²⁷ you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.' " And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

The center of our participation in the Lord's deliverance is worship. God delivers his people by creating a place of worship, which shows them how he has delivered them. And we pass this down to our children because it is their story. God has intended for us to preserve his story to us through the generations he has entrusted to us.

