

• *The Passover to become an annual ceremony*

Before the description of what happened on passover night, the story speaks of the demand that from this point on 'Passover' will be an annual ceremony in Israel^{□1}, accompanied by the Feast of Unleavened Bread^{□2}.

□1 12:14
□2 12:15-20

- According to Exodus 12:14–20 God gives instructions concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- In Exodus 12:21–27 Moses gives instructions concerning the present^{□1} and the future^{□2} passover.
- Exodus 12:28–30 tells of the death of the firstborn.
- According to Exodus 12:31–34, Pharaoh sends away the Israelites.
- According to Exodus 12:35–36, the Israelites plunder the Egyptians.
- Exodus 12:37–39 tells of the journey from Rameses to Succoth.

□1 12:21–23
□2 12:24-27

1. They must never forget that passover is the central event of their history

1. First, God looks to the future and tells them they must never forget that this passover is the central event of their history. The greatest and most important thing that will ever happen to them is about to take place, the day of their being redeemed with the blood of a lamb. This was the very meaning of God's name 'Yahweh'.

• *A memorial calling on them never to forget*

From now on 'Passover' would be an annual festival-time in Israel. It would be a 'memorial' calling upon them never to forget what happened to them at this time. It would be a regular reminder of what had happened at the time of their becoming 'Israel', at the first passover^{□1}. At the first passover there was little time to celebrate. But at the annual passover-festival the one day of Passover celebration would be followed by a whole week keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread^{□2}. The two feasts together would celebrate what God had done.

□1 12:14
□2 12:15

• *Linked to the Feast of Unleavened Bread*

• *The cross – the blood of the Lamb likewise the central event of Christian history*

The Christian must apply this idea to the blood of Jesus Christ. The cross, the 'blood of the lamb', is the central event of Christian history. Jesus Himself steadfastly set Himself to go to Jerusalem to die. The four Gospels emphasise the cross more than anything else in their story. Paul refused to 'glory' in anything other than the cross^{□1}. The Christian gospel is a matter of 'Christ and him crucified'^{□2} before it is anything else. Our central emphasis must not be prosperity or healing or miracles or social welfare or anything other than Jesus and His blood. The event that is never to be forgotten and is to be 'placarded' or 'publicly portrayed'^{□3} is the blood of the lamb.

□1 Gal 6:14
□2 1 Cor 2:2
□3 Gal 3:1

2. Redemption by blood purifies the people and consecrates them to God

2. Redemption by blood purifies the people and consecrates them to God. At this point in the story the book of Exodus inserts detailed instructions concerning the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread^{□1}. At the time of the first passover-event the people were to eat only bread which was without leaven and could be cooked at speed. This spoke of the haste and the urgency with which they would leave Egypt. Nothing that took a long time to cook – such a bread with yeast in it – was to be allowed. The roasting of the lamb would be the only thing that took any time, and they were preparing for that days ahead.

□1 12:15-20

• *Without leaven – haste and urgency*

• *A total break with the past*

• *Leaven forbidden in what was offered to God*

• *Leaven – a symbol of impurity*

• *We are to cleanse out the characteristics of the old life*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

• *Entering into rest*

• *Recognition as a member of Israel*

• *The Christian – bought by the Blood of Jesus*

The Hebrews were to make an abrupt and total break with their past life. It was to happen sharply and hurriedly. The unleavened bread was a sign that they were not planning to hang around.

This is how it came about that leaven symbolised the old life. Because of what happened at this time leaven came to symbolise lingering in the old life. Leaven would from now on be forbidden in any offerings to God (☞¹☞²☞³☞⁴ and the rest of the Mosaic law). It could be eaten in everyday life or in those parts of the sacrifices that were given for ordinary food ☞⁵ ☞⁶ but in what was offered directly to God it was forbidden.

Leaven is generally a symbol of impurity. Paul is referring to the sin of legalism when he says 'A little leaven leavens the whole lump'☞¹. A small amount of sin can ferment and grow, like yeast in dough. Paul makes the same point in 1 Corinthians 5:6 and goes on to say 'Cleanse out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump of dough ... Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'☞². Those who have been redeemed by the blood of God's Lamb, Jesus, must also learn the lesson of the Unleavened Bread. We are to cleanse out the characteristics of the old life.

In the Feast of Unleavened Bread, any bread with yeast or leaven in it would be removed from the house. For seven days only unleavened bread would be eaten. The first day and the last day were days of total rest, like the keeping of the sabbath☞¹. The blood of the lamb leads to total consecration to God. It enables us to 'enter into rest', that is, to achieve God's promises in our life such that He blesses us so powerfully that we find it restful. The 'Feast of Unleavened Bread' was to be kept permanently as a time of celebration in the future history of Israel. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread both pointed back to one day in the story of Israel. 'This very day I brought your hosts out of the land of bondage'☞². The double festival would be kept for eight days. Anyone who refused to align themselves with what God had done in the first passover was to lose recognition as a member of Israel, the national people of God☞³. Jesus is our passover lamb. Because Jesus has shed His blood, the Christian purges out the remains of his old life. By precious blood the Christian is 'bought with a price'☞⁴. He lives as a person bought with the blood of Jesus. He lives knowing that he was 'not redeemed with perishable things ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ'☞⁵.

☞¹ 23:18
☞² 34:25
☞³ Lev 2:11
☞⁴ Lev 6:17
☞⁵ Lev 7:13
☞⁶ Lev 23:17

☞¹ Gal 5:9

☞² 1 Cor 5:7-8

☞¹ 12:16

☞² 12:17

☞³ 12:18-20

(4 1 Cor 6:20

(5 1 Pet 1:19



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